

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL



EXECUTIVE SERVICES

Chief Executive

Julie Beilby BSc (Hons) MBA

Gibson Building
Gibson Drive
Kings Hill, West Malling
Kent ME19 4LZ
West Malling (01732) 844522

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

10 January 2022

To: MEMBERS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
(Copies to all Members of the Council)

Dear Sir/Madam

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held in the Council Chamber, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill on Tuesday, 18th January, 2022 commencing at 7.30 pm.

Members of the Committee are required to attend in person. Other Members are encouraged to participate online via MS Teams.

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

1. Guidance on the Conduct of Meetings

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2. Apologies for absence 7 - 8
3. Declarations of interest 9 - 10

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

4. Minutes 11 - 12

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 2 December 2021

5. Any Executive Decisions which have been 'called in' 13 - 14

Matters for Recommendation to the Cabinet

6. Review of Councils Public Health Function 15 - 42

This report makes recommendations to amend the structure of the Council's One You team in order to bring the cost of the service within the annual grant allocation received from Kent County Council (KCC).

7. Revenue Estimates 2022/23 43 - 58

The Council has a statutory duty to set the level of council tax for the forthcoming financial year by 11 March. Under the Budget and Policy Framework Rules of the Constitution, the Cabinet is responsible for formulating initial draft proposals in respect of the Budget. The role of this Committee is to assist both the Cabinet and the Council in the preparation of the Budget for 2022/23 within the context of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Council's priorities.

Due to its size Annex 1 – Draft Revenue Estimates Booklet – has been attached as a supplement to the main agenda.

8. Capital Plan Review 2021/22 59 - 82

Decisions to be taken by the Committee

9. Scoping report - Planning Enforcement 83 - 88

A scoping report looking at the existing Planning Enforcement Plan and associated practices to identify opportunities for improvement.

Matters for Information

10. Peer Challenge Review 89 - 116

11. Urgent Items 117 - 118

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

12. Exclusion of Press and Public 119 - 120

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

13. Urgent Items 121 - 122

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 Sergison (Chairman)

Cllr M O Davis (Vice-Chairman) and Cllr Mrs A S Oakley (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr M C Base
Cllr J L Botten
Cllr C Brown
Cllr R I B Cannon
Cllr R W Dalton
Cllr M A J Hood
Cllr F A Hoskins
Cllr S A Hudson

Cllr Mrs F A Kemp
Cllr D W King
Cllr J R S Lark
Cllr H S Rogers
Cllr M Taylor
Cllr D Thornewell
Cllr F G Tombolis

GUIDANCE ON HOW MEETINGS WILL BE CONDUCTED

- (1) All meetings of the Borough Council will be livestreamed to YouTube here, unless there is exempt or confidential business be discussed:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPp-IJISNgoF-ugSzxjAPfw/featured>
- (2) There are no fire drills planned during the time a meeting is being held. For the benefit of those in the meeting room, the fire alarm is a long continuous bell and the exits are via the doors used to enter the room. An officer on site will lead any evacuation.
- (3) Should you need this agenda or any of the reports in a different format, or have any other queries concerning the meeting, please contact Democratic Services on committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk in the first instance.

Attendance:

- Members of the Committee/Advisory Board are required to attend in person and be present in the meeting room. Only these Members are able to move/ second or amend motions, and vote.
- Other Members of the Council can join via MS Teams and can take part in any discussion and ask questions, when invited to do so by the Chairman, but cannot move/ second or amend motions or vote on any matters. Members participating remotely are reminded that this does not count towards their formal committee attendance.
- Occasionally, Members of the Committee/Advisory Board are unable to attend in person and may join via MS Teams in the same way as other Members. However, they are unable to move/ second or amend motions or vote on any matters if they are not present in the meeting room. As with other Members joining via MS Teams, this does not count towards their formal committee attendance.
- Officers can participate in person or online.
- Members of the public addressing an Area Planning Committee can participate in person or online. Please contact committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk for further information.

Before formal proceedings start there will be a sound check of Members/Officers in the room. This is done as a roll call and confirms attendance of voting Members.

Ground Rules:

The meeting will operate under the following ground rules:

- Members in the Chamber should indicate to speak in the usual way and use the fixed microphones in front of them. These need to be switched on when speaking or comments will not be heard by those participating online. Please switch off microphones when not speaking.
- If there any technical issues the meeting will be adjourned to try and rectify them. If this is not possible there are a number of options that can be taken to enable the meeting to continue. These will be explained if it becomes necessary.

For those Members participating online:

- please request to speak using the 'chat or hand raised function';
- please turn off cameras and microphones when not speaking;
- please do not use the 'chat function' for other matters as comments can be seen by all;
- Members may wish to blur the background on their camera using the facility on Microsoft teams.
- Please avoid distractions and general chat if not addressing the meeting
- Please remember to turn off or silence mobile phones

Voting:

Voting may be undertaken by way of a roll call and each Member should verbally respond For, Against, Abstain. The vote will be noted and announced by the Democratic Services Officer.

Alternatively, votes may be taken by general affirmation if it seems that there is agreement amongst Members. The Chairman will announce the outcome of the vote for those participating and viewing online.

Apologies for absence

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Declarations of interest

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TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Thursday, 2nd December, 2021

Present: Cllr J L Sergison (Chairman), Cllr Mrs A S Oakley (Vice-Chairman), Cllr M O Davis (Vice-Chairman), Cllr C Brown, Cllr R I B Cannon, Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr M A J Hood, Cllr F A Hoskins, Cllr S A Hudson, Cllr Mrs F A Kemp, Cllr D W King, Cllr J R S Lark, Cllr H S Rogers, Cllr M Taylor and Cllr F G Tombolis

(Note: As Councillor Base was unable to attend in person and participated via MS Teams he was unable to vote on any matters)

Councillors Mrs J A Anderson, Mrs P A Bates, R P Betts, V M C Branson, M A Coffin, N J Heslop, D Keers, W E Palmer and M R Rhodes participated via MS Teams and joined the discussion when invited to do so by the Chairman in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor D Thornewell

PART 1 - PUBLIC

OS 21/27 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

OS 21/28 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 7 October 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

OS 21/29 NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL - INTERVENTIONS REPORT

The joint report of the Chief Executive, Director of Finance and Transformation and Director of Central Services and Deputy Chief Executive summarised the key issues arising from the Commissioners' Interventions Report at the former Northamptonshire County Council.

Members reviewed the issues raised and assessed whether the Borough Council was adequately equipped to avoid these occurring

within Tonbridge and Malling. Particular reference was made to the major financial challenges facing the Council and consideration given to what role the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should have in supporting the 'financial agenda'. In addition, Members discussed what specific training might be required to assist in the overview and scrutiny role.

After careful consideration, it was

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) Officers be invited to consider how the agenda for each meeting of the Committee include an item on an element of financial matters which identifies any changes in the budgetary position since the previous meeting;
- (2) the Risk Register be reported to the Committee on a regular basis to provide an update on those identified as 'red' and identify actions taken to negate those risks;
- (3) Officers be invited to identify suitable training for members of the Committee in light of its scrutiny role and to enable a better understanding of financial issues; and
- (4) Officers investigate best practice at other local authorities and invite their officers to present details of this at a future meeting of the Committee.

***Referred to Cabinet**

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE

OS 21/30 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items considered in private.

The meeting ended at 9.03 pm

Agenda Item 5

Any Executive Decisions which have been “called in”

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TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18 January 2022

Report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet

1 REVIEW OF COUNCIL'S PUBLIC HEALTH FUNCTION

Summary

This report makes recommendations to amend the structure of the Council's One You team in order to bring the cost of the service within the annual grant allocation received from Kent County Council (KCC).

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 The Council work in partnership with KCC to deliver a One You programme across the borough. This work focusses on healthy lifestyles including healthy eating, exercise, drinking less and stopping smoking. In addition, the team work on supporting low level mental health needs for clients and make referrals into wider Council services e.g., housing, benefits. The service focusses on individual assessments of clients to establish needs and goals and ongoing support to achieve those goals. In addition, the team run Counterweight – a weight management programme – and support other initiatives such as healthy walks and wider health campaigns.
- 1.1.2 Tonbridge & Malling BC operates this service within a wider West Kent partnership with Sevenoaks DC and Tunbridge Wells BC and there is some shared staffing and resources e.g., call centre, IT system.
- 1.1.3 Tonbridge & Malling BC receive an annual grant from KCC for the One You delivery. For 2021/22 the grant was £120,720.07.
- 1.1.4 The Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered a scoping report on the Council's Public Health function on 29 August 2019 (provided as background information). On 15 January 2020 a further paper was taken to the Committee (provided as background information) exploring the three options that had been identified for the future provision of the One You Kent service within Tonbridge & Malling BC. The recommendation from that meeting was that a formal request for an increased contribution to cover management costs to enable delivery of the One You Service on a cost neutral basis be submitted to Kent County Council. This request was submitted, and discussions were underway when the Covid-19 pandemic occurred and understandably the Public Health team at KCC were

otherwise diverted. At the same time the Council's One You team played an integral part in the Council's Community Hub response to the pandemic and provided a much-valued befriending service and support to some of our most vulnerable residents.

- 1.1.5 Further reports to the Committee were presented on 18 June 2020 and 27 August 2020 which, as part of a wider scrutiny refocus and reporting on the Council's response to the pandemic, highlighted both the crucial role of the One You team in the pandemic and the ongoing need for the provision of this service at a time when healthy living has been highlighted as an important contributor to the short- and long-term effects of Coronavirus.
- 1.1.6 It has been clear from previous Member discussion at the Overview & Scrutiny Committee that the desire was to see the service cost brought within the available KCC grant budget including any management costs so that in effect the service is a nil cost to Tonbridge & Malling BC. Considering the Council's financial situation, it is now thought that it is the right time to revisit this intention for implementation from April 2022.

1.2 Current structure and cost

- 1.2.1 The structure and current cost of the service is provided at **Annex 1**.
- 1.2.2 Members will note that management costs have been apportioned to reflect the time actually spent on the One You team. Both the Head of Housing and Health and the Director of Planning, Housing & Environmental Health spend a considerable amount of time on health-related work e.g., West Kent Improvement Board, Local Care Delivery Board, Local Care Hub work that often relates to wider aspects of the Council's work e.g., housing, mental health etc. This would happen irrespective of where the One You delivery sits. Moving forwards, it is intended to separate out the salary allocations between Public Health and Health to provide a more accurate picture.
- 1.2.3 Members will also note that there is a shared post of Health Improvement Support Assistant across the West Kent partnership and both Sevenoaks DC and Tunbridge Wells BC contribute towards this post.
- 1.2.4 Further Members will note a gap in funding of the current structure of £35,367.93. To bring the service cost within the available grant budget it will be necessary to amend the current staffing structure.

1.3 Proposed structure and cost

- 1.3.1 A revised staffing structure and cost is proposed at **Annex 2**. It is proposed that this structure would be implemented from April 2022 subject to Cabinet endorsement and approval of the staffing elements at General Purposes Committee on 31/01/22.

- 1.3.2 For the purposes of this report, it is assumed that the salaries and grant allocation remain the same however there may of course be an increase in salaries and an increase/decrease in the grant allocation. Members will see there is a “buffer” of £8,125 to allow for any changes to the overall figures.
- 1.3.3 Both Sevenoaks DC and Tunbridge Wells BC have also raised similar concerns about the grant being received not covering the cost of their service either now or moving forwards (although they do not include management costs within their calculations) and this has resulted in a joint letter being sent to Kent County Council to highlight the concern across West Kent and to request increased funding. To date no response has been received and any update on this will be provided at the meeting. If the funding was to increase this is likely to be a one-off increase and therefore we would likely be in the same position next year. During these discussions Sevenoaks DC have indicated they are unlikely to be able to continue to support the shared Health Improvement Support Assistant beyond the end of 2021/22. As this role is not involved in direct delivery it is unfortunately felt that this role can no longer be supported. One of the major impacts of this will be felt around marketing and promotion of the service, however it is felt that a discussion with KCC should be held around their responsibility for marketing and how to improve this.
- 1.3.4 With the funding gap we have it is inevitable that we will also have to lose some direct delivery resources. We are therefore proposing that we reduce the number of One You Advisor posts from 2FTE to 1.2FTE. This will clearly have an impact on the number of clients that we can assist at any one time. However to counteract some of this we propose to utilise an allocation of the “buffer” of £8,125 to allow for the employment of casual staff when needed. This could be at certain times of the year when we are supporting campaigns or to run our Counterweight programmes allowing our One You advisors and the caseload the Health Team Leader carries to focus on our resident’s one to one assessments and support.
- 1.3.5 When considering our reporting requirements to KCC the focus is on the outcomes for residents and the impact of the service rather than a target number of assessments. Clearly any proposed changes to the staffing levels will have to be notified to KCC and the impact of this change will be highlighted.
- 1.3.6 It is considered important to maintain the role of the Health Team Leader who as well as carrying a caseload, manages the partnership with KCC including monitoring requirements and represents the service at key meetings.
- 1.3.7 As part of this revised structure new job descriptions will be developed for the remaining roles to reflect changes from the loss of the Health Improvement Support Assistant within the team plus changes to the ways of working because of on-line delivery.
- 1.3.8 Members will note that it is proposed to maintain the Healthy Living Initiatives budget at £10,000. This budget is used to fund the call centre, IT, campaigns and

Counterweight literature. One previous expenditure from this budget was the hiring of venues to run the Counterweight programmes however this has now moved successfully online, and some delivery will remain so moving forwards so costs in this respect are reduced.

1.4 Legal Implications

- 1.4.1 If KCC were to decide to withdraw funding from the districts because of raising concerns about delivery and award the contract to Kent Community Health Foundation Trust (other delivery organisation in Kent) then a TUPE transfer of staff may apply. There is however no expectation that KCC will make this decision in the immediate future.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.5.1 The Council receives an annual grant allocation for delivery of One You services from KCC. For 2021/22 this was £120,720.07.
- 1.5.2 When considering the cost of the current structure in 2021/22 there is a funding gap of £35,367.93. The overspend on public health has been funded via the public health reserve (see 1.5.4)
- 1.5.3 The proposed new structure will bring the cost of the service within the annual grant allocation and allows for a “buffer” of £8,125 for potential variation in salaries/grant allocation and the employment of casual staff.
- 1.5.4 A public health reserve is held by the Council and the balance at 1 April 2021 was £28,760. Due expenditure on public health exceeding income, based on the latest estimates (without any changes to the structure) it is expected the reserve will be fully used up during 2022/23.
- 1.5.5 The difference between the grant funding that we receive, and the actual cost of the service has been funded through the public health reserve. However as explained previously this reserve will shortly run out. Bringing the service within the cost of the annual grant application will mean the Council will avoid growth of £35,367.93 per annum based on 2021/22 costings.
- 1.5.6 A restructure may incur redundancy costs. Any reserve left as at April 2022 (as a result of bringing the service within the grant allocation) could be utilised towards these costs or used to support the “buffer” for potential variation in salaries/grant allocation and the employment of casual staff.

1.6 Risk Assessment

- 1.6.1 None

1.7 Equality Impact Assessment

1.7.1 Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The decisions recommended through this paper directly impact on end users. The impact has been analysed and varies between groups of people. The results of this analysis are set out immediately below:

- A number of the equality groups are targeted as part of the One You service as they are seen as higher risk of obesity etc. These include males, residents with learning disabilities, BAME groups. In addition residents in quintile groups 1 & 2 areas are also targeted. Therefore any reduction in service could potentially impact on these groups.
- The existing numbers of service users comprising of BAME groups and residents with a learning disability are very low.
- In order to minimise impact on these groups we could commit to ensuring that delivery of weight management programmes (as opposed to other work) is a priority and that we continue to target the required equality groups to ensure the service is provided where it is most needed.
- A further emphasis on the targeted groups along with a reduction in service could mean that other (non targeted) residents cannot access the service through TMBC directly.

1.8 Recommendations

1.8.1 That Cabinet is **REQUESTED** to **ENDORSE** the proposed structure to bring the One You service within the annual KCC grant allocation

Background papers:

contact: Linda Hibbs

Overview & Scrutiny Committee papers 29/8/19 & 15/1/20

Eleanor Hoyle
Director of Planning, Housing & Environmental Health

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Annex 1

One You team costings 2021-22

Post No.	Grade	Hours	Annual Salary (assume top of scale) £	Oncosts @ 28.5% £	Sub-Total £	Car Allowance £	Total Cost £	
Staffing								
Health Te	DV0201	M9	37.0	40,440	11,525	51,965	1,500	53,465 CP
Health Imj	DV0297	3	37.0	20,679	5,894	26,573	0	26,573 SB
One You ,	DV0202	5	22.0	15,808	4,505	20,313	1,500	21,813 NB
One You ,	DV0202	5	15.0	10,778	3,072	13,850	1,500	15,350 SW
One You ,	DV0203	5	22.0	15,808	4,505	20,313	1,500	21,813 SL
One You ,	DV0203	5	15.0	10,778	3,072	13,850	1,500	15,350 AB
Management								
Head of Housing & Health allocation*							4,415	
Director of P, H & EH*							1,989	
Street scene & Leisure management & admin support*							6,021	
Budget								
Healthy Living Initiatives budget							10,000	
TOTAL							176,789	

Car allowance of £1,500 reflects top rate essential car user allowance plus mileage at pre covid levels (approx 700 miles pa across the team)

**within the salary allocations process there is no code to allocate time spent on health work as opposed to public health work. So all the time spent on CCG activities e.g. WKICPDB & Local Care Board are allocated to public health. This misrepresents the amount of management for public health. The amounts in the table above have therefore been reduced from the amounts in the revised salary estimates*

KCC grant	120,720.07
Income	20,701 For shared Health Improvement Support Assistant
GAP IN FUNDING	35,367.93

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Annex 2 - Revised staffing structure and cost

One You team proposal

Post No.	Grade	Hours	Annual Salary (assume top of scale) £	Oncosts @ 28.5% £	Sub-Total £	Car Allowance £	Total Cost £	Notes	
Staffing									
Health Team Leader*	M9	37.0	40,440	11,525	51,965	200	52,165	Casual car user allowance based on changes to service.	
One You Advisor*	5	22.0	15,808	4,505	20,313	200	20,513	Casual car user allowance based on changes to service.	
One You Advisor*	5	22.0	15,808	4,505	20,313	200	20,513	Casual car user allowance based on changes to service.	
* New JDs will be produced									
Management									
Head of Housing & Health allocation*							4,415		
Director of P, H & EH*							1,989		
Street scene & Leisure management & admin support*							3,000	Discussion with Admin manager and likely ongoing support for OY team is reduced with amended structure/ways of working etc.	
Budget									
Healthy Living Initiatives budget							10,000		
							TOTAL	112,595	

**within the salary allocations process there is no code to allocate time spent on health work as opposed to public health work. So all the time spent on CCG activities e.g. WKICPDB & Local Care Board are allocated to public health. This misrepresents the amount of management for public health. The amounts in the table above have therefore been reduced from the amounts in the revised salary estimates*

KCC grant Income	120,720
	0
SURPLUS GRANT	-8,125

Posts deleted								
Health Improvement Support A	3	37.0	20,679	5,894	26,573	0	26,573	
One You Advisor	5	15.0	10,778	3,072	13,850	1,500	15,350	
One You Advisor	5	15.0	10,778	3,072	13,850	1,500	15,350	

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TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

29 August 2019

Report of the Director of Planning, Housing & Environmental Health

Part 1- Public

Delegated

1 SCOPING REPORT FOR REVIEW OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Summary

This report provides Members with background information on the Public Health team and work carried out by Tonbridge & Malling BC. Options for inclusion in the review of the service are presented for consideration.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Kent County Council as the public health authority commissions Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council as part of a wider West Kent partnership (including Sevenoaks DC and Tunbridge Wells BC) to deliver the One You Kent Service to help achieve the common objective of promoting healthier lifestyles among the population of Tonbridge and Malling in order to:

- Extend healthy life expectancy through prevention of chronic conditions such as obesity, cardiovascular diseases and diabetes;
- Reduce health inequalities; and
- Reduce avoidable demand on the health and care system in Kent.

