



TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE SERVICES

Chief Executive

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

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

3 October 2022

To: MEMBERS OF THE FINANCE, REGENERATION AND PROPERTY
SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE
(Copies to all Members of the Council)

Dear Sir/Madam

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee to be held in the Council Chamber, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill on Tuesday, 11th October, 2022 commencing at 7.30 pm.

Members of the Committee are required to attend in person. Other Members may attend in person or 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 for the Conduct of Meetings 5 - 6

PART 1 - PUBLIC

2. Apologies for Absence

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| 3. | Notification of Substitute Members | 7 - 8 |
| 4. | 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

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| 5. | Minutes | 11 - 14 |
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To confirm as a correct record the Notes of the meeting of the Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee held on 26 July 2022.

Matters for recommendation to the Cabinet

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| 6. | Financial Planning and Control | 15 - 42 |
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The report brings together information on three key budget areas – salaries, major operational income streams and investment income. The performance of the key budget areas, together with approved variations to the revenue budget and areas identified through revenue budget monitoring are then summarised to provide an indicative overall budget position for the year. The report also updates Members on capital expenditure and variations that have been agreed in relation to the capital plan.

Due to the escalating levels of inflation, Members are invited to consider whether an in-year review of some fees and charges should be recommended to Cabinet.

Matters submitted for Information

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| 7. | Revenues and Benefits Performance | 43 - 46 |
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A report detailing performance information in respect of council tax, business rates, council tax reduction and housing benefits.

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| 8. | Work Programme 2022/23 | 47 - 48 |
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The Work Programme setting out matters to be scrutinised during 2022/23 is attached for information. Members can suggest future items by liaising with the Chair of the Committee.

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| 9. | Urgent items | |
|----|--------------|--|

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

Matters for consideration in Private

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|-----|-------------------------------|---------|
| 10. | Exclusion of Press and Public | 49 - 50 |
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The Chairman to move that the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting during consideration of any items the publication of which would disclose exempt information.

PART 2 - PRIVATE

11. Urgent items 51 - 52

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 R I B Cannon (Chair)
Cllr F G Tombolis (Vice-Chair)

Cllr M C Base
Cllr P Boxall
Cllr T Bishop
Cllr C Brown
Cllr M O Davis
Cllr Mrs T Dean
Cllr D Harman

Cllr N J Heslop
Cllr M A J Hood
Cllr D Lettington
Cllr B J Luker
Cllr H S Rogers
Cllr C J Williams

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-ugSzxiAPfw/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.

Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee – Substitute Members (if required)					
	Conservative	Liberal Democratic	Green	Ind. Kent Alliance	Note
1	Roger Dalton	Frani Hoskins	Anna Cope		
2	Nick Foyle	Anita Oakley	April Clark		
3	Denis King	Roger Roud	Nick Stapleton		
4	James Lark	Michell Tatton			
5	Georgina Thomas	David Thornwell			
Members of Cabinet cannot be appointed as a substitute to this Committee					

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Declarations of interest

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TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

FINANCE, REGENERATION AND PROPERTY SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Tuesday, 26th July, 2022

Present: Cllr R I B Cannon (Chair), Cllr F G Tombolis (Vice-Chair), Cllr P Boxall, Cllr T Bishop, Cllr C Brown, Cllr M O Davis, Cllr D Harman, Cllr N J Heslop, Cllr M A J Hood, Cllr B J Luker and Cllr H S Rogers

In attendance: Councillor M A Coffin was also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No. 15.21.

Councillors Mrs S Bell, M D Boughton, V M C Branson, S A Hudson, D Keers, Mrs A S Oakley, W E Palmer, M R Rhodes, J L Sergison and K B Tanner participated via MS Teams and joined the discussion when invited to do so by the Chair in accordance Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M C Base and C J Williams

PART 1 - PUBLIC

FRP 22/1 NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute Members nominated for this meeting.

FRP 22/2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

FRP 22/3 MINUTES

As this was first meeting of the Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee there were no minutes to be considered.

FRP 22/4 WORK PROGRAMME 2022/2023

In advance of the meeting, Members had been asked to submit suggestions to be considered for inclusion in the Work Programme for 2022/23. The following suggestions were received:

- Future occupation of retail units on Station Approach, Tonbridge
- Future of Temporary Accommodation units, Pembury Road, Tonbridge

- Medium Term Financial Strategy and Savings and Transformation Strategy and Cabinet proposals on how to address the funding deficit
- Revenue Estimates
- Capital Plan
- Closure of Tonbridge Post Office

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

FRP 22/5 BUSINESS RATES LOCAL SCHEME DECISION

The report of the Director of Finance and Transformation provided details of a new discretionary rate relief scheme for 2022/23 to replace Transitional Relief and Supporting Small Business Relief which had both ceased on 31 March 2022.

This new relief was introduced to help businesses who would have still qualified for the previous schemes if they had continued into 2022/23, as the revaluation had been delayed from 1 April 2022 to 1 April 2023.

Members had regard to the main issues, the financial and value for money considerations and the legal implications detailed in the report and sought clarity around potential levels of fraud and funding to support the Borough Council in administering this new grant. In response, Members were advised that the risk of fraud remained very low and the Borough Council had robust measures in place. With regard to additional funding, it was reported that new burdens funding had been received for previous schemes. However, there was uncertainty around any future new burdens funding to support these new schemes.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) a scheme for the Extension of Transitional Relief and Supporting Small Business Relief be adopted for small and medium properties for 2022/23; and
- (2) delegated authority be given to the Revenues Manager to award, revise or revoke relief in accordance with the adopted scheme, subject to any disputed entitlement to relief being referred to the Director of Finance and Transformation.

MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION

FRP 22/6 REVENUE AND BENEFITS UPDATE

Members noted the recent developments in respect of council tax, business rates, council tax reduction and housing benefits as detailed in the report of the Director of Finance and Transformation.

