

# TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL



## EXECUTIVE SERVICES

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### 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](mailto:committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk)

25 August 2023

To: MEMBERS OF THE CABINET  
(Copies to all Members of the Council)

Dear Sir/Madam

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the Cabinet to be held in the Council Chamber, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill on Tuesday, 5th September, 2023 commencing at 7.30 pm.

Members of the Cabinet 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.

**(NB: Background papers to items referred from Scrutiny Select Committees and Committees have been omitted from printed agenda packs.)**

Yours faithfully

JULIE BEILBY

Chief Executive

## A G E N D A

1. Guidance for the Conduct of Meetings

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## **PART 1 - PUBLIC**

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

Members are reminded of their obligation under the Council's Code of Conduct to disclose any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests and Other Significant Interests in any matter(s) to be considered or being considered at the meeting. These are explained in the Code of Conduct on the Council's website at [Code of conduct for members – Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council \(tmbc.gov.uk\)](https://www.tmbc.gov.uk/code-of-conduct-for-members).

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

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| 4. | Minutes | 11 - 20 |
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To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 4 July 2023

### **Decisions to be taken in accordance with Part 3 of the Constitution**

#### **Executive Key Decisions**

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| 5. | Regulation 18 Consultation | 21 - 36 |
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Recommendation HP 23/20 of the Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee of 18 July 2023.

The reports and associated annexes are available on the Scrutiny Select Committee meeting [page](#). However, the report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environment Health of 18 July 2023 is attached for convenience.

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| 6. | Grounds Maintenance Contract - Service Delivery Review | 37 - 38 |
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Recommendation CE 23/31 of the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee of 19 July 2023

The report and supporting papers considered by the Scrutiny Select Committee are restricted and are attached for information under Part 2 of the agenda.

#### **Executive Non-Key Decisions**

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| 7. | Risk Management | 39 - 60 |
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Recommendation AU 23/31 of the Audit Committee of 24 July 2023

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| 8. | Economic Development Strategy 2023-2027 - Consultation Draft | 61 - 80 |
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Recommendation FRP 23/21 of the Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee of 25 July 2023

## **Matters submitted for Information**

9. Minutes of Panels, Boards and Other Groups 81 - 88

The minutes of meetings of Advisory Panels, Boards and Other Groups are attached. Any recommendations arising from these minutes are set out as individual items on this agenda.

- Tonbridge Community Forum of 12 June 2023

10. Decisions taken by Cabinet Members 89 - 90

A record of the decisions taken by portfolio holders since the last meeting of Cabinet are attached.

11. Urgent Items 91 - 92

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 93 - 94

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. Grounds Maintenance Contract - Service Delivery Review 95 - 238

(Part 2 Reasons: LGA 1972 - Sch 12A Paragraph 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)).

This report was considered by the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee on 19 July and is attached for information.

14. Urgent Items 239 - 240

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

Councillor M D Boughton, (Leader)  
Councillor R P Betts, (Climate Change, Regeneration and Property)  
Councillor M A Coffin, (Transformation and Infrastructure)  
Councillor D Keers, (Community Services)  
Councillor K B Tanner, (Finance and Housing)  
Councillor M Taylor, (Planning)

Members of the Council who are not members of the executive may attend meetings of the Cabinet. With the agreement of the Leader, any such Member may address the Cabinet on any item on the agenda but may not vote.

## **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](mailto: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](mailto: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

### CABINET

### MINUTES

Tuesday, 4th July, 2023

**Present:** Cllr M D Boughton (Chair), Cllr R P Betts, Cllr M A Coffin, Cllr D Keers, Cllr K B Tanner and Cllr M Taylor

**In attendance:** Cllrs B Banks\*, G C Bridge\*, R I B Cannon, S M Hammond\*, F A Hoskins\*, Mrs A S Oakley, D Thornewell, C J Williams\*, Mrs S Bell and M R Rhodes were also present pursuant to Access to Information Rule No 23.

(Note: \*These Councillors participated in the discussion on TMBC Owned Sites – Local Plan only and then left the meeting).

**Virtual:** Cllrs Mrs S Bell and M R Rhodes listened to the discussion via MS Teams in accordance with Access to Information Rule No 23.