1.1.2 Within the One You Kent Service the following work is carried out:

- Integrated Lifestyle Services – One You Kent - focusing on healthy weight, being more active, reducing alcohol intake and stopping smoking
- Weight Management Services
- Workplace Health
- Health in all policies
- Healthy Communities – including smoke free initiatives

1.1.3 The vision of the One You Kent Service is to motivate people to achieve and maintain a healthy lifestyle by supporting them to make positive lifestyle choices.

1.1.4 A number of principles have been developed for the model. These include:

- **Integrated** – People can get all the help they need to be healthier from one service.
- **Targeted** – Aimed at people who need help most but still available to everyone.
- **Motivating** – Encouraging people to be healthier.
- **Promoting independence** – Helping people to be healthier so they don't need to rely on a service.
- **Flexible** – Meeting the needs of local people creating better choice and tailored service.

1.1.5 The service contributes to achievement of outcomes set out in the Public Health Outcomes Framework (PHOF), and Public Health England's (PHE) vision to improve and protect the nation's health and wellbeing and improve the health of the poorest, fastest; through the following two key outcomes:

- PHE Outcome 1: Increased healthy life expectancy - taking account of the health quality as well as the length of life.
- PHE Outcome 2: Reduced differences in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy between communities through greater improvements in more disadvantaged communities such as those in the most deprived quintile.

1.1.6 The team currently consists of four established posts: DV0201 – Health Team Leader (37 hours per week, grade M9); DV0297 – Health Improvement Support Assistant (37 hours per week, scale 3); DV0202 and DV0203 – One You Advisors (37 hours per week, scale 5). Both the One You Advisor posts are currently resourced by job sharers, two of whom work 22 hours per week and two who work 15 hours per week.

1.1.7 In addition there are some resources (approximately one day a week for Tonbridge & Malling work) provided from the Council's Environmental Projects Coordinator who focusses on workplace health. This involves liaising with local businesses and workplaces to encourage and support with healthy lifestyle choices and opportunities for employees. Sevenoaks DC also commission Tonbridge & Malling BC to deliver their workplace health programme and this is carried out by the Environmental Projects Coordinator in again approximately one day a week staffing resources.

1.1.8 The One You Advisors provide one to one sessions with clients to help with lifestyle choices and behaviour and continue to support that client with their ongoing journey over typically six one to one sessions. The team also provide

weight management classes and attend many local events to promote healthy lifestyles.

- 1.1.9 We work in partnership with Sevenoaks DC and Tunbridge Wells BC to deliver One You across West Kent. The teams work closely together and provide resilience for one another when required. The teams share an administrative resource, a central contact number for One You in West Kent (managed by the call centre at Sevenoaks DC) and have commissioned a joint database to manage the caseload. All these elements are jointly funded by the three authorities. Clearly any decision Tonbridge & Malling BC takes with regard to the future of the service would have some effect on these two partners.
- 1.1.10 When the partnership for West Kent was set up to deliver the One You service there was a real focus on incorporating the services that districts provide to ensure a holistic approach to health. Services such as housing and benefits are now completely embedded into the One You service and often we find that by getting to the root cause of an issue e.g. too much drinking due to concern about rent arrears we can then help to tackle that cause as well as provide healthy lifestyle advice thus leading to a much more sustained outcome. This approach to service provision was one of the selling points of the boroughs' bid to undertake the One You service and is additional to the standard One You model utilised by KCC when commissioning other organisations.

1.2 Finance

- 1.2.1 Tonbridge & Malling have received funding from Kent County Council for healthy lifestyles for a number of years. More specifically a Healthy Lifestyle One You Kent (OYK) grant has been received from Kent County Council over the last three years. The details are provided in the following table:

Year	Amount of OYK grant
2015/16	£132,242
2016/17	£131,493
2017/18	£127,697
2018/19	£127,697
2019/20	£125,143

- 1.2.2 Members will note that over the period shown there has been a gradual reduction in the grant received other than in 2018/19 whilst costs have increased.
- 1.2.3 In terms of future funding Kent County Council's Director of Public Health, Andrew Scott-Clark has advised that "(KCC) are waiting for the results of the 2019

spending review, which will inform the Public Health (PH) grant allocation for 2020/21 and beyond. In addition, a national review around mandation will affect use of the grant. It has been possible on this occasion to apply only 2% cut but if there are further cuts announced for 2020 and beyond, we will need to apply any national reductions to the PH grant to your grant allocations.” However, it is also important to note that in the most recent discussions with KCC they have indicated that they are not currently minded to alter the arrangements with the West Kent boroughs and re-commission the service, should the boroughs wish to continue delivery. Although as a commissioning body they do retain the right to re-commission how they wish.

1.2.4 The Council’s revenue budget position for public health for 2019/20 is as below:

Item	£
Staff costs	141,500*
Partnership Receipts from Sevenoaks DC and Tunbridge Wells BC	(17,300)*
Managerial and other direct staff costs	34,250
Healthy Living Initiatives (budget to assist with delivery of programmes)	23,000*
Income from PH grant (does not match the actual grant of £125,143 as this is only confirmed after budget setting process)	(127,700)*
Income from other bodies (contribution from Sevenoaks DC for workplace health delivery)	(9,000)*
Central, Departmental & Technical Support Services	82,000
Summary	126,750

1.2.5 When examining direct costs and income (those items marked with an asterisk*) attributable to the One You Healthy Living service expenditure exceeds income to the sum of £10,500. When the service was introduced it was on the understanding that the ‘commissioning role’ would be fiscal neutral. The shortfall is currently funded from an earmarked reserve (balance as at 1/4/19 £54,477), but will in due course, were it to continue, represent budget growth and in turn add to the Corporate funding gap and the savings and transformation target.

1.3 Performance

1.3.1 The activity of the One You service is summarised in their annual return, which is attached at **Annex 1** to this report for information.

1.3.2 Some of the key highlights include the Counter Weight programme, a 12 week evidence based weight loss programme. Aimed at a moderate weight loss of 5-10%, it has demonstrated evidence of both clinical and cost-effectiveness. It is a structured weight management intervention delivered over a 12 week period, using behavioural strategies to assist people to change their lifestyle. In TMBC this year:

- 135 participants engaged in at least one session on the programme;
- 87 participants engaged in the programme;
- 87 engagers lost weight;
- 48 (55.17%) of engagers lost <3% weight;
- 20 (22.99%) of engagers lost 3-4.9% weight; and
- 19 (21.89%) of engagers lost >5%.

1.3.3 Across the One You Service as a whole, the following key statistics show very good performance levels against expected levels of engagement:

- 370 Referrals received into the One You Service;
- 72.7% Referrals contacted within 48 hours of receiving the referral;
- 176 Referrals were seen by a One You advisors; and
- 48 of the people seen were from quintiles 1 and 2.

1.4 HR Policy Implications

1.4.1 Depending upon the final outcome of the review, the Council's Reorganisation, Redundancy and Redeployment Procedure may apply. It may also transpire that relevant employment law such as TUPE may be applicable.

1.5 Legal Implications

1.5.1 There are none arising from this report.

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.6.1 When introduced it was on the understanding that the arrangement would be fiscal neutral. The funding provided has reduced over time whilst costs have increased where the Council is now meeting a shortfall in funding from an earmarked reserve. The reserve can 'plug' the shortfall in funding in the short term. If the shortfall were to continue this would represent budget growth and, in turn, add to the funding gap.

1.6.2 Each of the options as set out in paragraph 1.9 below will have a cost implication summary attached as part of the second O&S report.

1.7 Risk Assessment

1.7.1 With any externally funded service, the core risk is the funding being discontinued. This consideration will be built into the options appraisal.

1.8 Equality Impact Assessment

1.8.1 An equality impact assessment will need to be undertaken as part of this review.

1.9 Next steps

1.9.1 A number of options have been provisionally identified, and are set out below. Members are requested to consider which of these options they wish to see included in the review or to identify any other options they would like to explore.

1.9.2 Identified options for consideration

- 1) Adopt the principle that TMBC wishes to continue to deliver the programme by direct provision of funding above the KCC grant funding i.e. to continue the service in its current format and to continue to meet the current shortfall in funding up to a predetermined limit recognising in doing so this will generate budget growth (once the earmarked reserve is used up) and, in turn, add to the funding gap.
- 2) Adopt the principle that TMBC should only deliver the programme at a level fully funded by KCC i.e. to do as originally planned when the 'commissioning role' was introduced that the arrangement would be fiscal neutral.
- 3) Adopt the principle that TMBC should not be delivering this programme of work i.e. to discontinue delivering directly the One You service across Tonbridge & Malling and inform KCC that they would need to commission this service from another organisation.

1.9.3 In considering these various options, it is suggested that Members may be assisted by hearing from key partners in the delivery of public health services that could include the Director of Public Health at Kent County Council, GPs, Tonbridge & Malling Leisure Trust (exercise referral).

1.9.4 A further report with final recommendations will be reported to the December meeting of this Committee.

1.10 Recommendations

1.10.1 That the contents of this report **BE NOTED** and that a further report be made to the December meeting of this Committee regarding the options identified in section 1.9 of this report and any other options identified by this Committee.

Background papers:

Nil

contact: Eleanor Hoyle/Linda
Hibbs/Claire Potter

Eleanor Hoyle
Director of Planning, Housing & Environmental Health

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TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 January 2020

Report of the Director of Planning, Housing & Environmental Health

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Council

1 REVIEW OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Summary

This report explores the three previously identified options for the future provision of the One You Kent service within Tonbridge & Malling BC. Dependent on the option chosen by Members there may be future financial implications for the Council.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 At the meeting of this Committee on 29 August 2019 Members agreed to explore the following three options for ongoing provision of the One You Kent programme:

- 1) Adopt the principle that TMBC wishes to continue to deliver the programme by direct provision of funding above the KCC grant funding i.e. to continue the service in its current format and to continue to meet the current shortfall in funding up to a predetermined limit recognising in doing so this will generate budget growth (once the earmarked reserve is used up) and, in turn, add to the funding gap.
- 2) Adopt the principle that TMBC should only deliver the programme at a level fully funded by KCC i.e. to do as originally planned when the 'commissioning role' was introduced that the arrangement would be fiscal neutral.
- 3) Adopt the principle that TMBC should not be delivering this programme of work i.e. to discontinue delivering directly the One You service across Tonbridge & Malling and inform KCC that they would need to commission this service from another organisation.

1.1.2 The scoping report from the previous meeting is attached at **Annex 1**.

1.1.3 At the meeting on the 29 August 2019 Members confirmed that they wished to hear more about this service from the Director of Public Health, Kent County Council who commission the One You Kent programme as well as a local GP. Andrew Scott-Clark and Becky Prince (GP – Snodland surgery) have both accepted the invite to this meeting Members may wish to draw out from Andrew

Scott-Clark the impact of the One You service and any benefits of it being delivered through the district Council partnership approach in West Kent. It would be useful to hear Becky Prince's direct experience of the One You programme and the outcomes it has for her patients.

- 1.1.4 The scoping report laid out the budget position on current service delivery, which is the base position for option 1. KCC currently fund £125,143.06 per annum and TMBC currently have a savings reserve of £55,727 as at 31/3/20. Ahead of this report, KCC have informally indicated (ahead of their Public Health grant amount being confirmed) that they are intending to fund at the same level in 2020/21.
- 1.1.5 In 2015 a report was commissioned by the District Councils' Network (DCN). Its intention was to contribute to the understanding, assessment and development of the role of district councils in improving the health of their citizens and communities. It focussed on district councils' role in promoting public health through some of their key functions and enabling roles. It concluded that:
- a) Our health is primarily determined by factors other than health care. District councils are in a good position to influence many of these factors through their key functions and in their wider role supporting communities and influencing other bodies.
 - b) District councils face key challenges, the biggest of which is a fall in central government income. But public health reform and localism also create opportunities for them to increase their contribution to the health of their citizens. Moreover, many of their actions are likely to release savings to the public purse – primarily (but not solely) in the NHS. District councils therefore need to be more integrated in local health and social care policy than many currently are.
 - c) Among their core functions, housing, leisure and green spaces, and environmental health are key areas that affect public health.
 - d) District councils have an important role to play in supporting social capital by strengthening social networks and community-centred approaches to health, potentially through enabling greater volunteer involvement in health care support. These approaches have been shown to have strong and direct links to health, being as powerful predictors of mortality in older populations as common lifestyle risks, such as moderate smoking, obesity, and high cholesterol and blood pressure. They are also important in determining or averting health behaviours as well as resilience to, and recovery from, illness.
- 1.1.6 The One You team is integral to the delivery of the conclusions drawn out above by the DCN commissioned report.

1.2 Option 1 – TMBC continue to deliver One You programme in its current format

- 1.2.1 The table below provides a SWOT analysis for this option:

<p>Strengths</p> <p>Continues the positive and holistic approach to delivery of One You service within the wider district Council services.</p> <p>Continues the positive and strong working partnership across West Kent.</p> <p>Retain committed and hardworking team who are making a difference for residents.</p> <p>Continue with the progression of the newly formed One You Kent Countywide Partnership Meeting which focuses on continuous improvement and sharing best practice across all districts and KCHFT.</p> <p>Enables the current level of activity – dealing with 370 referrals and 135 participants in weight loss programmes.</p> <p>Helps to meet our corporate strategy aims where we state we remain committed to developing our dialogue with partners including those for health improvement and one of our key outcomes is to maintain effective joint working across West Kent on key issues such as health provision.</p>	<p>Opportunities</p> <p>Further develop the strong health links across the Council and with partner organisations particularly with housing and leisure</p> <p>Further develop the health in all policies agenda across the Council.</p> <p>Relook at the partnership across West Kent and if this provides any opportunity for rationalisation.</p> <p>To continue to raise the profile of this preventative work such that other partners e.g. health, community services will seek to also invest.</p> <p>Seek income generation opportunities.</p> <p>Improved efficiency in service through IT improvements.</p> <p>Seek additional funding opportunities.</p>
<p>Weaknesses</p> <p>This is not a mandatory service however has strong links into other such duties of the Council e.g. housing.</p> <p>Impact on senior management time - service needs to be managed within a head of service and Director portfolio so has an effect on resources available</p>	<p>Threats</p> <p>Future funding is uncertain so will represent budget growth once reserve fully spent.</p>

<p>for the rest of the service, many of which are statutory.</p> <p>Funding burden on Council if there is a funding shortfall.</p>	
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1.2.2 This option enables TMBC to continue to deliver the One You services with all the wider benefits this has for the Council – further detail is provided in 1.3.3 below.

1.2.3 However it is recognised that this option is highly likely to represent budget growth once the Public Health reserve has been used up and the length of time that will take is unknown due to the commissioning funding coming from KCC and staff costs rising through inflation. Members will recall from the last report that when the service was introduced it was on the understanding that the ‘commissioning role’ would be fiscally neutral for TMBC. This option will not achieve that objective and indeed the gap may widen each year.