Collection rates for council tax remained above target. However, due to the current economic climate and the cost of living crisis it was not expected that this performance would continue into the latter half of this financial year. As a result, the collection target for council tax had been reduced to 98% for 2022/23. The collection rate for businesses remained unchanged at 98.5% due to the strong performance last year.

Finally, it was noted that the level of take up for direct debit payments had increased to 82% due to the energy rebate scheme.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE

FRP 22/7 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chairman moved, it was seconded and

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

PART 2 - PRIVATE

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

FRP 22/8 GIBSON BUILDING - HIGH LEVEL OPTIONS FOR LONG TERM OFFICER ACCOMMODATION

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

The report of the Director of Central Services and Deputy Chief Executive provided an update on progress being made with reviewing the Council's office accommodation requirements and presented high level options for consideration.

Members views were sought on where the Borough Council should have its main office, whether the co-location arrangement with Kent Police should continue and the approach to be adopted towards the removal of covenants on the Council's title.

There was in-depth discussion on where the main offices of the Borough Council should be located and whether there were any suitable alternative sites in the ownership of the Council that represented value for money, easy access for residents and provided appropriate facilities. On balance, the Committee were of the view that the main offices should continue to be located at Kings Hill on the grounds of reasonable transport links from the North and South of the Borough and its central location. It was also recognised that options around the current location had the potential to represent best value for money.


However, the Committee also expressed the view that other Members of the Council should have the opportunity to comment on any future location of the main offices. It was recommended that a short survey should be circulated to all councillors and responses reported to the next meeting of Cabinet.

Members were also of the view that co-locating with Kent Police had many benefits for residents and were supportive of the arrangement continuing if a suitable solution was identified.

Unfortunately, the opinion of Counsel in respect of the covenants was not available and the Committee requested that this matter be deferred until the advice had been received and circulated.

Finally, the Monitoring Officer committed to clarifying the position around access to the opinion of Counsel for those Members who also served as a County Councillor.

RECOMMENDED: That

- 
- (1) the options set out in the report be noted;
 - (2) the view of the Committee that the main offices of the Borough Council should continue to be located in Kings Hill be noted;
 - (3) the view of the Committee that the co-location arrangement with Kent Police should continue, if a suitable solution was identified, be noted;
 - (4) the view of the Committee in respect of the removal of covenants be deferred until legal advice had been received and circulated;
 - (5) Officers be asked to carry out further investigation into the feasibility of Option 4 (as detailed in the report) including negotiating a settlement with Kent County Council on the alteration/removal of the covenants (subject to Member approval);
 - (6) a short survey be circulated to all Councillors seeking their views as to where the main office building should be located and responses presented to Cabinet in due course;
 - (7) a further progress report be brought back to the Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee in due course.

***Referred to Cabinet**

The meeting ended at 9.30 pm

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

FINANCE, REGENERATION AND PROPERTY SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE

11 October 2022

Report of the Director of Finance and Transformation

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Non-Key Decision

1 FINANCIAL PLANNING AND CONTROL

The report brings together information on three key budget areas – salaries, major operational income streams and investment income. The performance of the key budget areas, together with approved variations to the revenue budget and areas identified through revenue budget monitoring are then summarised to provide an indicative overall budget position for the year. The report also updates Members on capital expenditure and variations that have been agreed in relation to the capital plan. Due to the escalating levels of inflation, Members are invited to consider whether an in-year review of some fees and charges should be recommended to Cabinet.

1.1 Salaries Monitoring Statement

1.1.1 Appended for information at **[Annex 1]** is a budgetary control statement that compares actual expenditure on basic salaries, temporary staff, overtime, superannuation and national insurance to the end of August 2022, with the appropriate proportion of the original estimate for 2022/23.

1.1.2 Members will note that overall actual expenditure to the end of August is **£26,500** more than budgeted.

1.2 Income Monitoring Statement

1.2.1 Appended for information at **[Annex 2]** is a budgetary control statement that compares actual income from fees and charges to the end of August 2022, with the appropriate proportion of the original estimate for 2022/23.

1.2.2 Members will note that overall actual income to the end of August is **£77,200** less than budgeted.

1.3 Treasury Management

Core Funds

- 1.3.1 The Council achieved a return of 1.42% on its core fund investments for the period ended August 2022. Investment income achieved for the period ended August 2022 is £114,400.
- 1.3.2 At the end of August 2022 the value of core funds stood at £28m. This was invested at an average rate of 1.78% and an average maturity of 109 days.

Cash Flow Funds

- 1.3.3 The Council achieved a return of 0.95% on its cash flow investments for the period ended August 2022. Investment income achieved for the period ended August 2022 is £122,500.
- 1.3.4 At the end of August 2022 the value of cash flow investments stood at £25.8m. This was invested at an average rate of 1.70% and an average maturity of 8 days.

Multi-Asset Diversified Income Funds

- 1.3.5 The Council achieved a return of 5.16% on its multi-asset diversified income funds for the period ended August 2022. Investment income achieved for the period ended August 2022 is £91,300.
- 1.3.6 At the end of August 2022, the sum of £4.25m was invested in multi-asset diversified income funds spread across three different funds.

Property Investment Funds

- 1.3.7 Property funds pay dividends quarterly based on activity to the end of March, June, September and December. Investment income achieved for the period ended June 2022 is £43,700 which represents a return of 3.49%.
- 1.3.8 At the end of August 2022, the sum of £5m was invested in property investment funds spread across three different funds.

All Investments

- 1.3.9 The combined return figure for core, cash flow, multi-asset diversified income and property investment funds is compared with the original estimate for 2022/23 later in this report.

1.4 Approved Variations to the Revenue Budget

- 1.4.1 Listed below are the variations that have been agreed to the revenue budget. It has been based upon those variations approved by Portfolio Holders, Committees, Cabinet and Council.