### PART 1 - PUBLIC

#### **CB 23/58 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

#### **CB 23/59 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 6 June 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE COUNCIL

#### **CB 23/60 CORPORATE STRATEGY 2023-27**

Consideration was given to an updated Corporate Strategy 2023-2027 (attached at Annex 1) which incorporated feedback received from the recent community consultation as well as matters highlighted through the decision making process.

The Strategy set out a new direction for the Borough Council and had a vision ‘to be an innovative and forward thinking council, that leads people and businesses of the borough towards a vibrant, prosperous and sustainable future.’

An action plan setting out the strategic initiatives linked to delivering the Corporate Strategy was provided at Annex 2. This Plan included some of the key initiatives, rather than all of the activity, that the Borough Council would undertake to meet the priorities set out in the Strategy and would be reviewed on an annual basis.

A list of new updated Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were set out in Annex 3 in order to align these more closely with the Corporate Strategy. It was noted that currently there was no KPI relating to biodiversity as DEFRA guidance was still forthcoming and strategies on the topic were still being developed.

**RECOMMENDED\*:** That

- (1) the Corporate Strategy (attached at Annex 1) be commended to Council for adoption;
- (2) the Corporate Strategy Action Plan (attached at Annex 2) be commended to Council for adoption;
- (3) the proposed new Key Performance Indicators (attached at Annex 3) be commended to Council for adoption;
- (4) authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in liaison with the Leader of the Council, to approve any necessary further minor changes to the Corporate Strategy, Action Plan and Key Performance Indicators that might be required for reasons of clarity or presentation.

**\*Referred to Council**

**DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 3 OF THE CONSTITUTION**

**EXECUTIVE KEY DECISIONS**

**CB 23/61 HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND 2023/24**

(Decision Notice D230056CAB)

Approval was sought for the Borough Council's proposed approach in respect of the current grant of Household Support Fund for the Borough. The draft Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Household Support Scheme July 2023 – March 2024 (attached at Annex 1) set out the proposed use of the fund, which was to provide crisis support for households. The strategy for direction of funding was based on successful outcomes of previous awards, statistical returns, feedback from a recent welfare support workshop and anecdotal experience.

The proposed use of the grant funding was detailed in 1.3 of the report and it was noted that Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council had been allocated funding of £278,562 to be used in accordance with Government guidance by 31 March 2024. Unspent grant could not be rolled over into April beyond honouring any expenditure committed to before the end of March.

Careful consideration was given to the legal, financial and value for money implications and Cabinet supported the proposed use of the grant funding to support households, charitable organisations and the local community.

**RESOLVED:** That

- (1) the Household Support Fund Scheme July 2023 – March 2024, as set out at Annex 1, be approved;
- (2) delegated authority be granted to the Director of Finance and Transformation to establish an effective operational scheme to disburse funds in accordance with the Household Support Fund Scheme July 2023 – March 2024; and
- (3) significant variance in direction of spend in response to any emerging events or needs over the lifetime of the Scheme be allowed for by agreement of the Leader, Cabinet Member for Finance and Housing, Chief Executive and Director of Finance and Transformation, in line with the general parameters of the Household Support Fund.

## **CB 23/62 NEW LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

(Decision Notice D230057CAB)

Consideration was given to recommendation HP 23/11 of the Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee of 7 June 2023.

Members attention was drawn to the further detail on the assumptions around the Local Development Scheme (LDS) timetable, the evidence base studies and costs set out in the supplementary report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health. Particular reference was made to revised proposals in respect of the Green Belt Study which recommended that more detailed work be undertaken and that options for a 'strategic gap' be explored. It was anticipated that this further work could cost in the region of an additional £15,000. However, it was noted that all cost assumptions set out in Annex 3 were informed estimates at this stage.

The Cabinet Member for Planning was aware of concerns regarding the green belt and anticipated that a more detailed study would be beneficial

in retaining flexibility. The increased budgetary pressures as a result of a more detailed study were also noted.

On the grounds that the Green Belt Study was a crucial piece of evidence which influenced other key policy decisions relating to the Local Plan, Councillor Taylor proposed, seconded by Councillor Boughton that the study be commissioned as soon as possible to realistically meet the timeframes set out in the LDS and that the recommendations of the Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee be amended.