1.3 **Option 2 – TMBC continue to deliver One You programme at a level funded by KCC**

1.3.1 The table below provides a SWOT analysis for this option:

Strengths	Opportunities
<p>There will be no budget growth for the Council – the service will be managed within the annual KCC funding utilising the reserve (£55,727 as at 31/3/20, made up of underspends in public health in previous financial years) for any difference and staffing adjusted as required.</p> <p>Retains positive and holistic approach to delivery of One You service within the wider district Council services.</p> <p>Continues the positive and strong working partnership across West Kent.</p> <p>Retain committed and hardworking team (subject to level of KCC funding) who are making a difference for residents.</p>	<p>Further develop the strong health links across the Council particularly with housing and leisure.</p> <p>Further develop the health in all policies agenda across the Council.</p> <p>Relook at the partnership across West Kent and if this provides any opportunity for rationalisation.</p> <p>We continue to raise the profile of this preventative work such that other partners e.g. health, community services will seek to also invest.</p> <p>Seek income generation opportunities.</p> <p>Increased efficiency in service through IT improvements.</p>

<p>Continue with the progression of the newly formed One You Kent Countywide Partnership Meeting which focuses on continuous improvement and sharing best practice across all districts and KCHFT.</p> <p>Helps to meet our corporate strategy aims where we state we remain committed to developing our dialogue with partners including those for health improvement and one of our key outcomes is to maintain effective joint working across West Kent on key issues such as health provision.</p>	<p>Seek additional funding opportunities.</p>
<p>Weaknesses</p> <p>This is not a mandatory service however has strong links into other such duties of the Council e.g. housing.</p> <p>Impact on senior management time - service needs to be managed within a head of service and Director portfolio so has an effect on resources available for the rest of the service, many of which are statutory.</p> <p>There may be a reduction in the number of residents that can be assisted should the grant from KCC reduce significantly.</p>	<p>Threats</p> <p>Future funding is uncertain so shortfall for TMBC to fund (if any) will be determined year to year and may require staffing level changes, which could have staff retention and HR implications.</p>

- 1.3.2 This option enables TMBC to continue to deliver the One You services and all the wider benefits this has for the Council within the budget provided by KCC. In 2019/20 this has already happened with a reduction in the “Healthy Living Initiatives” budget from £23,000 to £10,000.
- 1.3.3 Without a doubt the delivery of the One You service by TMBC has paid dividends for our residents. The service has been able to influence the assessment criteria and process to enable wider district services as highlighted above e.g. housing to be explored with residents and where required issues to be addressed. It offers a

holistic approach to the resident ensuring that any underlying issues e.g. financial difficulties, poor housing conditions are also addressed at the same time as any lifestyle intervention. This is more likely to create a scenario where improving lifestyles can be maintained and prioritised. The West Kent partnership maintains that the districts are well placed to bring a number of additional benefits to the One You service and can help in offering a holistic approach for users. This combined with the strengths that KCHFT offer such as the stop smoking service mean that there are a variety of services and support on offer.

- 1.3.4 The One You team has successfully developed an extremely strong relationship with housing, leisure, benefits, environmental health and others that have many interlinked approaches, policies and aims around the improvement of the health and wellbeing of our residents.
- 1.3.5 The service has recently been through a “process mapping” exercise led corporately by IT services. This will result in the reengineering of the processes to determine if more efficient ways of working can be implemented. This could lead to assisting with the reduction in cost of the service without impacting on service delivery. In addition the IT system in use at the moment is being considered by the Head of IT as to whether any improvement can be sought in light of the Council’s move to improved mobile working etc.
- 1.3.6 Once the annual grant (or hopefully in the future longer term grant funding periods) are known T&M could plan accordingly to deliver the service within budget. If required this may mean some amendment to revenue budget/staffing changes within the team and the Public Health reserve could be used to allow for any period of adjustment.
- 1.3.7 We are aware that Sevenoaks DC operate to this model and apart from management costs do not top up the grant received from KCC. They have however been successful in accessing other sources of funding to add benefit to the work of the team. This is something we have identified

1.4 Option 3 - TMBC do not deliver the One You programme

- 1.4.1 The table below provides a SWOT analysis for this option:

Strengths	Opportunities
No financial risk to the Council.	The management resources currently used to manage the service can be utilised elsewhere in the wider Housing & Environmental Health service.

Weaknesses	Threats
<p>The strong links to other Council services that often adds value both for the Council and the resident may be lost.</p>	<p>There remains a need for the Council to ensure that the health and wellbeing of residents is considered across all services. The momentum and focus for this may be lost.</p>
<p>The ability to steer the direction of the One You service e.g. ensuring housing needs are being identified may be lost.</p>	<p>A loss of focus on staff health and wellbeing.</p>
<p>The often “good news” and positive stories for the Council of residents being helped to transform their lives will be lost. Residents are not guaranteed the holistic support to maintain a healthy lifestyle.</p>	<p>Possible HR costs associated with six members of staff.</p>
<p>Loss of a committed and dedicated team who make a difference for our residents.</p>	<p>Impact on wider partnership. Becomes less sustainable for other parties to continue.</p>

- 1.4.2 This option could lead to an external organisation delivering the One You service across T&M. In East Kent KCC commission Kent Community Health Foundation Trust (KCHFT) to deliver the One You service. Historically there have been some challenges in this approach in terms of the links between district services and the KCHFT delivering the One You Service in a joined up and holistic approach centred around the person. In order to address these challenges KCC launched a Quarterly One You Kent Countywide Partnership Meeting to identify areas for improvement, share best practice and to ensure all partners are linked up with the delivery of the service across Kent. This is still in its infancy but a number of improvements have already taken place such as KCHFT opening up their training offer to the districts at a very reduced rate. The development of a Network event for all advisors in West Kent and KCHFT has also been scheduled for January 2020. Advisors will hear a number of presentations from drug and alcohol services and social prescribing in their areas. This is also an opportunity for the Districts to present to the KCHFT staff the benefits the district advisors can offer (such as housing and debt advice and how/when to refer) and likewise KCHFT can offer advice on how to signpost into their stop smoking services in West Kent. KCHFT do have some One You advisor resource in the T&M area targeting the lower quintile areas and although we have never received a housing referral for any of their clients they have confirmed that they regularly signpost to districts when housing/debt or other district related issues are raised. Currently T&M One You advisors are in touch with the housing team on a very regular basis and taking advice on how best to help residents sustain healthier living. This difference leads

officers at TMBC to conclude that there is a huge advantage for the resident to receive the One You service via the district Council and they receive a much better service.

- 1.4.3 This option also poses a serious risk to the West Kent partnership. Sevenoaks have expressed concern should this option be taken as shared resources and posts have been established e.g. One You support officer, IT and call centre. Although there are no contractual implications for TMBC there is a significant impact on the remaining two local authorities within the partnership.

1.5 Legal Implications

- 1.5.1 There is no mandatory duty for Tonbridge & Malling B.C. to deliver this service although it does link in strongly with other parts of Council services where there are mandatory duties e.g. housing.
- 1.5.2 Should option 2 or 3 be preferred, there will be HR implications for current staff. These have already been discussed with the HR Manager and staff have been briefed on the Overview & Scrutiny process and offered the opportunity to discuss their individual circumstances.

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.6.1 There is currently a Public Health reserve that stands at £55,727 as at 31/3/2. This is made up from savings on previous years Public Health grant. KCC currently fund TMBC £125,143.06 per year. The grant from KCC does not increase year on year in line with expected rate of living increases.
- 1.6.2 Option 1 will have the most impact with future year's delivery representing budget growth and in turn adding to the corporate funding gap and the savings and transformation target once the Public Health reserve is used up. The KCC grant does not increase with cost of living pay awards so the gap will increase.
- 1.6.3 Option 2 will maintain a status quo with the KCC Public Health grant funding so that the programme is amended each year in line with the grant received. The Public Health reserve could be utilised in this option to fund any period where staffing changes are required to bring the service in line with the available funding.
- 1.6.4 Option 3 may incur initial costs from redundancies however in the medium and long term will have no impact on Council's budget. This scenario would be dealt with following the Council's Retention, Recruitment and Redundancy policy.

1.7 Risk Assessment

- 1.7.1 None arising from this report.

1.8 Recommendations

1.8.1 Members are recommended to consider the three options in light of the information provided in this report and input from the invited speakers and APPROVE an option for the One You (Public Health) function from the following;

a) continue to deliver the One You service in its current format, accepting that this will require funding input from TMBC at current or higher than current levels depending on KCC Public Health funding grant

b) continue to deliver the One You service within the budget envelope of the KCC Public Health funding grant, accepting that this will require dynamic service management and work with partners to consider rationalisation of the West Kent service to maintain that budget position

c) discontinue delivery by TMBC of the One You Service, accepting that this may, dependant on the outcome of discussions with the other West Kent partners, result in redundancies

Background papers:

Nil

contact: Linda Hibbs/Eleanor
Hoyle

Eleanor Hoyle
Director of Planning, Housing & Environmental Health

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TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18 January 2022

Report of the Director of Finance and Transformation

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet

1 REVENUE ESTIMATES 2022/23

The Council has a statutory duty to set the level of council tax for the forthcoming financial year by 11 March. Under the Budget and Policy Framework Rules of the Constitution, the Cabinet is responsible for formulating initial draft proposals in respect of the Budget. The role of this Committee is to assist both the Cabinet and the Council in the preparation of the Budget for 2022/23 within the context of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Council's priorities. This year's budget setting process has again had to incorporate the difficult task of estimating the scale of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Council's finances both next year and over the medium term.

Dashboard/ Key Points

- **Funding Gap, representing new savings that need to be identified and most importantly delivered, now projected at £2.15m. Of this sum £1.5m must be 'bridged' within the next 3 years to protect financial integrity. In addition, commitment of saving £200k in relation to release of office accommodation needs to be delivered. Budget position categorised as RED on the Strategic Risk Register.**
- **Provisional local government settlement 2022/23 giving TMBC a Settlement Funding Assessment (core funding) is for 1 year. Includes allocation of £1.19m for New Homes Bonus; also includes a one-off Services Grant including funding to cover national insurance increase. The overall funding DECREASE on 2021/22 is £401k (7.6%).**
- **Beyond 2022/23 there is no indication of future core funding, including any replacement (or not) for NHB making planning difficult.**
- **Council Tax referendum principles for district councils mean that council tax can only rise by up to 2% or £5, whichever is greater. By way of context, CPI inflation index for November is 5.1%.**
- **Three key service areas are impacting on the finances – namely Waste; Homelessness (Temporary Accommodation) and Local Plan.**

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The Cabinet is responsible for formulating initial draft proposals in respect of the Budget for 2022/23. This report is intended as the basis for recommendations from this Committee to the Cabinet.
- 1.1.2 A special meeting of the Cabinet is scheduled for the 10 February to consider the recommendations of this Committee and of the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board and, in addition, take into account the Council's final grant settlement.
- 1.1.3 At that special meeting on the 10 February, the Cabinet will need to formulate its final proposals in respect of the Budget for 2022/23 and the council tax to be levied in respect of the Borough Council. The Full Council will meet on the 22 February to approve the Budget and set the Council Tax. The Full Council may adopt or amend the Cabinet's proposals.
- 1.1.4 The role of this Committee is to consider both the Revised Estimates for 2021/22 and the Estimates for 2022/23 (see **[Annex 1]** to the report presented to the meeting of the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board) within the context of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the Council's priorities. For completeness, details of how we are updating the Medium Term Financial Strategy are contained within this report for information.
- 1.1.5 Overall, the draft 2022/23 Estimates show an increase over the 2021/22 Original Estimates of £751,628 prior to making a contribution to/from the General Revenue Reserve. Members are referred to the report presented to the meeting of the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board for further details on the Estimates and subsequent recommendations.
- 1.1.6 It is likely that there will need to be changes made to the Estimates as we move through the budget setting process. It is my intention to bring these together for the Cabinet Budget meeting in February, rather than introduce them in a piecemeal fashion.

1.2 Medium Term Financial Strategy

- 1.2.1 To recap, the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) covers both revenue and capital budgets over a rolling ten-year period, and it is this Strategy that underpins the budget setting process each year and over the strategy period. The aim of the Strategy is to give us a realistic and sustainable plan that reflects the Council's priorities. The MTFS sets out the high level objectives the Council wishes to fulfil over the agreed time span and are currently:
- To achieve a **balanced revenue budget** that delivers the Council's priorities by the end of the strategy period.

- To retain a **minimum of £3.0m** in the General Revenue Reserve by the end of the strategy period and **not to fall below £2.0m** at any time during the 10-year period.
- Seek to set future increases in council tax having regard to the **guidelines** issued by the Secretary of State.
- Continue to **identify efficiency savings** and **opportunities for new or additional income sources** and to **seek appropriate reductions in service costs** in delivery of the Savings and Transformation Strategy (STS) approved by Members.
- Subject to there being sufficient resources within the capital reserve, set a **maximum 'annual capital allowance'** each year as part of the budget setting process for all new capital schemes (currently set at £250,000 from the Council's own resources) and give priority to those schemes that generate income or reduce costs.

1.2.2 The MTFS sets out, not only the projected budgets for the period, but also the levels of council tax that are projected to be required to meet the Council's spending plans. Underneath the Strategy for the budget setting year sits detailed estimates formulated in conjunction with Services taking into account past outturn, current spending plans and likely future demand levels / pressures.

1.2.3 This time last year the projected funding gap was put at £475,000. This figure was increased to £2,150,000 earlier in the year and the reasons for what is a marked increase in the funding gap set out in a report to Cabinet on the 6 July followed by a further update on 12 October. Add to this those initiatives already built into the MTFS, **but not yet delivered**, of which only one now remains, the scaling back of office accommodation in the sum of £200,000 gave a daunting figure of **£2,350,000** to be found and delivered over the medium term.

1.2.4 The MTFS will need to be updated and rolled forward as part of the 2022/23 budget setting process. Further information about this including the **latest projected funding gap** is discussed later in this report at paragraph 1.8.

1.3 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement

Settlement Funding Assessment (Core Funding)

1.3.1 On 16 December 2021, the Secretary of State for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, Michael Gove MP, made a statement to Parliament on the provisional local government finance settlement for 2022/23. The provisional figures are expected to be confirmed in January / February 2022.

1.3.2 Again, the Settlement Funding Assessment (SFA) is for one year only (2022/23) and the Fair Funding Review deferred to a future date. This further prolonging the

uncertainty over local government funding more generally and specifically how it shakes down to individual councils.

1.3.3 Our provisional SFA for the year 2022/23 as shown in the table below is £2,302,118, to all intents and purposes the same as that received in 2021/22. The Government again funding what has been referred to as 'Negative RSG'.

1.3.4 However, it is important to stress that **funding beyond 2022/23 will be dependent** on the outcome of the Fair Funding Review.

New Homes Bonus

1.3.5 Last year legacy payments plus an allocation for the year 2021/22 was paid under the New Homes Bonus (NHB) scheme. This approach has again been adopted comprising legacy payments of £828,579 plus an allocation for the year 2022/23 of £365,368 giving a total sum awarded of £1,193,947.

1.3.6 The future of NHB or a replacement remains the subject of discussion, but at the very least will not continue in its current form leaving one of two options. Firstly, the scheme is withdrawn and not replaced; or alternatively it is replaced, but where the funding stream and sum awarded is much reduced (our working assumption).

Under-indexing of the Business Rates Multiplier

1.3.7 The payment for the under-indexing of the business rates multiplier is £189,122.

Lower Tier Services Grant

1.3.8 This was introduced last year to ensure no council sees a year on year reduction in core spending power as calculated by the government. This approach has been adopted again this year. Our provisional allocation for the year 2022/23 as shown in the table below is £1,052,110.

2022-23 Services Grant

1.3.9 This is a new (one-off) un-ringfenced grant allocation in the sum of £158,677 to support all services delivered by councils, including funding to cover the increase in employer national insurance contributions.

Total Grant Funding

1.3.10 Total grant funding for the year 2022/23 as shown in the table is £4,895,974, a cash decrease of £401,012 or 7.6% when compared to that received in 2021/22.

	2021/22	2022/23	Cash Increase/ (Decrease)	
	£	£	£	%
Local Share of Business Rates (baseline)	2,301,752	2,302,118	366	-
Tariff Adjustment ('negative RSG')				
Settlement Funding Assessment	2,301,752	2,302,118	366	-
New Homes Bonus	2,209,818	1,193,947	(1,015,871)	(46.0)
Under-indexing of the Business Rates Multiplier	119,931	189,122	69,191	57.7
Lower Tier Services Grant	665,485	1,052,110	386,625	58.1
2022-23 Services Grant	-	158,677	158,677	-
Total Grant Funding	5,296,986	4,895,974	(401,012)	(7.6)

1.3.11 The provisional local government finance settlement 2022/23 is subject to consultation. The return date for responses to the consultation was 13 January 2022 and the response agreed by the Cabinet Member for Finance, Innovation and Property prior to submission. The consultation paper can be found at the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/provisional-local-government-finance-settlement-2022-to-2023-consultation/provisional-local-government-finance-settlement-2022-to-2023-consultation>

1.4 Kent Business Rates Pool

1.4.1 Adopting a risk based approach and considering the wider Kent position it was decided that the Council should not be part of the formal Kent Business Rates Pool from 2021/22 and to revisit the decision at a future date subject to the existence of business rates pools and its viability at that time.

1.4.2 Business Rates Reforms have been deferred and plans to allow councils to retain 75% of their business rates abandoned.

1.5 Local Referendums to Veto Excessive Council Tax Increases

1.5.1 The Localism Act gives local communities the power to veto excessive council tax increases. The Secretary of State will determine a limit for council tax increases which has to be approved by the House of Commons. If an authority proposes to raise council tax above this limit they will have to hold a referendum to get approval for this from local voters who will be asked to approve or to veto the rise.

1.5.2 For the year 2022/23, a referendum will be triggered where council tax is increased by **2%, or more than 2% and more than £5**. Members will appreciate that this is well below the current level of inflation – CPI for November being 5.1%.

1.5.3 Referendum principles currently do not apply to town and parish councils.

1.6 Draft Capital Plan

- 1.6.1 A report elsewhere on this agenda seeks to advise Members of the way forward on the Capital Plan. The criteria established to guide the inclusion of new schemes to List C (holding list of schemes not yet fully worked up) and ultimately the inclusion of schemes on List A (schemes assigned budget provision) are:
- to meet legislative requirements including health and safety obligations;
 - funded from external resources; and
 - reduce revenue expenditure and or generate income.
- 1.6.2 The Capital Plan review report recommends schemes for inclusion on List B, the short-list of schemes for possible inclusion in the Capital Plan. Members are reminded that the selection from List B, of schemes to be included in the Capital Plan (List A) – if any – will be made at Cabinet on the 10 February for endorsement by Council. With this in mind Members are advised that, other than loss of investment income, the revenue consequences of new capital schemes **have yet to be incorporated.**
- 1.6.3 Capital expenditure is currently funded from the revenue reserve for capital schemes, grants from government and other bodies, developer contributions and from capital receipts derived from the sale of assets.
- 1.6.4 There is also an annual contribution to the revenue reserve for capital schemes to match the funding required for the replacement of existing assets (vehicles, plant and equipment) and recurring capital expenditure. The contribution in 2022/23 is £908,000.
- 1.6.5 There remains an annual capital allowance for all other capital expenditure not least in light of the difficult and challenging financial outlook. Any ‘bids’ for capital schemes or discretionary capital grants are to be assessed in the context of the annual allowance. The annual capital allowance is currently set at £250,000 and it is proposed that the annual allowance continue to be set at that level.
- 1.6.6 It should be noted, based on current projections, that from 2028/29 the Council may need to borrow to fund such expenditure. This does not however, preclude a decision to borrow in order to fund in full or in part a capital investment opportunity that meets the Council’s strategic priorities and objectives, achieves value for money and delivers a financial return. Each such opportunity to be considered on a case by case basis as appropriate.