1.4.2 Communities and Housing Advisory Board 15 February 2022

- Recommended the recruitment of additional temporary resources to progress work to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation funded from additional government grant and savings in temporary accommodation costs.
- Recommended a 20% reduction in the grant funding provided to Age UK Sevenoaks and Tonbridge, generating a saving of £1,600.

1.4.3 Council 22 February 2022

- Members resolved that the basic and special responsibility allowances for the 2022/23 municipal year be frozen at the current level, generating a saving of £8,150.

1.4.4 Cabinet 15 March 2022

- Resolved that West Malling public conveniences remain open until July 2022 and funded under the current arrangement with the County Council Member.
- Approved the use of £100,000 from the Invest to Save Reserve to meet the one-off implementation and training programme costs in respect of the replacement of the Uniform System. The replacement system will deliver an ongoing annual saving of circa £50,000 compared to the current software platform from 2023/24.

1.4.5 General Purposes Committee 22 March 2022

- Resolved that post DG2010, Environmental Projects Co-ordinator, be redesignated Cleaner Borough Co-ordinator and the hours of the post reduced to 18.5 hours with effect from 1 April 2022. This will generate savings of £18,800 per annum (£7,800 reflected in Salaries Monitoring Statement above).

1.4.6 General Purposes Committee 15 June 2022

- Resolved that post DV0915, Housing Technical Assistant, be redesignated and regraded Housing Technical Officer, scale SO and that the hours of post DV0308, Scientific Officer, be reduced to 24 hours resulting in an overall saving on the establishment of £750.

1.4.7 Emergency and Urgency Decisions under Part 7 of the Constitution

- The Leader resolved on 9 March 2022 that the proposal for the reinstatement of the garden waste service be approved. This will result in

additional payments to Urbaser of up to £92,100 over a six-month period. The cost of the proposal to be met from the Budget Stabilisation reserve.

1.4.8 Cabinet Member Decisions under Part 4 of the Constitution

- The Cabinet Member for Finance, Innovation and Property resolved on 20 May 2022 that Zurich Municipal be reappointed as the Council's Insurer commencing on 24 June 2022 for a period of 5 years, with an option to extend for a further two years. The new contract will generate annual savings of £60,000.
- The Cabinet Member for Finance, Innovation and Property resolved on 12 July 2022 that on account payments be made to Tonbridge and Malling Leisure Trust in respect of the utility cost sharing arrangement in recognition of the significant impact of increased energy costs on TMLT's in-year cashflow position. The payments are to be funded from the Budget Stabilisation reserve. Please also see paragraph 1.6.3.
- The Cabinet Member for Finance, Innovation and Property resolved on 19 July 2022 that NEC Citizen Access Form Designer software be purchased at an annual cost of £8,000. The cost to be met from the Transformation Reserve for the first two years after which permanent establishment savings will be sought.
- The Cabinet Member for Community Services resolved on 3 August 2022 that Grounds Consulting be commissioned to undertake an initial options review for the retender of the Council's Grounds Maintenance Contract. The cost of the work will be £4,900 and is to be funded from the Invest to Save Reserve.
- The Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change resolved on 3 September 2022 that a Climate Change Officer be appointed on a 3-year contract. 18 months has already been approved by General Purposes Committee on 5 October 2021. The cost of extending the post for an additional 18 month period is £70,586 and will be funded from the Climate Change Reserve.

1.4.9 A summary of the approved variations to the revenue budget is given in the table below.

Description	Paragraph Reference	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Housing Temporary Staffing	1.4.2	-	-
Grants to Voluntary Groups	1.4.2	(1,600)	(1,600) *
Members Allowances	1.4.3	(8,150)	(8,150) *

West Malling Public Conveniences	1.4.4	-	-
Replacement of Uniform System	1.4.4	-	(50,000) *
Cleaner Borough Co-ordinator	1.4.5	(11,000)	(18,800) *
Housing Technical Officer	1.4.6	(550)	(750) *
Garden Waste Collection	1.4.7	-	-
Insurance	1.4.8	(45,000)	(60,000) *
TMLT Utility Cost Sharing Arrangement	1.4.8	-	-
Citizen Access Form Designer	1.4.8	-	-
Grounds Maintenance Contract	1.4.8	-	-
Climate Change Officer	1.4.8	-	-
Total		(66,300)	(139,300)

Those items marked with an asterisk* will need to be considered and reflected as appropriate in updating the Medium Term Financial Strategy beyond 2023/24.

1.5 Virements

- 1.5.1 Listed below are the virements made to the original revenue estimates for 2022/23 reported to Council on 22 February 2022.
- 1.5.2 The Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health approved in response to the current economic climate a one-off in year virement of £3,000 from the Homelessness Temporary Accommodation budget to fund parking permits for homeless households placed in Council owned accommodation.

1.6 Revenue Budget Monitoring

- 1.6.1 As part of our budget monitoring and control arrangements Chief Officers confirm that budgetary control has been undertaken within the Service areas under their control each month and at the same time highlight those areas, if any, which they wish to bring to the attention of the Director of Finance and Transformation. In addition, the Accountancy Section also monitors budgetary performance across the whole range of services during the year. At the time of writing this report the following areas have been brought to my attention.
- 1.6.2 The Council has been awarded £5,213,100 and £288,600 for the mandatory and discretionary Council Tax Energy Rebate schemes. To date a new burdens grant of £55,650 has also been received to meet the cost of administering the schemes (£55,650 reflected in Salaries Monitoring Statement above).
- 1.6.3 Energy – the Council can expect a significant claim under the utility cost sharing agreement with the Tonbridge and Malling Leisure Trust in 2022/23. It is estimated the net claim could be in the order of £725,000 to be funded from the

Budget Stabilisation reserve. What happens beyond 2022/23 dependent on where energy prices are at the time and TMLT trading performance.