**RESOLVED:** That

- (1) the commissioning the extended scope of local plan Green Belt evidence and associated costs (as set out in the supplementary report) that were not anticipated at the time of the HPSSC recommendation be approved;
- (2) the new Local Development Scheme be approved and the implications on timing of the above decision and the uncertainties regarding the outcome of the government's planning reforms be noted; and
- (3) the additional budget requirements of the local plan and the need for further financial provision in future budget setting process be noted.

### **EXECUTIVE NON-KEY DECISIONS**

#### **CB 23/63 FINANCIAL PLANNING AND CONTROL**

(Decision Notice D230058CAB)

The report brought together information on 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 were summarised to provide an indicative overall budget position for the year. In addition, an update on capital expenditure and variations agreed in relation to the capital plan was provided.

Cabinet noted that in respect of salaries, overall actual expenditure to the end of May was £46,650 more than budgeted at the February Budget meeting. This overspend included funding of temporary staffing in planning as detailed in paragraph 1.4.5 of the report. Overall actual income to the end of May was £141,550 less than budgeted. However, this was relatively early in the new financial year and the position would continue to be monitored.

The current economic climate continued to have an ongoing impact on the Borough Council's financial position and the potential impact on both the current and future financial years of the Medium Term Financial Strategy was being assessed. The importance of ensuring the savings target of £500,000 was achieved by the start of the financial year 2024/25 was recognised.

Finally, reference was made to business rates pooling and it was reported that monitoring as at end of May 2023 placed the Borough Council at £701,000 above the nationally set baseline with a retained income of £561,000. This was a variation of £5,000 against the 2023/24 estimate.

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Finance commented that the pressures on the temporary accommodation budget had been exacerbated by the cost of living crisis and new Government guidance in relation to those fleeing domestic violence.

**RESOLVED:** That

- (1) it be noted that as at the end of May 2023, the projected overall outturn position for the year 2023/24 was a net adverse variance of circa £557,000 when compared to the budget set in February 2023;
- (2) the not insignificant impact of the current economic global conditions on the Borough Council's finances, and the need to identify and implement opportunities to delivery as a minimum this year's savings target of £500,000 be noted; and
- (3) the current business rate pool position as at the end of May 2023 be noted.

## **CB 23/64 TONBRIDGE AND MALLING SHARED UK PROSPERITY FUND**

(Decision Notice D230059CAB)

An update on delivery during Year 1 of the Tonbridge and Malling UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Programme, including Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF), was provided in 1.2 of the report. Upcoming initiatives for Year 2 were also highlighted at 1.3 of the report.

Particular reference was made to the establishment of a West Kent Rural Grants Programme, using the REPF funding previously secured. As part of this programme, all funding allocated to the Borough Council would be ring fenced for projects within the borough. Rural Businesses and Communities would be able to apply for capital grants of up to £25,000. Details of the decision making process was outlined in 1.3.4 of the report. However it was proposed that a Cabinet Member

representative from each West Kent local authority be part of a West Kent Rural Grants Programme Panel assessing applications.

Finally, Cabinet had regard to the risk assessment for the programme which identified a number of potential hazards and control measures to mitigate their impact. The risk assessment was provided at Appendix 2.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Regeneration and Property welcomed the continuation of the Shopfront Improvement Grant Scheme and the proposal for a Green Business Grant Scheme.

**RESOLVED:** That

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the delegation of decision-making powers to the West Kent Rural Grants Programme Panel, as set out in 1.3.4, be agreed;
- (3) the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Regeneration and Property be agreed as the representative for the Borough Council on the West Kent Rural Grants Programme Panel; and
- (4) the risk assessment for the UKSPF Programme as set out in Appendix 2 be endorsed.

## **CB 23/65 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT SCHEME**

(D230060CAB)

The report sought approval of schemes submitted for funding through the Community Development Grant Scheme.

As part of the Tonbridge and Malling UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Investment Plan, endorsed by Cabinet on 5 July 2022, there had been a total allocation of £165,269 for a community grant scheme. A first round of the Community Development Grant Scheme would operate for 2023/24 with a second round in 2024/25.