In addition, the Invest to Save Reserve or Transformation Reserve (made up of specific grants received from government in respect of revenues and benefits functions) amongst other Reserves could be used to fund in full or in part appropriate capital plan schemes.

1.7 Consultation with Non-Domestic (Business) Ratepayers

- 1.7.1 Before the Borough Council determines the amount of its total estimated expenditure and makes calculations of its requirements for the ensuing financial year, it consults representatives of its non-domestic ratepayers about its expenditure proposals (including capital expenditure). The consultees, who include the local Chambers of Commerce as well as a group of the larger ratepayers in the Borough, receive on request information and copies of the draft budgets and are invited to make written representations if they deem it appropriate. Any points of clarification required are dealt with by telephone, written correspondence or, if appropriate, an informal meeting with officers.
- 1.7.2 Any comments or representations received from the consultees will be reported to Members during the budget process as appropriate.

1.8 Medium Term Financial Strategy Update

- 1.8.1 When updating the MTFS we need to take into account the following (not exclusive) factors:

Covid-19 Pandemic

- 1.8.2 The full extent of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the Council's finances continues to unwind. Much will depend on the extent and speed of the recovery, impact of any further 'lockdown' measures, societal changes brought about by the response to the pandemic and any further financial support provided by central government.
- 1.8.3 It is **important to note** that in arriving at the latest projected funding gap it is assumed that:
- sources of income will in large part return to pre Covid-19 levels over the next two years – the question is will income return to the levels and in the timescale assumed?
 - the high homeless caseload and consequent significant and escalating increased cost of temporary accommodation will be pulled back to pre Covid-19 levels over the medium term – the question is will costs be pulled back to the extent and in the timescale assumed? As reported to Cabinet on 12 October, Management Team in consultation with the Leader agreed to commission some consultancy support to help us identify how and if processes can be refined to minimise cost. That work has now been concluded and the findings, conclusions and recommendations the subject of consideration.
 - On the basis that the waste contract will be re-let at the end of the first "break-point" (i.e. in March 2027), it has already been assumed that the specification will be 'pulled back' in order to mitigate, in part, the

anticipated significant increase in cost. **Therefore, an expectation of a reduced specification is already assumed within the MTFS as it stands.** If this were not assumed, the gap would be higher.

- 1.8.4 What is certain is we need to be prepared to take corrective action if and when required as the situation becomes clearer/unfolds.

Government Grant Funding (Settlement Funding Assessment + NHB + LTSG)

- 1.8.5 **Funding beyond 2022/23 will be dependent** on the outcome of the Fair Funding Review, and what is to happen to NHB and the recently introduced lower tier services grant and the new one-off services grant moving forward. Notwithstanding the continuing uncertainty and volatility surrounding local government finances with the increased risk of significant variations compared to projections, we still need to plan ahead as best we can.

- 1.8.6 In the latest iteration of the MTFS it is assumed government grant funding will reduce from circa £4.8m in 2022/23 to £2.7m in 2025/26 before seeing a modest increase year on year thereafter. A cash decrease of £2.1m or 43.8%.

- 1.8.7 A hypothetical example of how the assumed overall government grant funding of £2.7m in 2025/26 might be made up is business rates retention scheme (£2.0m) NHB/ replacement (£600,000) and grant income (£100,000).

Business Rates Retention Scheme

- 1.8.8 Business Rates Reforms have been deferred and plans to allow councils to retain 75% of their business rates abandoned.
- 1.8.9 Beyond 2022/23, however, the **question remains** as to what will our business rates baseline and baseline funding level be under a revamped Business Rates Retention Scheme and how this then compares to that reflected in the MTFS taking into account transfer of any new responsibilities?

Council Tax Referendum Principles

- 1.8.10 The MTFS sets out, not only the projected budgets for the period, but also the levels of council tax that are projected to be required to meet the Council's spending plans.
- 1.8.11 For the year 2022/23, a referendum will be triggered where council tax is increased by **2%, or more than 2% and more than £5**. This time last year the MTFS assumed a council tax increase of £5 representing a 2.3% increase in council tax. By way of context, CPI inflation level for November is 5.1%.
- 1.8.12 For the purposes of preparing the budget papers and updating the MTFS an **increase of £5 in 2022/23** has been assumed and each year thereafter.

Waste Services Contract

- 1.8.13 The Waste Services Contract if not extended beyond the initial 8 year contract period could see increased costs over that assumed. Where this was proved to be the case there is an expectation that the first 'port of call' would be to revisit the specification with the aim of bringing the cost down preferably within budget or as close to the budget as possible (see also paragraph 1.8.3).

Climate Change Agenda

- 1.8.14 Climate Change agenda related costs are not reflected in the MTFs other than a relatively small sum to meet one-off / time limited expenditure. As such one-off costs over the sum available and any ongoing costs would represent budget growth and, in turn, increase the funding gap.

Funding Gap

- 1.8.15 As we know, the funding gap is not static and constantly changes in response to both internal and external factors.
- 1.8.16 It goes without saying that the Council's finances are under severe pressure where at this stage in the budget process the latest projected funding gap stands at **£2,150,000**. Add to this those initiatives already built into the MTFs, **but not yet delivered**, of which only one now remains, the scaling back of office accommodation in the sum of £200,000 gives a daunting figure of **£2,350,000** to be found and delivered over the medium term. The difficult and challenging financial outlook demanding a **pressing and concerted** focus of attention. **Not forgetting**, amongst other things, the assumptions highlighted at paragraph 1.8.3 which are in themselves challenging.
- 1.8.17 The MTFs will continue to be updated as we move through the 2022/23 budget cycle and as more information becomes available and in due course presented with the Budget report to Cabinet in February.

1.9 Savings and Transformation Strategy

- 1.9.1 Alongside the MTFs sits a Savings and Transformation Strategy (STS). The purpose of the Strategy is to provide structure, focus and direction in addressing the financial challenge faced by the Council. In so doing, it recognises that there is no one simple solution and as a result we will need to adopt a number of ways to deliver the required savings and transformation contributions within an agreed timescale.
- 1.9.2 A number of key themes have been identified, together with outline targets and timescales which will need to be revisited and aligned with the latest projected funding gap as part of the budget setting process. An updated version of the STS will be presented with the Budget report to Cabinet.

Savings and Transformation Contributions

- 1.9.3 The Council set a savings target of £100,000 to be delivered by April 2022 and to date ongoing savings / increased income in the order of £329,000 have been identified, albeit other factors / decisions made giving a net figure of £144,000.
- 1.9.4 There are of course multiple factors that can take the savings target in either the right or wrong direction. A high level overview of the movement in the savings target when the budget was set in February 2021 and the latest projected funding gap of £2,350,000 is detailed below.

	£	£
Savings Target – Council February 2021		475,000
Northern Car Parks	95,000	
River Lawn	73,000	
Cabinet	17,000	
General IT Development Budget	(30,000)	
Savings Identified at Cabinet October 2021	(52,000)	
Disabled Facilities Grants	(54,000)	
Cemetery Income	(60,000)	
Parking Income	(133,000)	(144,000)
Sub-total		331,000
Other Factors Impacting on MTFS		
Waste Services Contract	1,400,000	
Car Park Usage	300,000	
Waste Services Contract Inflation	220,000	
Temporary Accommodation	130,000	
Social Care Levy	100,000	
Recycling Performance Payment	30,000	
Pension Attrition Rate	(50,000)	
Planning Application Fee Income	(58,000)	
Investment Income	(75,000)	
Council Tax	(84,000)	
Government Grant	(130,000)	
Other Factors	36,000)	1,819,000
Latest Projected Funding Gap		2,150,000
Initiatives Already Built into the MTFS		200,000
Total		2,350,000

1.10 Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board

- 1.10.1 The draft Revenue Estimates are to be considered in detail at the meeting of the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board on 12 January where a number of officers will be available to answer detailed questions.
- 1.10.2 It is not our intention to replicate the officer representation at this meeting and assume that Members will wish to focus on the strategic aspects of the Estimates rather than the detail. If Members do have detailed questions, please contact Neil Lawley, Chief Financial Services Officer on extension 6095 or by e-mail at neil.lawley@tmbc.gov.uk in advance of the meeting. Where appropriate, he will liaise with the relevant Services and advise accordingly.

1.11 Legal Implications

- 1.11.1 There are a number of legislative requirements to consider in setting the Budget which will be addressed as we move through the budget cycle.
- 1.11.2 The Localism Act gives local communities the power to veto excessive council tax increases. The Secretary of State will determine a limit for council tax increases which has to be approved by the House of Commons. If an authority proposes to raise council tax above this limit they will have to hold a referendum to get approval for this from local voters who will be asked to approve or veto the rise.
- 1.11.3 The Local Government Finance Act 2012 and regulations that followed introduced the current Business Rates Retention Scheme.

1.12 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.12.1 The scale of the financial challenge places financial sustainability at increased risk.
- 1.12.2 The uncertainty surrounding local government finances – the awaited outcome of the Fair Funding Review, the future of NHB and the recently introduced lower tier services grant and new one-off services grant moving forward, business rates reforms in addition to the adverse impact of the Covid-19 pandemic continuing to unwind makes financial planning that much more difficult.
- 1.12.3 The 2022/23 provisional local government finance settlement is relatively positive for TMBC, which is welcome news. However, this is a further standalone “holding year” and three key questions remain.
- Firstly, what will our business rates baseline and baseline funding level be and how will this compare to that reflected in the MTFs taking into account transfer of any new responsibilities?
 - Secondly, what is the extent to which NHB will feature in future government grant funding and if replaced what level of funding would we receive in its place?

- Thirdly, over what time period will the lower tier services grant be 'in play' and how much might we expect to receive year on year in that period and what is to happen to the new one-off services grant?

1.12.4 A further key question is, will the reductions in income and increased costs seen as a result of the pandemic return in large part to pre Covid-19 levels to the extent and in the timescale assumed?

1.12.5 In addition, the impact of current economic conditions on Council finances / financial assumptions in respect of inflation, interest rates, etc. and the scale of the impact over the medium term is uncertain and difficult to determine.

1.13 Risk Assessment

1.13.1 The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Financial Officer, when calculating the Council Tax Requirement, to report on the robustness of the estimates included in the budget and the adequacy of the reserves for which the budget provides. Consideration will and is given to the risks associated with any budget setting process where various financial and other assumptions have to be made. To mitigate the risks detailed estimates are formulated in conjunction with Services taking into account past outturn, current spending plans and likely future demand levels / pressures and external advice on assumptions obtained where appropriate.

1.13.2 The Medium Term Financial Strategy sets out the high level financial objectives the Council wishes to fulfil and underpins the budget setting process for the forthcoming year and over the Strategy period. As the Council's high level financial planning tool the Strategy needs to be reviewed and updated at least annually and in the current climate regularly reviewed by Management Team. In addition, not identifying and implementing the requisite savings and transformation contributions will put at risk the integrity of the MTFS.

1.13.3 The pandemic continues to have a significant adverse impact on the Council's finances and dependent on the extent and speed of the recovery further widen the funding gap.

1.13.4 The continuing uncertainty and volatility surrounding local government finances does not aid financial planning with the increased risk of significant variations compared to projections; and the consequent implications on the level of reserves held.

1.13.5 The projected figures for New Homes Bonus or its replacement are at risk of further revision downwards which would, in turn, increase the required savings and transformation contributions.

1.13.6 The Waste Services Contract if not extended beyond the initial 8 year contract period could see increased costs over that assumed. As mentioned at paragraph

1.8.3, however, it is important to note that forward planning already assumes a reduced specification.

1.13.7 The Inter Authority Agreement with KCC as part of the Waste Services Contract may not be extended beyond the initial 8 year contract period with potential significant adverse budget implications, albeit this is considered unlikely.

1.13.8 Members are reminded that there are factors not reflected in the MTFS, e.g. Climate Change agenda related costs other than a relatively small sum to meet one-off / time limited expenditure and the cost of borrowing for new capital plan schemes when and if required.

1.13.9 Any increase in council tax above the relevant threshold, even by a fraction of a percentage point, would require a referendum to be held.

1.14 Equality Impact Assessment

1.14.1 Where there is a perceived impact on end users an equality impact assessment has been carried out and as further savings and transformation options emerge, further equality impact assessments will need to be carried out as appropriate.

1.15 Policy Considerations

1.15.1 Budgetary and policy framework is relevant to all areas of the Council's business.

1.16 Recommendations

1.16.1 The Committee is asked to:

- 1) Consider the draft Revenue Estimates (**[Annex 1]** to the report presented to the meeting of the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board) and make such recommendations, as it considers appropriate, to Cabinet for its special meeting on 10 February.
- 2) Recommend to Cabinet that the Savings and Transformation Strategy is updated to reflect the latest projected funding gap as part of the budget setting process.

Background papers:

Nil

contact: Neil Lawley
Sharon Shelton

Sharon Shelton
Director of Finance and Transformation

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Due to its size Annex 1 – Draft Revenue Estimates booklet – is attached as a supplement to the main agenda

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TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18 January 2022

Report of the Director of Finance and Transformation

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet

1 CAPITAL PLAN REVIEW 2021/22

This report considers progress on the 2021/22 Capital Plan Review and requests endorsement of recommendations to Cabinet.

Dashboard / Key Points

- **Capital Plan is built on a “ladder” style basis:**
- **At the top – List A – sits the schemes that have received approval and have funding assigned (including the replacement of existing assets)**
- **List B - schemes have received in principle support but are awaiting funding to be assigned at an appropriate time**
- **List C is a list of potential schemes that have been identified for possible future adoption**
- **Funding can be found from the Capital Reserve (for which the annual capital allowance is £250,000); S106 sums (developer contributions); or external grants**
- **This year’s recommendations for schemes to be moved to the top of the ladder – List A – can be met from the capital allowance and/or other funding sources**

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The capital plan process, as outlined below, provides a means of maintaining a pool of schemes (List C) from which schemes can be selected for evaluation and possible implementation. It also provides an opportunity to review the provisions for schemes which are already in the Capital Plan (List A).

1.1.2 The criteria established to guide the inclusion of new List C schemes (holding list of schemes not yet fully worked up) and ultimately the inclusion of schemes on List A (schemes assigned budget provision) are:

- to meet legislative requirements including health and safety obligations;
- funded from external resources; and
- reduce revenue expenditure and or generate income.

1.1.3 The subsequent recommendations where appropriate have regard to these criteria.

1.1.4 The review takes place within the context of the revenue estimates, reflecting the fact that capital schemes have an impact on revenue. Positive impacts may include potential to reduce costs and or generate income. Negative impacts may include loss of income during construction and will include loss of investment income where the project costs are met from the Council's resources.

1.1.5 The Capital Plan review process is to be reported to the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board on 12 January 2022, where Members will consider the following issues:

- 1) The position of the existing Capital Plan (List A).
- 2) The addition of schemes to List C and the removal of schemes from List C.
- 3) The selection of schemes from List C to be evaluated.
- 4) Consideration of those schemes which have been evaluated.

1.2 Capital Plan Funding

1.2.1 Capital expenditure is currently funded from the revenue reserve for capital schemes, grants from government and other bodies, developer contributions and from capital receipts derived from the sale of assets.

1.2.2 There is also an annual contribution to the revenue reserve for capital schemes to match the funding required for the replacement of existing assets (vehicles, plant and equipment) and recurring capital expenditure. The contribution in 2022/23 is £908,000.

1.2.3 There remains an annual capital allowance for all other capital expenditure not least in light of the difficult and challenging financial outlook. Any 'bids' for capital schemes or discretionary capital grants are to be assessed in the context of the annual allowance. The annual capital allowance is currently set at £250,000 and it is proposed that the annual allowance continue to be set at that level.

- 1.2.4 It should be noted, based on current projections, that from 2028/29 the Council may need to borrow to fund such expenditure. This does not however, preclude a decision to borrow in order to fund in full or in part a capital investment opportunity that meets the Council's strategic priorities and objectives, achieves value for money and delivers a financial return. Each such opportunity to be considered on a case by case basis as appropriate.
- 1.2.5 In addition, the Invest to Save Reserve or Transformation Reserve (made up of specific grants received from government in respect of revenues and benefits functions) amongst other Reserves could be used to fund in full or in part appropriate capital plan schemes.

1.3 Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board

- 1.3.1 Details in respect of the existing Capital Plan (List A) can be found in the report to the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board including the proposed purchase of the freehold of 47 High Street, Tonbridge to the Capital Plan under urgency provisions. The position of the existing Capital Plan (List A) recommended for endorsement is summarised in **[Annex 1]**
- 1.3.2 As a result of the difficult and challenging financial outlook the focus has to be on what are seen as priority capital plan schemes or where there is potential for external funding. The schedule of schemes recommended to be added to and schemes to be deleted from List C is attached at **[Annex 2]**.
- 1.3.3 The List C schemes recommended for evaluation is attached at **[Annex 3]**. On this occasion, three schemes have been recommended including two for Fast-Track evaluation. In addition, there are five schemes selected for evaluation in a previous Review that are either on hold following evaluation, subject to further evaluation or yet to be evaluated as follows: Larkfield Leisure Centre – Sports Hall Roof Renewable Energy Technology, Tonbridge Farm Sportsground – Provision of Toilets, Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground – Improvement Works Phase 3, Tonbridge Castle – Site Improvements and River Medway – Riverside Environmental Improvements, Tonbridge.
- 1.3.4 The evaluated schemes recommended for transfer from List C to List B is attached at **[Annex 4]** including those schemes recommended for Fast-Track evaluation.