- 1.6.4 Energy – the direct impact is difficult to determine not least in the context of the current volatility in the marketplace, but could be in the order of £100,000.
- 1.6.5 The inflationary increase to be applied from 1 April 2022 in respect of the waste services contract was 0.19% more than estimated, equating to budget growth on the annual contract sum of £7,300.
- 1.6.6 An additional payment of £47,000 is to be made to the Waste Services contractor to work the additional Jubilee bank holiday.
- 1.6.7 The Council has been awarded Rough Sleeping Initiatives Grant of £983,500 for the three-year period 2022/23 to 2024/25. This will allow the Council to continue to fund its partnership work with Look Ahead and Porchlight to tackle rough sleeping.
- 1.6.8 On the purchase of the freehold of 47 High Street, Tonbridge the Council received £33,150 in respect of the service charge and ground rent paid in advance when the six flats were purchased in 2018.
- 1.6.9 The Council has appointed an external consultant to undertake an Internal Communications audit at a cost of £7,500 to be funded from the Peer Review reserve.
- 1.6.10 The fee payable to Kent County Council for the provision of internal audit and counter fraud services for the year 2022/23 is £5,600 more than that assumed at the time the budget was set.
- 1.6.11 The Council is to hand back the public conveniences in Wrotham to the parish council and a sum of £9,000 paid on handover accordingly.
- 1.6.12 The Council Tax Support administration grant awarded by the DLUHC for 2022/23 is £24,200 more than budgeted.
- 1.6.13 The planning application fee in respect of Bushey Wood in the sum of £90,000, which had been expected to be received in the current year, was received in late 2021/22. As a result, all other things being equal, planning application fee income is expected to be below profile by an equivalent sum in 2022/23.
- 1.6.14 The recycling performance payment for 2021/22 increased by £58,000 following the outcome of discussions with KCC when compared to that reflected in the outturn position.
- 1.6.15 The housing needs research project has now been completed with a final payment due of £10,850 to be funded from the Housing Survey Reserve.

- 1.6.16 As a result of the recent and anticipated further increases in the Bank Rate during the year, investment income for 2022/23 is expected to be circa £350,000 more than budgeted (£235,100 reflected in Treasury Management section above). The increased investment income will help mitigate cost pressures in the short term, but over the medium term interest rates are expected to be in line with that assumed.
- 1.6.17 Changes to the out of hours service will generate savings of £15,000 per annum.
- 1.6.18 The Council is to receive rental income of £40,000 for the use of Sovereign Way East car park by a third party. This in part will off-set the reduction in season ticket income received previously (£16,700 reflected in Income Monitoring Statement above).
- 1.6.19 The estimated cost of works required to Council owned bridges in 2022/23 is £45,000 more than the current budget.
- 1.6.20 The new policy and charges in respect of use of Council's public open spaces is expected to generate an increase in events income by an estimated £10,000.
- 1.6.21 Management Team have made the following establishment changes under delegated authority:
- The temporary Economic Development Officer post has been regraded to scale 4/5 and extended by a further 18 months to March 2024. The annual cost of the post is £35,250 to be funded from the Business Rates Retention Scheme reserve.
 - Following the GDPR Storage Limitation audit it was recommended that the Head of IT be appointed the Council's Senior Information Risk Owner for a trial period of 12 months starting 1 October 2022. The role to attract an allowance of £6,500 including oncosts.
- 1.6.22 The Council has been awarded the following grants from central government which will be used to fund as yet unbudgeted expenditure:
- Air Quality Grant £5,342
 - Changing Places Grant £40,000
 - Domestic Abuse Duty New Burdens Grant £34,271
 - Housing Benefit Award Accuracy Initiative Grant £17,924
 - Local Authority Data Sharing Programme Grant £11,058
 - Verify Earnings and Pension Alerts Grant £22,209
 - Welfare Reform Grant £26,002

1.6.23 A summary of the items identified through budgetary control is given in the table below.

Description	Paragraph Reference	2022/23 £	2023/24 £
Council Tax Energy Rebate Scheme	1.6.2	-	-
TMLT Utility Cost Sharing Arrangement	1.6.3	-	-
Energy	1.6.4	100,000	-
Waste Services Contract	1.6.5	7,300	7,300 *
Jubilee Bank Holiday Waste Collection	1.6.6	47,000	-
Rough Sleeping Initiatives	1.6.7	-	-
47 High Street, Tonbridge	1.6.8	(33,150)	-
Internal Communications Audit	1.6.9	-	-
Internal Audit & Counter Fraud	1.6.10	5,600	5,600 *
Public Conveniences, Wrotham	1.6.11	9,000	-
Council Tax Support Admin Grant	1.6.12	(24,200)	-
Bushey Wood Planning Application	1.6.13	90,000	-
Recycling Performance Payment	1.6.14	(58,000)	-
Housing Needs Research	1.6.15	-	-
Investment Income	1.6.16	(114,900)	-
Out of Hours Service	1.6.17	-	(15,000) *
Sovereign Way East Car Park	1.6.18	(16,700)	-
Bridge Works	1.6.19	45,000	-
Events Income	1.6.20	(10,000)	(10,000) *
Establishment Changes	1.6.21	3,250	3,250
Central Government Grants	1.6.22	-	-
Total		50,200	(8,850)

Those items marked with an asterisk* will need to be considered and reflected as appropriate in updating the Medium Term Financial Strategy beyond 2023/24.

1.7 Revenue Budget Summary

- 1.7.1 The table below brings together information on the key budget areas, the variations agreed to the revenue budget and items identified through budgetary control to provide an indicative overall budget position for the year.

Description	Budget to August £	Actual to August £	Variance £
Salaries Monitoring Statement	4,594,000	4,620,500	26,500
Income Monitoring Statement	(3,197,050)	(3,119,850)	77,200
Treasury Management	(136,800)	(371,900)	(235,100)
Approved Variations to the Revenue Budget			(66,300)
Revenue Budgetary Control			50,200
Net Favourable Variance			(147,500)

- 1.7.2 This would suggest if nothing else changed, the contribution to the General Revenue Reserve would be £252,000 compared to £104,500 anticipated when the budget was set in February 2022.