A copy of the application form, criteria and scoring sheet used for Round 1 of the Scheme was attached for information at Annex 1. Funding priorities for this year were detailed in 1.2.2 of the report. The deadline for Round 1 applications closed on 16 June 2023 and the total amount of funding applied for by eligible applicants exceeded the total funding pot of £33,962. As a result, the decision had been taken to decrease the amount for some applicants based on a scaled allocation with those achieving higher scores receiving the full amount of funding and those with lower scores receiving a lower amount. The suggested allocations were set out in Annex 2 of the report, with a further detailed summary of the details of each bid and the priorities met set out in Annex 3. It was noted that there was a potential underspend of £622.00 which could be



used to fund the administration costs for the Scheme or used as a contingency fund to support specific bids.

Cabinet welcomed the investment in youth provision as part of this grant funding. On the grounds that Round 1 was oversubscribed, Councillor Boughton proposed, seconded by Councillor Keers that the underspend be passported over to Round 2 funding to support future bids.

**RESOLVED:** That

- (1) the grant allocations, as set out in Annex 2 of the report, be endorsed; and
- (2) the outstanding balance of £622 for 2023/24 be passported over to Round 2 funding

### **CB 23/66 TMBC OWNED SITES - LOCAL PLAN**

(Decision Notice D230061CAB)

Consideration was given to recommendation FRP 23/13 of the Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee of 13 June 2023.

At the request of local Ward Members, further consideration was given to sites 59554 and 59555 (Vauxhall) on the grounds of loss of green space. However, Cabinet felt it was important to retain flexibility and control over future development as part of the Local Plan process and these sites should be considered 'available' when formally responding to the letter from the LPA. Local Ward Members were also reminded that this did not mean that the sites would be developed but would be available for assessment as part of the planning process.

Subsequent to the meeting of the Scrutiny Select Committee, further information in respect of site 59469 (land at Russett Close, Aylesford) had been provided and the previous views of the Planning Inspectorate supporting the protection of this green space were noted. The comments of the local ward Members were also taken into consideration and reflected the concerns raised by residents at the potential loss of this area of open public space.

On the grounds of the extra information provided and having regard to the comments of local Ward Members, Councillor Betts proposed, seconded by Councillor Taylor that site 59469 be unavailable for development when formally responding to the letter from the LPA.

**RESOLVED:** That

- (1) the following 9 TMBC owned sites identified in the urban capacity study be considered **available** for development when formally responding to the letter from the LPA:

- 59559, 59560, 59661, 59562, 59563, 59581 (Cage Green and Angel);
  - 59554 59555 (Vauxhall); and
  - 59572 (Judd)
- (2) the Angel Centre, Tonbridge site be considered available for development when formally responding to the letter from the LPA; and
- (3) the following 12 TMBC owned sites identified in the urban capacity study be considered **unavailable** for development when formally responding to the letter from the LPA:
- 59437 (Larkfield);
  - 59449 (East Malling, West Malling and Offham);
  - 59456 (Birling, Leybourne and Ryarsh);
  - 59502 (Snodland East and Ham Hill);
  - 59469 (Aylesford South and Ditton);
  - 59515; 59516 (Cage Green and Angel);
  - 59521; 59522 (Trench)
  - 59524 (Higham); and
  - 59550;59552 (Judd)

#### **CB 23/67 TREE SAFETY POLICY**

(Decision Notice D230062CAB)

Consideration was given to recommendation CE 23/16 of the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee of 14 June 2023.

**RESOLVED:** That the proposed amendments to the Tree Safety Policy, as set out in Annexes 3 and 3a, be approved; subject to:

- clarification with the insurers with regard to the recommended length of time for any tree inspections records to be kept by the Borough Council

#### **CB 23/68 EVENTS ON PUBLIC OPEN SPACES**

(Decision Notice D230063CAB)

Consideration was given to recommendation CE 23/17 of the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee of 14 June 2023.

**RESOLVED:** That

- (1) the proposed amendments to the Events on Open Spaces Policy and application form, as detailed in Annexes 1 and 2, be approved subject to:
  - a sliding scale schedule for payment of deposits, lawn hire fees and administration fees and the terms and conditions for cancellation and refund being investigated; and
  - agreed in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community Services and added to section 6 (Charging of the Policy);
- (2) a byelaw to address unauthorised use of the Borough Council's public open space be progressed

**CB 23/69 LITTER AND FLY TIPPING ENFORCEMENT PILOT - 6 MONTH REVIEW**

(D230064CAB)

Consideration was given to recommendation CE 23/18 of the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee of 14 June 2023.