1.4 Capital Strategy

- 1.4.1 Updates to both the Prudential Code and Treasury Management Code were published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) in December 2021 and uphold a key principle that borrowing primarily for return on investment is not permissible.
- 1.4.2 The requirements of both the Treasury Management and Prudential Codes of Practice published by CIPFA have been taken into account and reflected as

appropriate in the annual review and update of the Capital Strategy attached at **[Annex 5]**. The Strategy has no annexes but includes links to a number of other documents or web pages which are referred to in the text and are available on the Council's website or the internet.

- 1.4.3 CIPFA – “The Capital Strategy should describe how the investment of capital resources will contribute to the achievement of the authority's key objectives and priorities that are detailed in their Performance Plans and Community Plans/Strategies. An authority's Capital Strategy should be one of the key, overarching strategies that support service plans. The strategy will also determine priorities between the various services and look for opportunities for cross-cutting and joined-up investment. The authority's Capital Strategy should describe how the deployment of capital resources contributes to the achievement of the described goals. It will also help to ensure that issues around property and other assets are fully reflected in the Council's planning.”

1.5 Legal Implications

- 1.5.1 The Local Government Act 2003 and its subsidiary regulations set out the framework for the system of capital controls which applied from 1 April 2004 whereby local authorities must set their own borrowing limits with regard to affordability, prudence and sustainability. Underpinning this is a requirement to follow the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code).

1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.6.1 The transfer of schemes from List C to List B has no financial impact. The transfer of schemes from List B to List A will be considered by Cabinet on 10 February in the context of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the overall budget position.
- 1.6.2 The Capital Strategy outlines a capital plan process which follows the CIPFA Prudential Code and in addition to supporting the achievement of the Council's strategic priorities and objectives, focuses on value for money.

1.7 Risk Assessment

- 1.7.1 Financial implications of new schemes to be considered by Cabinet at the February budget meeting.
- 1.7.2 Failure to endorse a satisfactory Capital Strategy may lead to a capital programme which does not fully support the Council's strategic priorities and objectives.

1.8 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.8.1 Where there is a perceived impact on end users an equality impact assessment has or will be carried out as schemes progress as appropriate.

1.9 Recommendations

- 1.9.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that the recommendations to the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board detailed at paragraph 1.3 be endorsed.
- 1.9.2 It is **RECOMMENDED** that Cabinet be invited to endorse the Capital Strategy as attached at **[Annex 5]** for adoption by Council and publication on the Council's website.

Background papers:

Nil

contact: Donna Riley
Neil Lawley

Sharon Shelton
Director of Finance and Transformation

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**Capital Plan: List A
Service Summary**

	Expenditure To 31/03/21	2021/22 Estimate inc Prior Year Slippage	2022/23 Estimate	2023/24 Estimate	2024/25 Estimate	2025/26 Estimate	2026/27 Estimate	2027/28 Estimate	Scheme Total
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Plan Schemes									
Planning, Housing & Environmental Health	1,519	1,094	30	30	30	30	30	30	2,793
Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services	140	318	826	1,265	159	159	159	159	3,185
Corporate	97	223	0	0	0	0	0	0	320
Sub-total	1,756	1,635	856	1,295	189	189	189	189	6,298
Capital Renewals									
Planning, Housing & Environmental Health	n/a	0	0	0	13	0	0	0	13
Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services	n/a	561	1,380	421	360	207	451	756	4,136
Corporate	n/a	197	304	162	315	203	204	123	1,508
Sub-total	n/a	758	1,684	583	688	410	655	879	5,657
Total	1,756	2,393	2,540	1,878	877	599	844	1,068	11,955

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Capital Plan Review 2021/22

Recommendations in respect of List C

	Annex 2 Page
Schemes to be added to List C	
Planning, Housing & Environmental Health Services	
Environmental Health – Air Quality Monitor	CP 29

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Capital Plan Review 2021/22

Schemes selected for evaluation from List C

	Annex 2 Page
Planning, Housing & Environmental Health Services	
Environmental Health – Air Quality Monitor (Fast-Track)	CP 29
Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services	
Sports Grounds – Tonbridge Farm Sportsground Improvements (Fast-Track)	CP 33
Open Spaces – Taddington Valley Woodland Management	CP 34

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Capital Plan Review 2021/22

Recommendations in respect of evaluated schemes

	Capital Cost	Estimated Annual Revenue/ Renewals Cost		Annex 3 Page
	£'000	£'000		
Planning, Housing & Environmental Health Services				
Air Quality Monitor	10	3	Transfer from List C to List B	CP 38
Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services				
Tonbridge Farm Sportsground Improvements	40	3	Transfer from List C to List B	CP 41
Total	50	6		
The estimated capital cost of the Air Quality Monitor is to be met from the annual capital allowance of £250,000 and the estimated capital cost of the Tonbridge Farm Sportsground Improvements to be funded in full by developer contributions.				

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TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

Draft Capital Strategy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of the Capital Strategy is to document the principles and framework that underpin the Council's capital investment and expenditure proposals. The Strategy is drawn up under the framework provided by the Local Government Act 2003 and its associated regulations.
- 1.2 The principal aim of the Capital Strategy is to provide a context for a programme of capital investment (known as the Capital Plan) that will assist in the achievement of the Council's strategic priorities and objectives. The Capital Plan is published in the Council's [budget book](#) and available on the Council's website.
- 1.3 The component elements of the Capital Strategy comprise:
- A statement of the financial context within which the Council needs to determine its approach to capital investment (Section 2).
 - A description of the legislative framework and its associated regulations that will influence capital investment decisions (Section 3).
 - An explanation of the direct relationship between capital investment decisions and the Council's strategic priorities and objectives (Section 4).
 - The key principles supporting the Capital Strategy (Section 5).
 - Consideration of various partnership arrangements (Section 6).
 - Explanation of the processes to be followed in the implementation and management of the Capital Strategy (Section 7).
 - The Capital Plan (Section 8).
 - Post implementation reviews (Section 9).

2 The Financial Context

- 2.1 Key financial statistics are:

Net Budget Requirement 2021/22	£13.44 million
Government Grant / Business rates excluding New Homes Bonus 2021/22	£3.0 million
Borough Council Band D Charge 2021/22	£219.50
Capital Plan 2021/22 to 2026/27 (Gross expenditure)	£15.85 million
Fixed Assets at 31 March 2021	£92.54 million
Debt Outstanding at 31 March 2021	Nil
Revenue Reserve for Capital Schemes at 31 March 2021	£7.60 million

- 2.2 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) together with the Council's strategic priorities and objectives along with the established criteria used to guide the inclusion of capital plan schemes and the Prudential Code (see paragraph 3.1) form the basis for any capital investment decisions. The MTFS was used to guide the selection of new Capital Plan schemes in recent years

and will continue to be a major influence on the **2021/22** and subsequent Capital Plan reviews. The MTFs is updated at least once a year and the latest version is published on the Council's website.

- 2.3** Capital receipts derived from the sale of capital assets (generally land and buildings) can only be used to repay debt or finance new capital expenditure. The Council's assets are reviewed on a regular basis to identify the potential for alternative use or disposal. To assist with the Council's savings and transformation agenda Members agreed, Council February 2017 and 2018, that amounts (revenue resources) equivalent to the disposal proceeds from existing assets and other windfalls may be invested in externally managed property funds. £2m, excluding existing cash balances, has been invested in property funds thus far. A further £3m, drawn from existing resources, has also been invested in externally managed property funds. ***In addition to the externally managed property funds the council has invested a further £4.25m, drawn from existing resources into externally managed multi asset diversified income funds in order to increase the financial income to the Council.***
- 2.4 The demographic and economic features of the Borough give rise to a realistic assessment of very limited opportunities to attract funds from national and regional sources. Nevertheless, the Council will continue to investigate and exploit external funding opportunities.
- 2.5 Capital expenditure is currently funded from the revenue reserve for capital schemes (RRCS) grants from government and other bodies, developer contributions and from capital receipts derived from the sale of assets.
- 2.6 All government support for the Council's capital expenditure is by way of capital grant. Government support through capital grants is usually ring-fenced for specific purposes. It is the Council's intention to try to secure capital grants, wherever possible, for schemes which advance the Council's strategic priorities and objectives.
- 2.7 There is also an annual contribution to the revenue reserve for capital schemes** to match the funding required for the replacement of existing assets (vehicles, plant and equipment) as well as recurring capital expenditure. **The contribution in 2022/23 is £908,000.**
- 2.8 There is an annual capital allowance for all other capital expenditure. Any 'bids' for capital schemes or discretionary capital grants are to be assessed in the context of the annual allowance. The annual capital allowance *is currently* set at £250,000 *per annum*. Based on current projections the Council may need to borrow to fund such expenditure from **2028/29 onwards**. Priority is afforded to schemes that meet legislative requirements, address health & safety concerns, generate income or reduce the Council's revenue costs.
- 2.9 This does not, however, preclude a decision to borrow *at any time* in order to fund in full or in part *capital investment if deemed appropriate*.

3 Legislative Framework and its associated regulations

- 3.1 The legislative framework is set out by the Local Government Act 2003 and its subsidiary regulations. This framework provides for a prudential system based on borrowing limits set by each individual local authority. Under this system, local authorities must have regard to affordability, prudence and sustainability and must follow the “Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities 2017 Edition” published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA).
- 3.2 The Prudential Code requires that the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice is adopted and that a number of prudential indicators are set. Council adopted the 2017 edition of the Code on 30 October 2018. Following the review of Local Authority borrowing from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) in 2020, it is no longer possible to utilise PWLB loans to fund commercial investments.
- 3.3 The objectives of the Prudential Code are to ensure, within a clear framework, that the capital expenditure plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable, and that treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice and in full understanding of the risks involved and how these risks will be managed to levels that are acceptable to the Council. The Prudential Code requires authorities to look at capital expenditure and investment plans in the light of overall organisational strategy and resources and ensure that decisions are being made with sufficient regard to the long run financing implications and potential risks to the authority. Effective financial planning, option appraisal, risk management and governance processes are essential in achieving a prudent approach to capital expenditure, investment and debt.
- 3.4 Another key element of the legislative framework is the duty to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the Council’s use of resources. Achieving value for money is addressed in Section 5 of the Strategy as one of the key principles to be applied in capital investment decisions.

4 Strategic Priorities

- 4.1 Capital plan schemes should emerge from, or be designed to achieve, the Council’s strategic priorities and objectives set out in overview in the [Corporate Strategy](#). The Strategy sets out Our Vision and Our Values guided by the following core values:
- Achieving Efficiency.
 - Embracing Effective Partnership Working and Funding.
 - Valuing our environment and encouraging sustainable growth.
 - Innovation.
- 4.2 A one-year addendum to the Corporate Strategy was agreed by Cabinet in June 2020 to provide a framework within which to consider a wide range of issues in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. The addendum was underpinned by three themes of review, re-orientation and recovery.

- 4.3 The Corporate Strategy is supported by a wide range of Strategies and Plans where specific improvement projects and initiatives are cascaded down into section plans across the Council. These section and other plans also cover a range of other priorities, improvements and indicators that are set and managed by individual services.
- 4.4 The Council's capital investment decisions should be in support of its strategic priorities and objectives along with the established criteria used to guide the inclusion of capital plan schemes, and this is an integral part of the evaluation process for each project under consideration. No project should proceed to inclusion within the Capital Plan unless it furthers achievement of the Council's strategic priorities and objectives.

5 Principles Supporting the Capital Strategy

- 5.1 The key principles that underpin the Council's Capital Strategy are:
- 5.2 **Strategic Priorities.** Establishment of a direct relationship with the Council's strategic priorities and objectives, with a Capital Plan based upon investment needs and prioritised on an authority-wide basis. This demonstrates an explicit link with key strategic planning documents and recognition of the need for a corporate approach to cross-cutting issues such as the environment, social inclusion, affordable housing, economic regeneration and community safety.
- 5.3 **Public Consultation.** The use of public consultation is, indirectly, an important part of developing the Capital Plan through its use in setting priorities and developing strategies, which may lead to capital projects coming forward.
- 5.4 **Other Consultation.** As well as individuals communicating directly with Council Officers and Members, other conduits exist for expressing views to the Council. The Parish Partnership Panel, the Tonbridge Community Forum, the Tonbridge Sports Association, and customer panels at leisure facilities allow specific persons or groups of users to express their views.
- 5.5 **Partnerships.** Partnership initiatives are considered in Section 6 including the Tonbridge and Malling Local Strategic Partnership, the West Kent Partnership and the Community Safety Partnership which help shape policy objectives and which aim to deliver projects in conjunction with others.
- 5.6 **Procurement Strategy.** The [Procurement Strategy](#) seeks to ensure that good procurement practice is applied consistently throughout the Council. It sets out how the Council will address procurement and establishes its importance to the Council and the contribution it can make to improved service delivery.
- 5.7 **Support for Regional and National Priorities.** To support, where possible, regional and national priorities, for example urban renaissance, transportation improvements, environmental initiatives such as increased levels of recycling.

- 5.8 **Support for Local Priorities.** The Borough Council has been consistently investing in its car parks to support the local economy through a phased programme of improvements. The Economic Development strategy sets out broader economic development priorities. Additional funding from the Business Rates Retention Pilot has been earmarked for economic development within the Borough. As a Flood Risk Management Authority, we will maintain our support for the flood defence schemes being developed in the area.
- 5.9 **Availability of External Funding.** In support of the Council's strategic priorities and objectives to monitor and pursue available forms of external partnership and other funding opportunities. Capital schemes are increasingly being funded in full or part by contributions from developers.
- 5.10 The Council's [Local Development Framework Core Strategy](#), adopted in 2007, supports the Government policy that development should contribute towards the community services and infrastructure that are necessary to support that development. The provision of infrastructure by developers as part of a wider project and financial contributions are brought forward by planning conditions or legal agreements on a case by case basis where justified by the application of the statutory tests. These arrangements have brought forward significant provision of and contributions to affordable housing, education facilities, children's play, sports pitches, leisure facilities, highway works and transportation services.
- 5.11 The new TMBC Local Plan will set out development policies and proposals until 2039. The development approach is built upon strategic development options with the capacity to bring forward new infrastructure investment in parallel with planned growth.
- 5.12 The Council is keen to secure a continuing supply of homes at appropriate and in sustainable locations to meet the needs and demands of the Borough. It has a proven track record in fostering growth in a strategically planned way. A range of housing provides balanced support for economic investment by companies looking to locate and expand in the Borough. The supply of new homes and businesses themselves make a contribution towards the Council tax base, potential new homes bonus funding and the potential income from business rates. So long as the level is consistent with planning policies and good practice the Borough Council will seek to secure levels of growth that assist in sustaining important local services.
- 5.13 As a non-stockholding Housing Authority, the Council has a key role to play in the delivery of the strategic housing function covering policy and enabling, private sector housing, and in identifying and addressing housing needs. Contained within a new emerging Housing Strategy the key priorities are likely to be:
- Taking a sustainable approach to housing.
 - Improving housing options and opportunities.
 - Delivering the homes our residents need in the places they are needed.
 - Working in partnership.

- 5.14 **Use of the Council's Assets.** Maintenance of an Asset Management Plan and performance measures for the use of Council owned assets to ensure optimum returns and early release of redundant assets in support of strategic investment priorities and to attract inward investment. An updated Asset Management Plan, covering a four year period, *was approved* by Members in January 2020.
- 5.15 **Consideration of the Impact on the Council's Revenue Budget.** To ensure that capital investment decisions are consistent with the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy, particularly the management of its revenue budget so as to reduce its dependence upon the use of revenue reserves.
- 5.16 **Value for Money.** Each year the Council's external auditor gives an opinion on whether the Authority has put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. All of the Capital Plan processes from identification and selection of schemes, through implementation to subsequent review of completed schemes can contribute to achieving value for money.
- 5.17 **Investment in IT.** In order to improve efficiency and economy and to meet customer aspirations for self-service, particularly via the website; and to enable more flexible and different ways of working to be adopted to support and assist delivery of the Savings and Transformation Strategy. The IT Strategy has been realigned to last until 2023 and mirror the Digital Strategy 2019 to 2023, which has set the direction of travel for the transformation programme.

6 Partnerships

- 6.1 **The Tonbridge and Malling Local Strategic Partnership.** The Local Strategic Partnership is now well established and has attracted a high level of representation from the public, private, voluntary and faith sectors. Its work focuses on addressing key issues of concern locally such as older people's services, the needs of young people, the local economy, affordable housing and public health issues.
- 6.2 **West Kent Partnership.** The Council is a founding member of the [West Kent Partnership](#), formed on a sub-regional rather than district basis, reflecting the degree of economic and social homogeneity across West Kent and a shared community of interest. The Partnership works with other partners in a joined up fashion for the benefit of the local community with a focus on economic development and infrastructure issues. Finance for these initiatives will come in part from the Business Rates Retention Pilot (a partnership comprising all Kent Authorities). A Number of strategic priorities have benefited from the Local Growth Fund.
- 6.3 **Transportation Partnerships.** The Borough Council has consistently sought to influence the quality of transportation services in its area and increase investment in them by the relevant authorities. These authorities include the

local highway authority, (Kent County Council), the strategic road network agency (National Highways), railway operators and Government Departments.