1.8 Medium Term Financial Strategy / Savings and Transformation Strategy

- 1.8.1 As reported to the meeting of Cabinet in June, Members will not be surprised to hear that the position outlined at the time of setting the Budget in February has been exacerbated by the conflict in Ukraine and its impact on global economic conditions. The scale of the impact is very difficult to determine, the report setting out a number of factors to consider (not exhaustive).
- 1.8.2 It is not my intention to again set out each of the factors in that report, but to instead focus on just one – **inflation** – and specifically in respect of the waste services contract, to give a sense of the potential scale of the impact.
- Inflation and the waste services contract – if inflation rates in October 2022 are where they were around the time of writing the report in June it was suggested the inflationary increase in April 2023 will be 14% compared to 4% reflected in the Medium Term Financial Strategy and **this alone** would add to the funding gap circa £400,000. Of course since then inflation has continued to move in one direction, upwards and, in turn, further adding to the funding gap. The impact beyond the year 2023/24 dependent on where inflation rates are at the time.
- 1.8.3 With the level of inflation in mind, this does bring into focus whether fees and charges need to be reviewed ‘in-year’. Of course, an in year review may not be appropriate for all fees and charges the Council sets, but could certainly be appropriate for some.

- 1.8.4 Bearing in mind the fact that some of the fees charged are not keeping pace with the associated costs due to escalating inflation, Members might therefore wish to consider whether they wish to make a recommendation to Cabinet inviting an 'in-year' review of the level of fees and charges.
- 1.8.5 The impact of surging inflation is not unique to Tonbridge and Malling and, unless the government recognise the scale of the pressure in future finance settlements and council tax referendum principles, it will be no surprise if a number of councils finances are under severe strain – including this Council. As Members are aware, we are already facing a difficult and challenging financial outlook.
- 1.8.6 Again, as mentioned in the report to Cabinet in June it is very difficult at this juncture to give an indication of what this could do to the funding gap.
Undoubtedly there will be an adverse impact – it is the scale of that impact that is difficult to determine, albeit significant and placing financial sustainability further at risk.
- 1.8.7 For Members awareness a report on the MTFS including progress in delivering this year's savings target of £350,000 is to be presented to the Cabinet meeting in November; followed by a report to this Committee later that same month (either as part of the Financial Planning and Control report or a separate report).

1.9 Capital Monitoring Statement

- 1.9.1 Appended for information at **[Annex 3]** is a capital monitoring statement which compares actual capital expenditure for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 August 2022 with the 2022/23 Capital Plan. The Capital Plan for 2022/23 is based on the 2022/23 budgets that were approved by Council on 22 February 2022, amended for slippage from 2021/22.
- 1.9.2 Prior year's expenditure is only shown for finite schemes for which there is a budget in 2022/23. Where schemes are of a rolling programme nature, prior year's expenditure has not been shown in order to avoid large, generally meaningless, totals building up.
- 1.9.3 Capital Plan schemes which are scheduled to start in 2023/24 and beyond have not been shown. The budget profile for these schemes can be found in the [2022/23 Revenue and Capital Budgets Book](#).
- 1.9.4 Members will note a Capital Plan spend (net) at the end of August 2022 of £528,000 against a budget for the year of £4.201m.

1.10 Approved Variations to the Capital Plan

- 1.10.1 Council on 12 July 2022 approved the addition of a new capital scheme for the installation of photovoltaic (solar) panels at Larkfield Leisure Centre. The estimated capital cost of the scheme is £140,000 to be funded from the Climate Change Reserve.

1.11 Capital Plan Issues

- 1.11.1 The capital plan monitoring statement is essentially aimed at monitoring the financial performance of the capital plan overall and on a Service and scheme basis. Notes have been provided to supply further information where this is felt to be particularly relevant. Other monitoring reports, which provide greater information about individual schemes, are presented by the Services to the relevant Committee.

1.12 Legal Implications

- 1.12.1 This report fulfils the requirement of the Local Government Act 2003 which places a statutory duty on the authority to monitor income and expenditure against budget and to take action if overspends or shortfalls in income emerge. If monitoring establishes that the budget situation has deteriorated, authorities are required to take such action as they consider necessary. This might include action to reduce spending in the rest of the year, to increase income or to finance all or part of the shortfall from reserves.

1.13 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.13.1 As set out above.

1.14 Risk Assessment

- 1.14.1 Budgetary control is a prerequisite of good financial management, financial planning and control and needs to be kept under review to ensure it remains effective and relevant.
- 1.14.2 The Council's financial sustainability at increased risk following the Ukraine conflict and its adverse impact on global economic conditions.

1.15 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.15.1 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.

1.16 Policy Considerations

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

1.17 Recommendations

- 1.17.1 Members are RECOMMENDED to consider whether Cabinet be invited to undertake an in-year review of fees and charges due to the escalating levels of inflation.

Background papers:

contact: Neil Lawley

Nil

Sharon Shelton

Director of Finance and Transformation

Salaries Budgetary Control Monitoring Statement

Annex 1

Period Ended Last Day of August 2022**2022/23 Financial Year**

	Annual Budget 2022/23	Budget to end of August (a)	Actual to end of August (b)	Above (Below) Budget (b - a)
Service	£	£	£	£
Central				
Administration & Property	896,200	373,400	348,400	(25,000)
Legal	592,750	247,000	254,250	7,250
Personnel	522,600	217,750	224,750	7,000
Executive	590,650	248,300	230,800	(17,500)
Finance & Transformation				
Finance	1,840,950	692,200	747,250	55,050
Information Technology	1,076,200	448,400	418,850	(29,550)
Planning, Housing & Environmental Health				
Environmental Health & Housing	1,496,500	623,550	688,800	65,250
Planning	2,254,500	939,250	1,018,600	79,350
Street Scene, Leisure & Technical				
Street Scene & Leisure	1,295,450	539,800	559,150	19,350
Technical	714,500	297,750	285,750	(12,000)
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Management Savings	11,280,300	4,627,400	4,776,600	149,200
Shared Working Arrangements	(9,200)	0	0	0
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Sub-total	11,271,100	4,627,400	4,776,600	149,200
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Non-budgeted spend on recruitment & other expenses to the end of August				9,700
Payments outstanding for the period to the end of August				69,000
Budgeted ring-fenced sum to the end of August				(16,600)
Adjustments for expenditure funded from reserves or grants				(234,800)
Budgeted management savings to the end of August				50,000

Above / (Below) budget				26,500

Financial Services
20 September 2022

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Income Budgetary Control Monitoring Statement

Annex 2

Period Ended Last Day of August 2022**2022/23 Financial Year**

	Annual Budget 2022/23	Budget to end of August (a)	Actual to end of August (b)	(Above) Below Budget (b - a)
Service	£	£	£	£
Central				
Land Charges	(243,000)	(100,250)	(90,750)	9,500
Licensing	(362,800)	(136,450)	(119,850)	16,600
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Sub-Total	(605,800)	(236,700)	(210,600)	26,100
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Planning, Housing & Environmental Health				
Planning Applications	(940,000)	(354,150)	(388,350)	(34,200)
Building Regulations	(423,000)	(176,250)	(191,250)	(15,000)
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Sub-Total	(1,363,000)	(530,400)	(579,600)	(49,200)
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Street Scene, Leisure & Technical				
Garden Waste Collection	(700,000)	(1,030,000)	(1,055,000)	(25,000)
Recycling Performance Payment	(570,000)	0	0	0
Bulky Refuse Collection	(135,000)	(56,250)	(58,750)	(2,500)
Tonbridge Cemetery	(130,450)	(54,350)	(53,900)	450
Short Stay Car Parking	(1,800,000)	(687,000)	(612,400)	74,600
Long Stay Car Parking	(645,000)	(287,000)	(259,150)	27,850
Penalty Charge Notices	(290,000)	(120,850)	(133,250)	(12,400)
Car Parks Season Tickets	(167,000)	(81,000)	(48,550)	32,450
Residents Parking Permits	(145,000)	(70,000)	(67,000)	3,000
Haysden Country Park Parking	(95,000)	(43,500)	(41,650)	1,850
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Sub-Total	(4,677,450)	(2,429,950)	(2,329,650)	100,300
	-----	-----	-----	-----
Grand Total	(6,646,250)	(3,197,050)	(3,119,850)	77,200
	-----	-----	-----	-----

Financial Services
23 September 2022

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<u>CAPITAL PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT 2022/23 TO 31 AUGUST 2022</u>			
<u>SUMMARY OF SERVICES</u>			
	Expenditure To 31/03/22	2022/23 Including Prior Year Slippage	2022/23 Actual to 31 August 2022
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Plan Schemes			
Planning, Housing & Environmental Health	1,554	1,040	256
Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services	288	852	212
Corporate	35	76	0
Sub-total	1,877	1,968	468
Capital Renewals			
Planning, Housing & Environmental Health	n/a	0	0
Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services	n/a	1,767	54
Corporate	n/a	466	6
Sub-total	n/a	2,233	60
Total	1,877	4,201	528

<u>CAPITAL PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT 2022/23 TO 31 AUGUST 2022</u> <u>PLANNING, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH</u>			
	Expenditure To 31/03/22	2022/23 Including Prior Year Slippage	2022/23 Actual to 31 August 2022
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Plan Schemes			
Housing			
Grants	n/a	30	1
Temporary Accommodation	1,554	1,000	255
Environmental Health	0	10	0
Sub-total	1,554	1,040	256
Capital Renewals	n/a	0	0
Total Planning, Housing and Environmental Health	1,554	1,040	256

CAPITAL PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT 2022/23 TO 31 AUGUST 2022 PLANNING, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH					
	Code	Expenditure To 31/03/22	2022/23 Including Prior Year Slippage	2022/23 Actual to 31 August 2022	Notes
Housing		£'000	£'000	£'000	
(a) Disabled Facility Grants					
(i) Mandatory Grants Less repayments	P03AC	n/a n/a	1,956 (10)	322 0	
(ii) Government Grant		n/a	(1,946)	(322)	
Sub-total		n/a	0	0	
(b) Housing Assistance Less repayments	P03AD	n/a n/a	60 (30)	11 (10)	
Sub-total		n/a	30	1	
Total Grants to Summary		n/a	30	1	
(c) Temporary Accommodation					
(i) 4 Dwellings Pembury Road, Tonbridge Less Developer Contributions	P03AX	2,060 (506)	1,165 (425)	45	Revised plans under consideration.
Sub-total		1,554	740	45	
(ii) Ground Floor Unit High Street, Tonbridge	P03AY	0	40		
(iii) Freehold of 47 High Street, Tonbridge	P03AZ	0	220	210	Purchase now complete.
Total Temporary Accommodation to Summary		1,554	1,000	255	

<u>CAPITAL PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT 2022/23 TO 31 AUGUST 2022</u> <u>PLANNING, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH</u>					
	Code	Expenditure To 31/03/22	2022/23 Including Prior Year Slippage	2022/23 Actual to 31 August 2022	Notes
Environmental Health		£'000	£'000	£'000	
(a) Air Quality Monitoring Station (ii) Government Grant	P02EN	0	10	28 (28)	
Total Environmental Health to Summary		0	10	0	DEFRA grant applied