- 6.4 **The Joint Transportation Board**, comprising Members from the Borough and County Councils, provides an overseeing function for the co-ordination of transport investment in the Borough. This ranges from regular reviews of minor improvements, highway maintenance programmes and parking reviews to major investment through key strategies.
- 6.5 **Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)**. The South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP) seeks to promote economic growth across Essex, Kent and East Sussex. Given its size, a federated model of operation has been adopted and the Kent and Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP) is the local body which covers Tonbridge and Malling. A key role for both organisations is to bid for Local Growth Fund monies to fund local projects which support our local economy. TMBC has a key role in identifying and promoting priorities for economic regeneration.
- 6.6 **Community Regeneration Partnerships**. The Council has entered into partnerships which have made a genuine difference to the local community with clear and tangible outcomes.
- 6.7 **The Community Safety Partnership (CSP)**. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 placed an obligation on local authorities and the Police (amongst others) to work together to develop and implement a strategy to tackle crime and disorder in their area. The Tonbridge and Malling CSP vision is: working together to ensure the safety and security of Tonbridge and Malling's residents, businesses and visitors.
- 6.8 **Tonbridge Central Area Action Plan**. The Plan provides the ambition for Tonbridge Town Centre and the context for partnership projects to attract private sector investment in the town centre and secure transport and environmental improvements. A number of key sites are allocated that have potential to deliver town centre and mixed use development that can generate increased vitality into the town centre and the High Street in particular. The Action Plan is to be reviewed as part of the new Local Plan.
- 6.9 **Climate Change Forum**. The Council has recently established a Climate Change Forum to enable: collaborative working and engagement with individuals, community groups, businesses and other partners in Tonbridge and Malling; investigate steps that may be taken by the Forum to work towards achieving net-zero carbon status and towards protecting and enhancing biodiversity; produce a plan of action that is realistic, measurable and deliverable.
- 6.10 **Other Partnerships**. The Council is also part of a partnership that has promoted a bid to the Local Growth Fund to bring forward the much needed improvement to the Leigh Flood Storage area. This is a strategic infrastructure investment required to safeguard many residential and business

properties in the southern part of the Borough and to enable future growth and new development to take place.

7 Implementing and Managing the Capital Strategy

- 7.1 The Council has developed a process for considering and evaluating potential capital schemes as an integral part of its Capital Strategy. This process for selecting schemes is described below.
- 7.2 Schemes, subject to some exceptions listed below, are selected by a phased process. For convenience, the stages have been termed List A, List B and List C, with List A being the approved Capital Plan.
- 7.3 As schemes come forward, they are stored in a list of schemes (List C) for consideration and possible evaluation. These schemes should emerge from, or be designed to achieve, the Council's strategic priorities and objectives along with a set of criteria used to guide the inclusion of new schemes to List C and ultimately the inclusion of schemes on List A. The criteria are: to meet legislative requirements including health and safety obligations; funded from external resources; and reduce revenue expenditure and or generate income. Justification would need to be provided for any schemes that failed to meet one or more of these criteria in order for them to progress through the capital plan process.
- 7.4 From List C, Members select schemes for evaluation. Evaluations will include:
- Specification of the purpose of the scheme and its relevance to the Council's strategic objectives and any wider national policy objectives, the setting of targets by which the success or otherwise of the project can be judged post-implementation.
 - An outline design to facilitate costing and, where appropriate, consultation.
 - Identification of milestones and risks to aid project management and decision making.
 - Consultation, including, where appropriate, public consultation on the scheme's principle.
 - The establishment of a realistic estimated capital cost, incorporating any consultation feedback on design issues.
 - An assessment of the ongoing revenue costs and income generating capacity of the completed scheme including an assessment of the loss of interest from investments and impact on capital renewals provisions.
 - Consideration of partnership and external funding opportunities.
 - Consideration of the time after the end of the project during which the targets and objectives should be reviewed and reported to stakeholders.
 - An equality impact assessment.
- 7.5 The evaluation process will reveal the impact of the project on the revenue base budget, enabling Members to compare the value of the scheme with the financial savings required to pay for it or the impact on the council tax requirement. Schemes successfully passing through evaluation will be included in List B.

- 7.6 The Council is conscious that the process of evaluation is a revenue cost in itself; involving in-house staff and resources or the buying in of external resources and which may draw resources away from the implementation of the approved Capital Plan. In order to minimise the resource impact of evaluation it is important that restraint is exercised in selecting schemes for evaluation. A balance is struck each year between deliverability of the programme and the evaluation of new schemes.
- 7.7 Under the constitutional arrangements adopted by the Council, the evaluated schemes will be reported to Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board which will advise the budget meeting of Cabinet of those schemes deemed suitable to progress to be included on List B. Prior to the budget meeting of Cabinet that advice will be reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee and may be updated. By considering all eligible schemes at the same time, a corporate approach can be taken to selecting those schemes deemed suitable to progress. Prioritisation of such schemes will be informed by the wider financial climate, the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the requirements of the CIPFA Prudential Code. Prioritisation will take account of national and regional priorities, the Council's strategic priorities and objectives and the financial consequences arising from the schemes proposed.
- 7.8 The main exception to this selection procedure is the investment necessary to maintain existing levels of service. This will consist primarily of renewals provisions and some one-off items outside the basic renewal provisions. These provisions are subject to Member scrutiny within List A and application of value for money principles.
- 7.9 Ultimately the selection of new Capital Plan schemes from List B for inclusion in the Capital Plan (List A) will be determined by the Council following recommendations from the Cabinet in the light of advice from the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board and Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
- 7.10 Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board will also review existing Capital Plan (List A) schemes, advising Cabinet of the result. This provides an opportunity to review the budget and progress of existing schemes or even to propose their deferment or deletion.

8 The Capital Plan

- 8.1 The result of the process described in section 7 is the Council's Capital Plan. This is a medium term financial and capital planning document covering a seven-year period (current financial year + six).
- 8.2 Achievement against the Capital Plan is monitored regularly via monthly reports posted on the Council's intranet for use by the Council's staff. At the end of each quarter a statement is considered by the Council's Corporate Management Team and monitoring reports are presented to Members at meetings of the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board.

9 Post Implementation Reviews

- 9.1 It is important that any issues relating to the implementation of a Capital Plan project are addressed as soon as possible; either during the project or shortly after completion. The wider issues of the effectiveness and value for money of a project are addressed through a formal system of post-implementation review. The reviews take place after completion of a project, at a time determined during the evaluation process and are reported to an appropriate Advisory Board. Lessons learnt inform future capital programme decision making and are part of a system of continuous improvement. Monitoring reports are presented annually to the July/September meeting of the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board.

Strategy updated: December **2021**

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18 January 2022

Report of the Director of Planning Housing and Environmental Health

Part 1- Public

Delegated

1 **SCOPING REPORT: PLANNING ENFORCEMENT**

A scoping report looking at the existing Planning Enforcement Plan and associated practices to identify opportunities for improvement.

1.1 **Background**

1.1.1 The Council's adopted Planning Enforcement Plan was first published in 2016 following a report to the Planning and Transportation Advisory Board and subsequent approval by Cabinet. Since that time, a number of associated Protocols have been published seeking to further crystallise best practice around certain specific elements of planning enforcement with a view to improving transparency and consistency in our approach.

1.1.2 This Plan itself sets out the approach the Council will take in relation to breaches of planning control in the Borough, explaining how the Council's planning enforcement service seeks to address breaches of planning control, prioritise its work and communicate with those involved in the investigations.

1.1.3 It has always been the intention for the overarching Plan to be subject to ongoing review to ensure it remains a useful tool both for officers in terms of their day to date ways of working but also for those who come into contact with the Planning Enforcement function.

1.2 **Overview of current practice – updating complainants and Members**

1.2.1 It is appreciated that effective community engagement is a key part of delivering a responsive and accountable planning enforcement service and this one of the focuses of the Plan as published.

1.2.2 The adopted Planning Enforcement Plan (which was first reported to PTAB in July 2016 and subsequently adopted following approval by Cabinet on 04 November 2016) sets out how the team presently communicate with complainants on the progress of our investigations. It states that we will acknowledge complaints, explain what priority it has been given, the name of the investigating officer, keep complainants informed on progress and advise on the final outcome. The Plan

does not contain a specific framework which sets out how and when complainants will be kept informed about progress.

- 1.2.3 In terms of keeping Members updated on the progress with our investigations, they receive a weekly list of open and closed cases. Additional updates by the investigating officers are more ad hoc and usually upon individual request. Again, the Plan in its current form does not set out a framework for when any such updates will be given other than at the start and end of an investigation.

1.3 Scope of the review

- 1.3.1 In the above respects, it is understood that there can be frustrations amongst complainants because they do not consider they are being updated early or often enough during our investigations. Similarly, Members have expressed concerns that outside the weekly lists, they do not receive regular, detailed updates on case progression.

- 1.3.2 Whilst the Plan fully acknowledges the importance of effective community engagement, it is equally important to recognise that the team have limited resources available to them and much of their focus must be on undertaking their investigations in a timely manner.

- 1.3.3 With these factors in mind, it is suggested that the scope of the review focus on the following key aspects:

- Review the schemes of prioritisation contained within the Plan (and as set out at Annexe 1 to this report) to ensure that the resources of the team remain focused on the most significant breaches and review the associated target timescales to ensure they remain reasonable, proportionate, and fit for purpose
- Linked to the above, review internal processes regarding case allocation, prioritisation and workflow management systems (the steps contained within Section 5 of the adopted Planning Enforcement Plan) to ensure that the adopted schemes of prioritisation and associated actions are adhered to in all circumstances
- Review the content of the Plan insofar as it relates to communicating with complainants (including where Members are the complainant) with a view to establishing key milestones within our investigations where they will be updated and to establish efficient internal processes to ensure agreed measures this is met
- Review the content of the Plan insofar as it relates to updating Members on enforcement investigations, with a particular emphasis on whether such updates should be focused on cases where Members have asked to be kept updated (either via the weekly open case list or otherwise) and/or for certain case types linked to the scheme of prioritisation, for example, and to

establish efficient internal processes to ensure agreed measures can be met.

1.4 Legal Implications

1.4.1 Without an effective Planning Enforcement Plan in place the Council's decisions to take, or not to take, enforcement action (including prosecutions) may in future be subject to legal challenge through the Courts.

1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.5.1 The investigating officers all have significant caseloads and no dedicated administrative support beyond that of the planning technical team. Any additional actions implemented resulting from the review of the Plan and the associated activities of the team are likely to have an additional resourcing cost.

1.6 Risk Assessment

1.6.1 The Planning Enforcement Plan reduces the risk at appeal or by judicial review as it clearly sets out the process and timescales by which enforcement complaints will be investigated and progressed

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.

1.7.2 Public sector equality duty 2011

1.8 Policy Considerations

1.8.1 Communications

1.8.2 Customer Contact

1.8.3 Equalities/Diversity

1.8.4 Community

1.8.5 Human Resources

1.9 Recommendations

1.9.1 That Members **ENDORSE** the approach identified in Section 1.3 of the report, to review and update the existing Planning Enforcement Plan.

Background papers:

contact: Emma Keefe

Annexe 1: Adopted schemes of prioritisation

Eleanor Hoyle
Director of Planning Housing and Environmental Health

**Annex 1:
Adopted Schemes of Prioritisation (as contained in Planning Enforcement Plan)**

PLEASE BE AWARE: These are target timescales for the undertaking of an initial site inspection and will be adhered to as far as reasonably practicable in the prevailing circumstances. Following the initial inspection, a subsequent investigation will take place the length of which will be dependent on the complexities of the individual case.

Priority ranking	Case characteristics	Target for initial site inspection	Comments
Top Priority	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work to Listed Buildings. 2. Work to protected trees. 3. Development likely to have a serious impact on health or public safety. 	1 working day	Approach would be to inspect site as soon as possible to prevent irrevocable damage.
High Priority	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development causing significant harm the quality of life of a significant number of local residents. 2. Development with some (less serious or immediately threatening) impact on health or public safety. 3. Development causing potential harm to a Conservation Area or Site of Special Scientific Interest. 4. Development potentially causing significant harm to the landscape. 	5 working days	Cases with these characteristics are inevitably themselves subject to assessment and judgement during triage – may require engagement with outside specialist bodies which may have more appropriate powers of control or enforcement (e.g. Environment Agency, Health and Safety Executive)
Medium Priority	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development which causes limited harm to individuals and/or local communities. 2. Development other than of a wholly minor nature not falling 	10 working days	

	within any other category.		
Other Priority	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minor developments such as sheds, fences. 2. Most advertisements. 3. Other minor breaches of planning conditions. 4. Minor departures from approved plans. 	As soon as resources allow, bearing in mind other priorities	

This prioritisation reflects the perceived urgency and level of harm arising to amenity or to areas or features that benefit from special protection.

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18 January 2022

Report of the Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 PEER CHALLENGE REVIEW

To update Members on the Local Government Association review due to take place from 25 January 2022.

1.1 Background

1.1.1 A Peer Challenge Review involves a team of experienced officers and members spending time with another council as “peers” to provide challenge and share learning. Participating councils receive a comprehensive report and recommendations from the peer team in the capacity as a “critical friend”, and then identify their own action plan to respond.

1.1.2 A Peer Challenge Review was last undertaken at the Borough Council in 2014. The review offered an assessment of strengths and weaknesses and provided recommendations on future changes to address the challenges ahead.

1.1.3 In consultation with the new leadership, it is now felt to be the right time to undertake another Peer Challenge, bringing in some external challenge to help influence and inform new priorities and plans. The focus of this challenge will be on five core elements:

- Local priorities and outcomes
- Organisational and place leadership
- Governance and culture
- Financial planning and management
- Capacity for improvement

1.1.4 As part of the Review, the Council is required to submit a Position Statement, which is attached at Annex 1 for information.

1.1.5 The Peer Team will conduct the initial interviews and focus groups remotely over a five-day period. Interviews will take place with Cabinet, political group leaders, the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny, Management Team, heads of service, partner organisations as well as focus groups with a range of Council employees. At the

end of the five days, there will be a presentation and Q&A session. The Peer Team then send a report to the Council within three weeks. The Council is required to comment on this and publish an action plan. There will be a further session with the Peer Team six months after the action plan is published to assess progress and check recommendations have been considered.

1.2 Legal Implications

1.2.1 N/A (a Peer Challenge is a voluntary review).

1.3 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.3.1 To be assessed as part of the review. The Peer Challenge is provided by the LGA at no charge. As it is being held remotely, there are no associated expenses.

1.4 Risk Assessment

1.4.1 Reputational risk if the outcome of the review is not favourable or the Council fails to undertake recommendations suggested by the Peer Team.

1.5 Policy Considerations

1.5.1 Business Continuity/Resilience

1.5.2 Communications

1.5.3 Community

Background papers:

contact: Gill Fox

Nil

Julie Beilby
Chief Executive

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge 2021/2

Position Statement



December 2021



www.tmbc.gov.uk

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Appendix A: Progress from previous Peer Challenge

Appendix B: Service Manager Structure charts

1. Welcome to Tonbridge and Malling

Welcome to Tonbridge and Malling. We are very proud of our borough – it's a great place to live, work and visit, and it boasts beautiful countryside, historic natural and built heritage and a well-performing economy. However, there are also some very real challenges that we are working hard to address with our partners.

The Borough Council last undertook a Corporate Peer Challenge in 2014, which acted as a catalyst for a number of positive changes within the authority. However, we believe that it is essential that local authorities such as ours continue to welcome external challenge as that is one of the fundamental ways in which we can continue to improve. With the Borough Council having a change in political leadership in recent months, now feels like the right time to undertake a further review in order to help put the council on solid foundations.

Given the current environment, the Borough Council would like this particular challenge to focus on the five core components only. Whilst the Borough Council has a corporate strategy and robust financial planning in place, in the current climate there is always a balance to be struck between our ambitions and our constraints, and we would very much welcome feedback about how we could achieve that in a sustainable manner.

We warmly welcome our LGA Peer Team to Tonbridge and Malling, and look forward to a fruitful working relationship. This Position Statement sets out both a comprehensive picture of our council and the borough we cover, which we hope acts as a useful starting point for the Peer Challenge process.



Cllr Matt Boughton
Leader of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council



Julie Beilby
Chief Executive of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

2. Introduction to Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council

Why we want a Peer Challenge:

The Borough Council has seen first-hand, the tangible benefits of taking part in a Peer Challenge. In 2014, the Peer Challenge Team undertook a review of the Borough Council and were very quickly able to assess strengths and weaknesses and come to some very concise recommendations on future changes that could be made to address the challenges ahead. These recommendations have been embraced and thanks to the work of the Peer Challenge Team, the Borough Council is currently on a relatively stable footing given the current challenges it faces.

However, for a multitude of reasons, it now feels like the right time for the Borough Council to take part in a further Peer Challenge. Firstly, in July 2021, Cllr Matt Boughton became the new Leader of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council following the resignation of Cllr Nicolas Heslop after 9 years as Leader. Cllr Boughton has also brought on board a new Cabinet, with Cllr David Lettington serving as Deputy Leader. With new political leadership at the Borough Council, there is an enthusiasm to bring in some external challenge to help influence and inform new priorities and plans.

Secondly, there have been a number of dramatic changes nationally since 2014 which means that the Borough Council has been (and will likely continue to be) operating within a very different environment. Both adjustments to a post-Brexit world and the considerable disruption caused by the covid-19 pandemic have led to a very challenging couple of years for the Council. It is therefore felt that the timing is right for a further independent assessment that takes stock of progress since the last challenge and helps to give feedback on progress on our priorities, plans and performance.

About the borough:

The Borough of Tonbridge and Malling is situated in the heart of Kent, covering an area of around 93 square miles from the North Downs at Wouldham and Snodland in the north to the town of Tonbridge in the south. It is largely rural with few large settlements, with Tonbridge in the south being the largest and home to around 40,000 residents. The remainder of the borough is dotted with villages and smaller towns.

It is a generally affluent borough, with comparatively low levels of unemployment and good household income levels. Mosaic profiling data from 2016 indicates that the most prevalent groups in Tonbridge and Malling are (Kent figures in brackets):

- Group B ('Prestige Positions' – established families in large, detached homes living upmarket lifestyles) – 17.6% (9.0%)
- Group D ('Domestic Success' – thriving families who are busy bringing up children and following careers) – 15.9% (10.1%)

- Group H – ('Aspiring Homemakers' – younger households settling down in housing priced within their means) - 14.6% (12.7%)
- Group M – ('Family Basics' – families with limited resources who have a budget to make ends meet) - 9.9% (8.8%)

The 2020 mid-year estimate indicates that the population of Tonbridge and Malling is approximately 132,600 people, with key characteristics of this population being:

- It has an average age of 40.7 years, which is slightly lower than the Kent average of 41.2 years.
- There are slightly more female residents (51.1%) than male.
- There is an overall population density of 5.5 persons per hectare (which is higher than the average of 4.5 for Kent as a whole)
- The borough is not particularly diverse in terms of ethnic backgrounds. The most recent data relates to the 2011 census which showed 92.4% of residents describing themselves as White British and 3.5% as another White ethnic group.