CAPITAL PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT 2022/23 TO 31 AUGUST 2022				
STREET SCENE, LEISURE & TECHNICAL SERVICES				
	Expenditure To 31/03/22	2022/23 Including Prior Year Slippage	2022/23 Actual to 31 August 2022	Notes
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Capital Plan Schemes				
Street Scene	n/a	113	132	
Leisure				
Sports Grounds	33	172	62	
Open Spaces	124	0	0	
Other Leisure Schemes	103	0	0	
Technical Services				
Car Parking	0	30	14	
Transportation	3	37	4	
Land Drainage / Flood Defence	25	500	0	
Sub-total	288	852	212	
Capital Renewals	n/a	1,767	54	
Total Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services	288	2,619	266	

CAPITAL PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT 2022/23 TO 31 AUGUST 2022
STREET SCENE, LEISURE & TECHNICAL SERVICES

	Code	Expenditure To 31/03/22	2022/23 Including Prior Year Slippage	2022/23 Actual to 31 August 2022	Notes
		£'000	£'000	£'000	
Street Scene					
(a) Green Waste Bins Growth / Replacement	P02BC	n/a	31	69	
(b) Refuse Bins Growth / Replacement	P02DA	n/a	61	32	
(c) Garden Waste Bin Replacement	P03CF	n/a	21	31	
Total Street Scene to Summary		n/a	113	132	
Sports Grounds					
(d) Racecourse Sports Ground Riverside Revetment Less Grants	P05DD	50 (17)	175 (11)	57	
Sub-total		33	164	57	
(e) Racecourse Sportsground Rugby Pitch Drainage Less Developer Contributions	P05DE	10 (10)	16 (8)	5 0	
Sub-total		0	8	5	
(f) Tonbridge Farm Sportsground Site Improvements Less Developer Contributions	P05DF	0 0	40 (40)	0 0	
Sub-total		0	0	0	
Total Sports Grounds to Summary		33	172	62	
Open Spaces					
(a) Leybourne lakes Country Park Path Improvements Less Grants & Developer Contributions	P05FH	74 (22)	0 0	0 0	
Sub-total		52	0	0	
(b) Leybourne Lakes Country Park Facility Improvements Less Grants & Developer Contributions	P05FF	544 (472)	358 (358)	457 (457)	
Sub-total		72	0	0	
Total Open Spaces to Summary		124	0	0	

<u>CAPITAL PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT 2022/23 TO 31 AUGUST 2022</u>					
<u>STREET SCENE, LEISURE & TECHNICAL SERVICES</u>					
	Code	Expenditure To 31/03/22	2022/23 Including Prior Year Slippage	2022/23 Actual to 31 August 2022	Notes
		£'000	£'000	£'000	
Other Leisure Schemes					
(c) Ton Cemetery / Closed Churchyards - Memorial Safety	P05KV	106	0	0	
Less Grants & Developer Contributions		(3)	0	0	
Sub-total		103	0	0	
Total Other Leisure Schemes to Summary		103	0	0	

CAPITAL PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT 2022/23 TO 31 AUGUST 2022 STREET SCENE, LEISURE & TECHNICAL SERVICES					
	Code	Expenditure To 31/03/22	2022/23 Including Prior Year Slippage	2022/23 Actual to 31 August 2022	Notes
Car Parking		£'000	£'000	£'000	
(a) Existing Car Parks Improvement Rolling Programme Less Grants & Contributions	P01AB	n/a	30	14	
Sub-total			30	14	
Total Car Parking to Summary		0	30	14	
Transportation					
(b) Electric Vehicle Charging Points Less Grants & Contributions	P01EA	3	117 (80)	4	
Total Transportation to Summary		3	37	4	
Land Drainage / Flood Defence					
(c) Leigh FSA Enhancement Contribution	P01HV	25	500	0	
Total Land Drainage / Flood Defence to Summary		25	500	0	

CAPITAL PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT 2022/23 TO 31 AUGUST 2022					
STREET SCENE, LEISURE & TECHNICAL SERVICES					
	Code	Expenditure To 31/03/22	2022/23 Including Prior Year Slippage	2022/23 Actual to 31 August 2022	Notes
Capital Renewals		£'000	£'000	£'000	
Sports Grounds & Open Spaces	P05KG BC05	n/a	590	8	} Budgets includes £387,000 underspend carried forward from } 2021/22. To be reviewed Autumn 2022. } } } } } } } } } }
Technical Services					
(a) CCTV Capital Renewals	P01BA	n/a	50	9	
(b) Car Parking	P01JF	n/a	13		
Provision for Inflation		n/a	10		
Sub-total			663	17	
Leisure Centres					
(c) Angel Centre	P05KG BC01	n/a	509	1	
(d) Larkfield Leisure Centre	BC02	n/a	323	15	
(e) Tonbridge Swimming Pool	BC04	n/a	347	10	
(f) Poult Wood Golf					
Clubhouse	BC03	n/a	137	11	
Course	BC07	n/a	18		
Grounds Maintenance	BC06	n/a	121		
Provision for inflation	P05KZ	n/a	1,455	37	
Savings Target (assumes 25%)		n/a	16		
Sub-total			(367)		
			1,104	37	
Total Capital Renewals to Summary		n/a	1,767	54	

<u>CAPITAL PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT 2022/23 TO 31 AUGUST 2022</u>			
<u>CORPORATE</u>			
	Expenditure To 31/03/22	2022/23 Including Prior Year Slippage	2022/23 Actual to 31 August 2022
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Capital Plan Schemes			
Land and Property	10	60	0
Information Technology Initiatives	5	12	0
Other schemes	20	4	0
Sub-total	35	76	0
Capital Renewals	n/a	466	6
Total Corporate	35	542	6