Whilst the borough performs well in comparison to the whole of Kent, it does still face a number of key challenges:

- **Ageing population:** Forecasts indicate that the population of Tonbridge and Malling is expected to grow to around 142,900 by 2028. The largest increase will be in people over 65 years of age – growing from 24,500 currently to around 30,000 by 2028 (an increase of roughly a quarter).
- **Pockets of deprivation:** Whilst Tonbridge and Malling borough is generally affluent, this does hide a number of pockets of deprivation within the borough. In the recent IMD2019 data, Trench (Tonbridge), East Malling and Aylesford all have Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) that fall within the 20% most deprived, with a further LSOA in Snodland falling within the 25% most deprived areas in England.
- **Housing delivery:** Our Housing Delivery Test Action Plan (July 2021) demonstrates that in the past 3 years, despite the constraints within the borough, 2,036 homes were delivered, which represents 91% of the Housing Delivery Test requirement of 2,240 homes. As this number has fallen below the 95% threshold, for the first time, the Borough Council is having to produce an Action Plan to identify actions that can help to boost supply. This is a challenge given the housing land supply currently stands at just under 3 years supply.
- **Housing affordability:** In 2020, Median house prices were 11.8 times more than median workplace earnings. To put this in to context, the median housing affordability ratio for England in 2020 was 7.84 and for the South East region it was 9.92.
- **Pressure on infrastructure:** there continues to be pressure on infrastructure as a result of housing growth. The Council's Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2018) highlights a number of short, medium and longer-term investments that are required in order to alleviate some of this pressure.

- **Skills attainment:** whilst the Borough is well-served by good quality education establishments, the skills attainment levels in the borough continue to be a challenge. For example, approximately 7% of the workforce (16–64-year-olds) do not have any qualifications, which is much higher than our West Kent neighbours

Table 1 provides a summary of some of the key statistics relating to Tonbridge and Malling borough:

Table 1: Summary of Key Data about the Borough		
	Tonbridge and Malling	Kent
Population (2020 est.)	132,600	1,589,100
Population Density (2020)	5.5 people per ha	4.5 people per ha
Proportion aged 19 and under (2020 est.)	25.0%	24.2%
Proportion aged 65 and over (2020 est.)	19.0%	20.2%
Average Age (2020)	40.7 years	41.2 years
Number of households (2020)	55,655	685,640
Area	92.71 square miles	1,368 square miles
Satisfaction with the area as a place to live (Happy at Home Index 2020)	Tonbridge 15 th (1 st in SE)	N/A
Halifax Quality of Life survey - UK Best Place to Live (2020)	14 th (5 th in SE)	N/A
Indices of Multiple Deprivation ranking out of 324 (where 1 is most deprived) (2019)	236	N/A
No of LSOAs (2019)		
- In 10% most deprived:	0/72	51/902
- In 20% most deprived:	3/72	132/902
Life Expectancy (2020)		
- Male	80.7 years	79.9 years
- Female	84.7 years	83.4 years
Average resident salary (full-time) (2020)	£689.90 per week	£607.10 per week
Average house price (2021)	£392,914	£362,758
Economically active 16–64-year-olds (2020)	81.4%	78.8%
Number of enterprises (2020)	6,055	64,005
Proportion of businesses that employ under 10 people (2020)	89.3%	90.2%
Top five sectors (by no. of businesses) (2021):		
	17.4%	14.9%

- Professional, Scientific and Technical	15.9%	15.4%
- Construction	10.8%	8.8%
- Business Administration	7.5%	6.3%
- Information and Communication	6.2%	9.0%
- Retail	5.2%	6.6%
- Accommodation and Food Services		

About the Council:

The political leadership of the Council is through the Executive (Cabinet), with managerial leadership comprising the Management Team.

Our Cabinet comprises the Leader of the Council along with 7 other councillors, each with a portfolio, as follows:

Cllr M Boughton – Leader of the Council

Cllr D Lettington – Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure and Deputy Executive Leader

Cllr V Branson – Cabinet Member for Economic Regeneration

Cllr R Betts – Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change

Cllr M Coffin – Cabinet Member for Finance, Innovation and Property

Cllr D Keers – Cabinet Member for Community Services

Cllr P Montague – Cabinet Member for Technical and Waste Services

Cllr K Tanner – Cabinet Member for Housing

Our Management Team comprises the Chief Executive and four Directors:

- Julie Beilby, Chief Executive
- Adrian Stanfield, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Central Services
- Sharon Shelton, Director of Finance and Transformation
- Robert Styles, Director of Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services
- Eleanor Hoyle, Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health

Through its Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), the Council plans its finances over a 10-year horizon. At the time of drafting this document, the Council’s estimated ‘funding gap’, translating into a need for financial savings, is in excess of £2 million. Due to the level of reserves it holds, the Council is in a position where it can afford to deliver the required savings over a more managed period of circa 4 years rather than needing to deliver immediately. Nevertheless, this is still a significant challenge, and the latest savings target is on top of the savings that have already been delivered (approaching £3.5 million) since the inception of the Savings and Transformation Strategy (STS). The Council is presently debt-free having sold its Housing stock in

the early 1990s. However, it is expected that the Council will need to borrow to meet the costs of new capital projects before the end of the MTFS period.

At the present time, on top of the general concerns nationally regarding recovery from the pandemic and responding to the climate crisis, the three biggest risk areas in terms of finances are waste, homelessness and local plan.

- **Waste Contract:** a joint contract with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council that is outsourced to Urbaser. The service has been beset by a number of challenges, particularly in relation to HGV driver recruitment, which has led to the suspension of the green waste collection service.
- **Temporary Accommodation:** the homelessness case load has continued to grow, and it is predicted that the estimated net increased cost in respect of temporary accommodation for 2021/22 will be in the region of £300,000.
- **Progress with the Local Plan:** In November 2021, the Local Plan submitted to the Secretary of State in January 2019 was withdrawn. The Council is now in the process of refreshing the Local Plan Evidence Base and preparing to undertake a new Call for Sites exercise, which invites landowners and those with an interest in land to promote sites for inclusion in the Local Plan. This work is expected to cost in the region of £650-750,000 over the next three years, with the new Plan scheduled to be submitted to the Secretary of State in the first half of 2023 and adoption expected during 2024.

The following table provides a summary of key data about the council:

Table 2: Summary of key data about TMBC	
Budget 2021/22 total service expenditure	£20,728,250
2021/22 gross expenditure budget	£91,970,466
2021/22 Council Tax average Band D charge	£219.50
Number of staff	255 (221 FTE)
Number of wards*	24
Number of Councillors*	54
Political Make Up (as of Dec 2021)	
- Conservative	37
- Liberal Democrat	9
- Green	4
- Independent	3
- Labour	1

*The Borough Council is currently subject to a Boundary Review by the LGBCE. They have proposed a reduction to 44 councillors across 19 wards.

3. Understanding of the Place and Priority Setting

In February 2020, the Borough Council launched a new Corporate Strategy, outlining its vision, values and priorities for the period 2020-2023. The direction of the strategy was informed by government expectations, local needs (as illustrated by socio-economic data), the views of partner organisations and the views of councillors and senior officers.

The Council's Vision reflects its role and purpose within the local community, and is designed to convey what the Council is striving to achieve through its work. This vision is:

“To continue to be a financially sustainable Council with strong leadership that delivers valued services, a commitment to delivering innovation and change to meet the needs of our Borough”

To underpin this vision, the Borough Council has a focus on the following four values and priorities:

- i) **Achieving Efficiency** - focusing on ensuring good value for money, continuously reviewing how our services are provided and funded, focusing our available resources where they will have most beneficial impact for our communities, and maximising commercial opportunities.
- ii) **Embracing Effective Partnership Working** - achieving more by working and engaging effectively with a wide range of local partners from the private, public, voluntary and community sectors.
- iii) **Valuing our Environment and Encouraging Sustainable Growth** - keeping our towns, villages and countryside clean and well maintained, planning for our future homes and jobs, led by our Local Plan, driving investment in economic regeneration and infrastructure and meeting the challenges of climate change.
- iv) **Innovation** – developing more cultural change, innovative and efficient ways to deliver our services through the use of improved systems and technologies guided by our recently adopted Digital Strategy.

Within a matter of weeks after this Corporate Strategy was adopted, the nation was faced with the devastating impact of the coronavirus pandemic. This clearly had an impact on our priorities in the short term, and as such the Borough Council produced a Year One Addendum to the Corporate Plan that reflected the need to provide a framework for working towards our own recovery in June 2020. The addendum was underpinned by three themes:

- Review - how did we respond to the pandemic emergency, and what have we learnt from this
- Re-orientation – how might we re-position the Council's finances and operations to be fit for purpose in the “new normal”

- Recovery – how to work with others to encourage recovery in our communities and economy, in adapting to both the transition period and into the “new normal”

These were considered on a thematic basis, loosely aligning with the KCC Recovery Plan, but amended to greater reflect the Borough Council’s roles and responsibilities within the recovery. This addendum was reviewed in June 2021.

With the immediate response to the coronavirus pandemic winding down, the impact that the pandemic has had on the Council and more widely across the borough, and with the arrival of a new Leader of the Council, emphasis is now on refreshing our Corporate Plan and establishing a framework that helps us to prioritise resources and deliver actions that benefit everyone living and working in the borough.

This process has already started with an initial consultation exercise with local residents which took place in October 2021. In total, there were 284 responses to the consultation, with the aggregate scores for all questions revealing the top five most important things for respondents are:

- A Council that listens
- Protection of the countryside
- Good facilities and infrastructure
- Parks and open spaces
- A reliable waste collection service.

Other issues that scored highly were keeping the borough safe, tackling fly-tipping and investing in town centres.

4. Leadership of Place

Partnership working across public sector bodies in Tonbridge and Malling is well-established and a collaborative approach is taken on a range of issues that are critical in addressing our challenges.

Tonbridge and Malling sits predominantly within a three-tier local authority structure (County, Borough and Parish), although the urban area of Tonbridge is unparished. In order to ensure effective and collaborative working across this structure, and with other key stakeholders, there are a number of established groups that are in place, including:

Kent-wide Partnerships

Kent Council Leaders is a high-level strategic group made up of the democratic Leaders of all Kent's local authorities, supported by their Chief Executives. Members of the group have signed up to the 'Kent Recommitment' and are working towards shared priorities, new initiatives and joint working - <http://www.kentcouncilleaders.org.uk/leaders/> . **Joint Kent Chiefs** is the strategic management group for Kent, which supports and underpins the Kent Council Leaders group - <http://www.kentcouncilleaders.org.uk/jointkentchiefs/> . The Borough Council has played a strong role in these two groups, which have been key in helping to address key strategic issues facing our borough and the county.

The **Kent Estates Partnership** was established in 2013 to support the delivery of the One Public Estate Programme. The partnership has 26 partners with representatives from Local Authorities, KALC, Health Partners, Kent Universities, Blue Light Services and Central Government. Since 2016, the partnership has been chaired by the Chief Executive of TMBC.

The **Kent & Medway Economic Partnership** was set up in 2013 and is an economic partnership which aims to drive forward economic growth and prosperity throughout the region. It is governed by a board that is chaired by the private sector, with membership drawn from business, local government, further and higher education. It is facilitated by Kent County Council and is one of four federated partnerships which comprise the **South East Local Enterprise Partnership**. The Borough Council has been a key member of this group, not only ensuring investment into the borough, for example securing Local Growth Funding for Tonbridge High Street, Leigh Flood Storage Area, NIAB East Malling Research, but also participating in joint lobbying and support for Kent as a whole.

Sub-regional Partnerships

The **West Kent Partnership** is a long-established public-private partnership that works towards improving the economy of West Kent – defined by the three local authority areas of Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks. The partnership has successfully delivered a wide range of economic initiatives over the years, including the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network,

West Kent LEADER Programme, West Kent Business Support Programme, and more recently the West Kent Kick Start Programme. Work is currently being undertaken to refresh the 'Case for West Kent', which will be used as a key tool in supporting the case for further investment into the area.

The **Medway Flood Partnership** is a hugely effective vehicle for the delivery of flood mitigation works across the River Medway Flood Plain. Administered and Chaired by the Environment Agency, the partnership also benefits from input from local authorities, parish councils, utilities providers and community and voluntary organisations. The Borough Council has taken a strong leadership role in the delivery of the Leigh Expansion and Hildenborough Enhancement Scheme, especially through political lobbying, accessing of external funding and the allocation of its own resources to ensure the scheme comes to fruition.

Borough-wide Partnerships

The **Tonbridge and Malling Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)** provides a strategic and co-ordinating umbrella for partnership working within the borough. It works to strengthen the connection between public sector agencies, local government, the voluntary and community sector, businesses and local residents. The aims and objectives of the LSP are to:

- exercise a strategic leadership role, co-ordinating services locally and securing improved outcomes for local people, including increasing the opportunities for joint service provision.
- promote or improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of the borough, improving public services, developing strong, sustainable economies and healthy, safe communities.

The new Leader of Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council chairs the partnership meetings and is currently undertaking a review of the LSP, with consultation of members currently underway.

The **Tonbridge and Malling Community Safety Partnership (CSP)** works to tackle issues such as anti-social behaviour and crime, as well as support victims of domestic abuse. The Borough Council is the lead authority and works with a range of organisations including Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, Kent County Council, West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group and local Housing Associations. The partnership meets on a weekly basis, chaired by the Council's Safer and Stronger Communities Manager, and are a vital tool in tackling anti-social behaviour, supporting vulnerable people and victims of crime, and sharing essential information between agencies to support safeguarding work. In addition, a Safeguarding Officer Study group meets on a regular basis to allow representatives from across Council services to discuss Serious Case reviews and any published Domestic Homicide reviews, along with any local safeguarding issues or internal staff training issues.

The **Joint Transportation Board** has a role to review the progress and out-turn of works programmes, review the performance of Kent Highway Services in the Borough and be a forum

for consultation between KCC and TMBC on policies, plans and strategies related to highways, road traffic and public transport. Recent topics of discussion have been the Tonbridge Town Wide 20mph Zone Trial and proposed traffic calming measures in Upper Haysden Lane. It is currently chaired by the Deputy Leader of TMBC.

In February 2021, the Borough Council established a **Climate Change Forum** to enable wider engagement on climate change issues, and to drive forward a response to the climate emergency and to support the delivery of the Climate Change Strategy Action Plan. This forum has a wide representation and is chaired by the Cabinet member for Environment and Climate Change.

Local Partnerships

The **Parish Partnership Panel** is a vehicle for the exchange of information, consultation and a structured dialogue between the Borough Council and the Parish Councils in the Borough. Recent topics of debate have included road safety, waste services and the Climate Change Strategy. The group has recently been subject to an Overview and Scrutiny Committee review in order to further improve the working relationship. This has led to a number of suggested changes, including the increased frequency of meetings and the removal of standing items.

In addition, to cover the unparished area of Tonbridge, the **Tonbridge Forum** has been established to create a separate vehicle for the exchange of information, consultation and a structured dialogue between the Borough Council and those Tonbridge-based organisations with a shared interest in enhancing the well-being of the town through the identification of problems and joint-working towards solutions. Like the Parish Partnership Panel, the Forum has also recently been reviewed. This has led to suggestions such as increasing community representation and ensuring greater two-way discussion on issues.

The Borough Council provides leadership, guidance and support to a range of **Community Partnerships and organisations** across the Borough. Borough Councillors are appointed to over 25 outside bodies each year, ranging from Age Concern to the Snodland Partnership. In addition, there are a number of groups that are co-ordinated and supported by officers, including:

- **Tonbridge and Malling Seniors (TAMS) Forum** – is an established group which seeks to represent the views of senior people in the borough aged 50 and over. The forum has a Management Committee which meets regularly to organise events and help promote the needs of older residents. Up until recently the forum was chaired by a Borough Councillor, but continues to be supported by the Council to help run the group, administer meetings and support the annual Seniors Information and Advice Day.
- **East Malling Partnership, Snodland Community Development Partnership (ME6)** and the **TN10 Partnership (in Trench, Tonbridge)** all aim to support residents by tackling issues of inequality in some of our most deprived wards. Each group is made up of voluntary and community sector representatives along with the Borough

Council (Councillors and Officers), local Housing Associations, Children's Centre and local school representatives. Work undertaken by these partnerships includes supporting food banks, information and advice days, jobs/career support, social activities, volunteering, physical and mental health support and community cohesion projects.

- **TM Youth Forum** – represents the views of young people aged 11 to 18 who live in Tonbridge and Malling. The forum has two types of membership – full member (attending meetings and events and get involved in projects and campaigns) and community member (consulted on projects and campaigns but not attend meetings).

5. Organisational Leadership and Governance

A considerable strength of the Council, over many years, has been the strong leadership given by both the Leader and Chief Executive, supported by constructive relationships between our Councillors and Officers, and the mutual respect which exists between the two. This relationship is underpinned by the Council's Constitution, which underpins the decision-making process and codes of conduct for both Councillors and officers.

Following the Local Government Act 2000 coming into effect, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council adopted the 'Leader and Cabinet' model in 2002. This model currently consists of:

- a) Full Council of 54 Members which approves and adopts the budget and key policies within which Cabinet decisions are taken. Council appoints members of committees/Cabinet Advisory Boards and holds them and the Cabinet to account for the decisions they take.
- b) Cabinet which comprises 8 Members, including the Leader of the Council. They are responsible for most day-to-day decisions. Each Member has responsibility for particular service areas, as referenced in Section 2.
- c) Councillors' overriding duty is to the whole community, but they are democratically accountable to all the residents of their ward. Their role is to represent the residents of their ward, share in the policy and budgetary decisions of the Full Council, suggest policy improvements, and scrutinise the Cabinet's policy proposals and their implementation.

Management Team and Service Managers support the Cabinet and individual board members meet regularly with senior officers responsible for aspects of their portfolios.

In addition, under the terms of the Constitution, a number of regulatory and other Committees are in place. These have delegated authority to carry out and/or oversee specific duties and functions of the Council. These are:

- Planning Committees (Areas 1, 2 and 3)
- Audit Committee
- General Purposes Committee
- Joint Standards Committee
- Standards Hearing Panel
- Licensing and Appeals Committee
- Licensing and Appeals Panel
- Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Overview and Scrutiny Committee has a particularly important role within the Council's governance structure as it provides challenge to the Executive and Management Team helping to drive improvement. The committee very much acts as a 'critical friend' to the Council and can look at any area that is causing concern or is an important issue for local residents.

The Borough Council also operates a number of advisory boards which feed recommendations into Cabinet, and help it to develop and implement policy. The number of advisory boards has been streamlined over the past ten years to better reflect the priorities of the Council. At present there are 5 advisory boards covering the following topics:

- Communities and Housing
- Economic Regeneration
- Finance, Innovation and Property
- Planning and Transportation
- Street Scene and Environment

The advisory boards, which each have 16 non-executive councillors (politically balanced), cover a wide range of issues and ensure a local focus to the work of the Council.

There are many other opportunities for non-executive members to inform and influence decision-making. Councillors are welcome to attend and express their views at any meeting of the Cabinet, Advisory Boards, Overview and Scrutiny Committee or any other committee.

Induction training is given to all Members following local elections, including by-elections covering the array of Council Services. This is supplemented with training sessions taking place on a regular basis for all Councillors to help them to take an active role in discussions. A recent example of training provided for Councillors was a session on 'How to evidence our planning decisions' which took place in November 2021. Other recent sessions have included, 'risk management' and 'planning fundamentals'.

Our Strategic Risk Register is a 'live' document which is updated as often as required by the Management Team and reported in to Audit Committee for full consideration. In addition, a full risk analysis accompanies the budget proposals for the year ahead when being considered by Cabinet, and any new proposals (particularly significant corporate projects) are accompanied by a risk commentary as a matter of course.

There are many examples where the Council has shown strong leadership in recent years by making often difficult decisions that were required in order to support its residents. The following is an overview of a select sample:

Navigating the Council and the Borough through the pandemic - Vaccination Centre in Tonbridge - <https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/news/article/9/the-angel-centre-in-tonbridge-to-become-latest-large-scale-vaccination-centre-in-kent>

Moving towards a Special Expenses Scheme in 2016 that has created greater Council Tax fairness across the borough - <https://democracy.tmbc.gov.uk/documents/s28546/Annex%2014a%20Special%20Expenses%20Policy.pdf> – which has subsequently gone out to consultation again in recent months - <https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/news/article/17/consultation-opens-on-fairer-charging>

Transfer of operations at Leybourne Lakes Country Park to the Tonbridge and Malling Leisure Trust - <https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/news/article/34/award-winning-park-transfers-to-leisure-trust>

Securing the delivery of the Leigh Flood Storage Area Expansion following severe flooding in the borough in 2013/14 – the Borough Council not only allocated a funding contribution of £500,000, but has been central in lobbying the Local Enterprise Partnership, and accessing Local Growth Fund (LGF) funding - <https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/news/article/31/project-underway-to-protect-homes-from-future-flooding-in-tonbridge-and-hildenborough>

6. Capacity to Deliver

In this section, an overview is provided of both the staffing and financial capacity of the Borough Council in order to help provide a picture of its capacity to deliver.

Staffing Capacity:

The Borough Council has a relatively **small workforce of only 255 employees (221 FTE)**, many of whom are long-serving. The fact that the organisation is so small means that resources have to be carefully managed, and yet at the same time requires our existing workforce to be developed in ways that are responsive to future change and reflect the need to invest in the delivery of our key priorities.

Since the start of the pandemic, the authority's approach to HR strategic planning has, of necessity, been agile. The HR Strategy no longer exists as an annual planning event. Instead, the HR Manager attends the weekly meetings of Management Team to support 'real time' decisions regarding the ever-changing needs of the deployment and development of staff, as well as changes to the Council's permanent staffing establishment.

Where possible, members of Management Team submit draft reports on proposed temporary and permanent staffing issues which include financial information prepared by a member of the accountancy team. One of the key principles is that, in order to meet the requirements of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, any proposals should not entail growth unless absolutely necessary, and should only be funded from existing budgets or reserves. Management Team consider the extent to which the proposals address the needs of the Corporate Plan and where approval is given, authority to implement permanent establishment changes is sought from members of the General Purposes Committee in line with the Council's constitution. In urgent situations, prior approval to initiate recruitment for a post is sought from the Chair and Vice Chair of the General Purposes Committee.

The authority's main HR initiative at the current time is the trialling and development of more hybrid working arrangements to support the objective of the Climate Change Strategy to reduce carbon emissions; the Medium-Term Financial Strategy to seek to optimise the potential of the contribution of the eventual reduction in office space to achieve savings, as well as the need to ensure that significant numbers of employees remain well and are not absent at any one time due to sickness. This work is driven via a multi-disciplinary Officer Study Group whose recommendations are considered by Management Team and, where relevant Members at General Purposes Committee.

Staff Appraisals are undertaken on an annual basis both to assess individual performance and ensure that the delivery of our key priorities is given emphasis. Training needs are identified, and staff are given the opportunity to raise any capacity concerns with their line managers. Any issues that are identified are referred to Management Team. These annual appraisals are underpinned by regular one-to-one meetings between employees and their managers. The Council has a centralised training budget to ensure the Council can meet the professional development needs of staff for professional qualifications and continued professional development in all services across the Council.

All staff have access to the Council's online e-learning system, the number of online courses available to staff continues to grow year on year (currently over 200) as new courses are added to the online library, courses are regularly updated in line with changes in legislation. The Council also has a new E-Learning System provided by Learning Nexus due to launch in January 2022. Now that the Council has moved into the transitional working arrangements it is expected that staff will continue to work with a far greater degree of flexibility in terms of their work location. These new ways of working will likely mean that there is going to be a greater need for online training in the future with a reduction in face-to-face training. Management training has been identified as a priority to help managers manage their staff remotely now that they have teams which can consist of a mixture of remote, hybrid and roving workers as defined under the Council's transitional working arrangements. Courses for staff to help maximise their productivity under the new ways of working is also a priority.

Over the years, the Borough Council has sought to **deliver quality services** in the most efficient ways. For example, currently the Council's internal audit and counter-fraud function is delivered in partnership with Kent County Council, and whilst the Borough Council has an Economic Regeneration team, a number of aspects of the Economic Regeneration agenda (chiefly rural regeneration, skills development, worklessness and business support) are delivered through the West Kent Partnership, which covers the local authority areas of Tonbridge and Malling, Tunbridge Wells and Sevenoaks – www.westkentpartnership.org.uk

In addition, the Council constantly **reviews** shared arrangements to ensure they continue to deliver value for money. Up until recently the Borough Council shared a Building Control service with Sevenoaks District Council, however this has now ended, culminating in a saving of approximately £25,000 per annum.

The Council also has a strong track record of harnessing community **volunteering** to help deliver local priorities. In addition to the community partnership referred to in Section 4, the waste and recycling team work closely with the local community to tidy-up their neighbourhoods. This includes providing groups, schools and residents with all the equipment they need to run a clear-up operation.

Financial Capacity:

As mentioned in Section 7, our external auditors provide an annual assessment of our financial management and value for money, and our insurers undertake period risk management assessments into specific areas.

The Council maximises the value of Section 106 contributions from developers for a range of local improvements, including public open space and sports and recreation facilities. In the Infrastructure Funding Statement (December 2020), a summary of obligation secured by s.106 during 2019/20 is provided, which highlights that in addition to 188 affordable housing units being secured and 134 school places being facilitated, £385,776 was secured for the provision or enhancement of medical practices, and £266,480 was secured for public open space provision. Through this resource, a range of projects have been (part) funded including improvements to the public realm and linkages across Tonbridge Town Centre (including a new bridge at Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground), the purchase of new temporary accommodation, and a new café/water sports area at Leybourne Lakes Country Park, which will open in Summer 2022.

More recently, the Borough Council has just secured significant s.106 contributions from the new Panattoni Park Aylesford development, which is scheduled to complete in 2023 and will support improvements to sustainable transport and biodiversity initiatives.

In addition, the Council also has a strong track record of bringing in external funding into the borough in order to enable delivery. For example, Business Rates Retention Pilot and Business Rates Pool funding are both being put to good use to fund the economic regeneration agenda, support the development of the Local Plan and carry out improvements at Tonbridge Castle. The Council has also successfully helped to secure Local Growth Fund grant funding for a wide range of important infrastructure projects in the borough, including:

- Tonbridge High Street Improvements
- Junction 4 M20 Upgrade
- Leigh Flood Storage Area and Hildenborough Embankment
- East Malling Advanced Technology Horticultural Zone
- West Kent Sustainable Transport Programme – improvements to Snodland and Tonbridge Stations.

In addition, the inclusion of Borough Green Gardens within the Garden Communities Programme has opened the door to additional resources that support the progression of the site.

7. Financial Planning and Viability

The Borough Council has a proven track record of managing its finances to ensure financial sustainability, which is a key strength in the organisation at a time of uncertainty regarding government funding, challenges in relation to the waste contract, Local Plan and the response to climate change, as well as disruption caused by the covid-19 pandemic, which combined add up to a significant financial challenge.

The financial environment that the Borough Council works within, including the key risks, can be found in our Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). This enables the Borough Council to take a measured and controlled approach to budgetary pressures rather than a knee-jerk reaction. Our external auditor (Grant Thornton UK LLP) concluded, following the 2020 audit, that in all significant respects the Council put in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources for the year ending 31 March 2020.

Since it was introduced in 2003, the MTFS has been key in protecting the key services that are provided by the Council. However, as a result of the unprecedented impact of the pandemic, along with matters referred to above, there are now significant savings required by April 2026 in order to preserve the integrity of our financial plans. Indeed, it has never been more important for the Council to focus firmly on the delivery of necessary savings.

A recent update report to Cabinet on the MTFS (October 2021) has set this out clearly. The funding gap (representing savings that have yet to be identified and delivered over the course of the strategy) has increased to **over £2 million**. This is a daunting funding gap but one that has been broken down in to 5 tranches in order to ensure the savings are met within the timeframe:

Tranche 1 - £100,000 to be achieved by April 2022

Tranche 2 - £350,000 to be achieved by April 2023

Tranche 3 - £400,000 to be achieved by April 2024

Tranche 4 - £650,000 to be delivered by April 2025

Tranche 5 - £650,000 to be delivered by April 2026.

In order to deliver the required savings, the Council has developed a Savings and Transformation Strategy (STS). This strategy sets out a measured structure and framework for delivering the necessary savings and transformation contributions through a series of 'themes'. Each theme has a deliverable target within a timeframe, although it does not itemise exactly how each theme will meet its target – this is being undertaken in more detail by the relevant Directors and Service Managers, in discussion with portfolio-holders.

Recognising the urgency of the situation and that 'business as usual' is not an option, discussions regarding the prioritisation of services is currently underway between Cabinet and Management Team. Significant progress has already been made on getting towards the target set out in Tranche 1, with work underway to identify the savings required in Tranches 2-5.

8. Area of Focus for the Challenge

Whilst in our previous Corporate Peer Challenge in 2014, the Borough Council requested that the topic of 'economic regeneration' be an area of focus, on this occasion it is felt that the direction of this particular challenge should remain focussed on the five core elements:

- Local priorities and outcomes
- Organisational and place leadership
- Governance and culture
- Financial planning and management
- Capacity for improvement.

The reasons for this are that, firstly, the recommendations of the previous challenge regarding the economic regeneration agenda have been delivered and it is now a well-established part of the Council. Secondly, given the fundamental obstacles that the council faces it is imperative that there is a concerted focus on the overall DNA of the organisation in order to ensure that, corporately, it is able to manage and work through what is proving to be an extremely challenging period in Local Government, and benefit from the advice and guidance of the Peer Challenge Team.

9. Sharing of Successful Practice

This section contains a number of examples of successful practice that we think will be of help to other councils. We would be happy for these to be shared with other councils through their corporate peer challenges and the LGA innovative councils database.

New Approach to Making the Council more Accessible

The Borough Council has made a strategic decision to make digital the default means of accessing council services and support in order to improve efficiency and effectiveness. One of the key challenges in meeting this objective was that our existing website was not sufficiently set-up to provide a straightforward digital experience. The site had evolved over a number of years to become cumbersome and difficult to navigate.

Following feedback from local residents, the Borough Council went about the task of transforming the website, with a range of much improved features. For more information go to <https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/news/article/20/new-website-to-offer-better-digital-services>

New Working Arrangements

As part of the Council's Brexit resilience measures, the Council moved from a static, desk-based model to flexible working arrangements that enabled staff to work remotely or in a hybrid environment. This new set-up enabled the Council to operate efficiently and quickly as the covid-19 pandemic evolved, and ensured a strong continuity in public service provision.

In recent months, the arrangements have evolved further as the Council has moved to a predominantly cloud-based solution which has not only increased resilience but also delivered cost efficiencies.

Covid Response and Recovery

Whilst the above measures have undoubtedly enhanced the Borough Council's resilience and continuity during the coronavirus pandemic, the Borough Council has also undertaken a considerable amount of work to ensure that local residents and businesses were as well-protected as possible. Measures included:

- Close collaboration between Finance, Business Rates and Economic Regeneration to ensure the effective distribution of just under £40m of business grants between April 2020 and October 2021. Discretionary funding was aligned with mandatory funding to ensure consistency of approach.
- Support for the establishment of a county-wide business support helpline to ensure easy access to help for businesses in the borough. This was set up at a time (March 2020) when the national helpline had insufficient capacity to meet demand. Take up in the borough was high, with nearly 2,000 enquiries from Tonbridge & Malling businesses for the period up until October 2021.

- The setting up of a special community support helpline to provide supplies to residents who are socially isolated or in urgent need of help. In order to ensure effective use of resources, the Council employed Civil Enforcement Officers to help provide these food supplies to older and vulnerable residents across the borough, with over 150 distributed in the first couple of months of the pandemic alone.

Christmas 2021 – Festival and Castlemas

The Borough Council has a strong track record when it comes to events as a means of enhancing the economic vitality of our towns – be it helping to facilitate community events, ensuring safety and compliance or direct delivery. For Christmas 2021, the Borough Council worked closely with the Tonbridge Rotary to support the Christmas Festival and lights switch on 28 November 2021, which saw approximately 12,000 people visit over the course of the event. The Council also used Welcome Back Funding to support the delivery of a brand-new event ‘Castlemas’ at Tonbridge Castle which ran from 10-19 December 2021 and comprised a range of daytime and evening entertainment. It has received a lot of positive reviews including - <https://www.kentlive.news/whats-on/reviews/visited-tonbridge-castlemas-opening-day-6336802>

Green Business Grants Scheme

The Borough Council established a new Green Business Grants Scheme in July 2021 in order to help contribute towards the aims and objectives of the Climate Change Strategy and the Economic Recovery Strategy. The scheme is focussed on supporting growth in our local green business sector, but also interventions that help to reduce the carbon footprint of our businesses across the borough. It has been pitched to add value to the Kent-wide Lower carbon Across the South East (LoCASE) scheme. A first round closed in September 2021, with 19 proposals allocated funding amounting to just over £75,000. A second round will open up in early 2022.

Since the scheme has been established, three other local authorities in the South East have approached the Council about the scheme with a view to using the template of the project for their own areas.

Aylesford Jobs Market

In recent years, the Borough Council has led the delivery of a jobs event in Aylesford. The creation of this event has been in response to socio-economic deprivation data highlighting the need for additional support in this part of the borough. By working in partnership with the DWP, the Royal British Legion Industries (RBLI) and local Registered Social Landlords, the event has now become an established event in the calendar.

Despite a short hiatus due to the covid-19 pandemic, the jobs market took place again in October 2021. 25 local businesses and training providers, all looking to recruit new staff or students, took part in the event, with just over 100 local people attending. On this occasion, numbers were about half of pre-pandemic levels due to venue capacity constraints, but the feedback from all concerned has been overwhelmingly positive.

10. Key Documents

Document	Link
Annual Audit Letter – December 2020	https://democracy.tmbc.gov.uk/documents/s51191/Annex%201%20-%20Letter.pdf
Budget Book and Budget Summary Table 2021/22	https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/downloads/download/107/tmbc-budget-2021-22 https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/downloads/download/106/budget-summary-2021-22
Climate Change Strategy 2020-2030	https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/downloads/file/1793/tmbc-climate-change-strategy
Climate Change Strategy Second Year Action Plan	https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/downloads/file/1345/tmbc-climate-change-action-plan-2021
Corporate Strategy 2020-2023	https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/downloads/file/1767/corporate-strategy-2020-to-2023
Corporate Strategy First Year Addendum	https://democracy.tmbc.gov.uk/documents/s55240/Appendix%201_Corporate%20Plan_Addendum_Update.pdf
Digital Strategy 2019-2023	https://democracy.tmbc.gov.uk/documents/s39048/Digital%20Strategy.pdf
Economic Recovery Strategy 2021-2023	https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/downloads/file/1328/economic-recovery-strategy-2021-2023
Medium Term Financial Strategy	The latest version is not on the website yet as it is dynamic. The last published version is in the budget book referenced above which was approved by Full Council in Feb 2021 (page 9 – 13). Cabinet on 12 October 2021 updated the MTFs, and it has further moved since.
Saving and Transformation Strategy	The latest version is not on the website yet as it is dynamic. The last published version is in the budget book referenced above which was approved by Full Council in Feb 2021 (page 14 - 16).
Statement of Accounts	https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/downloads/file/1856/tonbridge-and-malling-borough-council-statement-of-accounts-2021
Strategic Risk Register	Reported to the Audit Committee – last update was 27 September 2021 - https://democracy.tmbc.gov.uk/documents/s56637/Annex%201.pdf . Next update will be January 2022.

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Agenda Item 11

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 12

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 13

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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