<u>CAPITAL PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT 2022/23 TO 31 AUGUST 2022</u>					
<u>CORPORATE</u>					
	Code	Expenditure To 31/03/22	2022/23 Including Prior Year Slippage	2022/23 Actual to 31 August 2022	Notes
Land and Property		£'000	£'000	£'000	
(a) Tonbridge Castle Offices: Re-tile Roof	P06AA	10	60	0	
Total Land and Property to Summary		10	60	0	
Information Technology Initiatives					
(b) Revenues and Benefits IT Digital Solution	P06EW	5	12		
Total Information Technology Initiatives to Summary		5	12	0	
Other Schemes					
(c) Electric / Hybrid Pool Car	P06EZ	20	4		
Total Other Schemes to Summary		20	4	0	

<u>CAPITAL PLAN MONITORING STATEMENT 2022/23 TO 31 AUGUST 2022</u>					
<u>CORPORATE</u>					
	Code	Expenditure To 31/03/22	2022/23 Including Prior Year Slippage	2022/23 Actual to 31 August 2022	Notes
Capital Renewals		£'000	£'000	£'000	
(a) General :	P06FA				} Budgets includes £162,000 underspend carried forward from } 2021/22. To be reviewed Autumn 2022. }
Departmental Administration	GR01	n/a	24		
Council Offices	GR02	n/a	20		
Print Unit	GR03	n/a	86		
Telephones	GR05	n/a	9		
Snack Facilities	GR06	n/a	5		
Elections	GR10	n/a	1		
Sub-total		n/a	145	0	
(b) Information Technology :	P06FB		318		
Desktop Hardware	FB10	n/a		4	
Mobile Hardware	FB20	n/a		2	
Computer Suite	FB30	n/a			
Other Hardware	FB40	n/a			
Network	FB50	n/a			
Corporate Software	FB60	n/a			
Operational Software	FB70	n/a			
User Software	FB80	n/a			
Sub-total		n/a	318	6	
Provision for inflation	P06FZ	n/a	3		
Total Capital Renewals to Summary		n/a	466	6	

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

FINANCE, REGENERATION AND PROPERTY SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE

11 October 2022

Report of the Director of Finance and Transformation

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 REVENUES AND BENEFITS PERFORMANCE INFORMATION REPORT

A report detailing performance information in respect of council tax, business rates, council tax reduction and housing benefits.

1.1 Collection of council tax and business rates

1.1.1 As at 31 August 2022, the collection rate for council tax stood at 46.38%. For the same period in the year 2021/22, the collection rate was 45.71%.

1.1.2 As at 31 August 2022, the collection rate for business rates stood at 53.63%. For the same period in the year 2021/22, the collection rate was 46%.

1.1.3 We therefore remain on the same direction of travel, with collection performance still currently above target. However, with the increased energy price cap coming into effect in October, I am not expecting this trend to continue.

1.1.4 For many residents, the winter months will be particularly difficult, and I anticipate they will not be seeing payment of council tax as a priority. We therefore need to be prepared for collection rates to fall, and although the collection rate targets have been reduced, this may need to be reviewed later on this year depending on performance over the next few months.

1.1.5 The amount of arrears for previous year debts currently stands at £5.2M for council tax and £950k for business rates. These totals have increased significantly since 2020/21 when we were unable to take any action to recover debts; however, we continue to work hard to reduce the levels.

1.2 Performance of Benefits Service

1.2.1 The average number of days to pay housing benefit and council tax reduction applications was 17.5 as at 1 September. Changes in circumstances take on average 2.8 days. The number of new claims processed is relatively small due to the shift to Universal Credit. The decline in performance is a direct consequence of the Clarion cyber attack. Over the past two months Clarion has had severely limited communication channels and not been able to supply information relating

to tenancies essential in making payments. At the time of writing we are just starting to see signs of systems being reset and information starting to flow.

1.2.2 The number of households paid housing benefit continues to drop, mostly due to the transfer to Universal Credit. On 1 September the total number of households getting help with housing benefit was 3681, almost exactly half working age and half pension age. Pilot sites are underway across the country trialling managed migration of the existing working age housing benefit caseload to Universal Credit. Government ambition remains that nationally the transition from housing benefit to Universal Credit will be completed by the end of 2024.

1.2.3 The number of households receiving help with council tax was 6534 on 1 September, 2392 of these were pension age. This is an overall slight rise in numbers but a fall in the pension age proportion, reflecting the economic environment.

1.3 Legal Implications

1.3.1 none

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.4.1 The percentage of council tax and business rates collected during the year impacts on the Council's finances and, consequently, on the level of council tax for future years.

1.5 Risk Assessment

1.5.1 Failure to collect council tax or business rates in a timely and efficient manner could put the Council's finances under pressure. As the Billing Authority, TMBC has to pay Preceptors in accordance with an agreed schedule regardless of whether collection is on track.

1.5.2 Over the years, TMBC's collection rate for council tax has been above the national average for shire districts. A reduction in collection rate for council tax which becomes sustained and 'permanent' will have an impact on the MTFS.

1.5.3 Delays in processing benefit claims or changes of circumstances could place claimants in difficult financial circumstances. Equally, delays in processing changes of circumstances could put the Council's own finances at risk if overpayments are made as a result and become irrecoverable at a later date.

1.6 Policy Considerations

1.6.1 Community

1.6.2 Customer Contact

Background papers:

Nil.

contact: Glen Pritchard
Andrew Rosevear

Sharon Shelton
Director of Finance and Transformation

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FINANCE, REGENERATION AND PROPERTY SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE

WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

Standing items:

- Record of Executive (Cabinet and Cabinet Member) Decisions Taken;
- Record of Officer Decisions Taken (If any);
- Notice of Forthcoming Key Decisions;
- Key Performance Indicators
- Work Programme (information item).

Meeting Date	Matter for Discussion	Requested by:	Director/Officer
15 November 2022	Medium Term Financial Strategy and Savings and Transformation Strategy: <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Consider shortfall; and- Reflect on how savings targets will be met	Cllr M Base/N Heslop	Sharon Shelton
14 March 2023	Tonbridge Post Office (invite representative of Post Office to address Committee)	Cllr M Hood	Gill Fox
30 May 2023			

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

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

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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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