The Cabinet Member for Transformation and Infrastructure commented that the procurement of a third-party enforcement contract demonstrated that fly tipping and littering would not be tolerated in Tonbridge and Malling.

**RESOLVED:** That a contract for the third-party provision of litter and fly tipping enforcement be procured through a formal tender procedure (as set out in option 3 at 1.4.1 of the report to Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee)

**MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION**

**CB 23/70 DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET MEMBERS**

Details of the Decisions taken in accordance with the rules for the making of decisions by executive members, as set out in Part 4 of the Constitution, were presented for information.

**CB 23/71 MINUTES OF PANELS, BOARDS AND OTHER GROUPS**

The Minutes of the Joint Transportation Board of 5 June 2023 and the Notes of the Parish Partnership Panel of 15 June were received and noted.

**CB 23/72 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were no items considered in private.

The meeting ended at 8.52 pm

## **REGULATION 18 CONSULTATION**

### **Item HP 23/20 referred from Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee of 18 July 2023**

The report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health built upon the initial results presented to the Committee on 6 December 2022, and set out the full consultation analysis from the Regulation 18 consultation. The responses would be utilised and drawn upon in preparing the next Regulation 18B document for Spring 2024. The updated outputs of the questionnaire were included at Annex 1 of the report and the free text answers were included within Annex 2. In addition to the questionnaire, comments were received against sections of the local plan document and the responses were included in Annex 3 together with the officer response. It was highlighted that the level of detail provided on these responses reflected the early stage in plan-preparation.

During discussion, Members welcomed the positive response to optimising the density on development sites within Tonbridge, particularly on those sites within the town centre and maximising their potential for residential and mixed-use development.

**RECOMMENDED\*:** That the output of the Regulation 18 consultation, be noted.

**\*Referred to Cabinet**

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**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**HOUSING AND PLANNING SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE**

**18 July 2023**

**Report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health**

**Part 1- Public**

**Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Key Decision**

**1 REGULATION 18 CONSULTATION**

**1.1 This report sets out the full consultation analysis from Regulation 18 consultation. This builds upon the initial results presented to the 6 December meeting (see Annex 5).**

**1.2 Background**

1.2.1 The Council consulted upon the Regulation 18 Local Plan between 22 September and 3 November 2022. In total over 4,000 representations were received. At the 6 December 2022 meeting of this committee members were presented with the initial findings of the Regulation 18 consultation. This included analysis of the online responses only, plus some summary information from key stakeholders.

1.2.2 This report now sets out the full and updated analysis, including responses received by email and letter. These responses will be utilised and drawn upon in preparing the next Regulation 18B document for Spring 2024.

**1.3 Questionnaire responses**

1.3.1 **Annex 1** includes the updated outputs of the questionnaire. These figures provide an update to that presented in December 2022. In total 2228 people responded to the questionnaire, and therefore the proportions below relate to this figure. The key messages from the questionnaire were:

- 71% of responses disagreed with the established settlement hierarchy
- 68% of responses preferred spatial strategy option 1 (outside the Green Belt and AONB boundaries)
- 79% disagreed with 'exceptional circumstances' for release of Green Belt land and 62% supported Green Belt extension
- 90% of responses preferred meeting objectively assessed needs only
- 54% of responses agreed with the windfall allowance methodology

- With reference to Tonbridge 93% preferred option 1 (maximising delivery within the town centre)
  - 92% of responses supported seeking more than 10% biodiversity net gain (if viable).
- 1.3.2 The questionnaire contained 12 questions with free text answers with summaries as below. The full text answers are also included within **Annex 2**.
- 1.3.3 Question 4 asked about the reasons for selecting the spatial strategy option. Given the scale of support for option 1 it is unsurprising that Green Belt and countryside protection were cited as key reasons. Specific matters relating to the implications of the various options on settlements were also raised.
- 1.3.4 Question 6 asked the reasons for selecting the quantum option, as above (Question 5) 90% of respondents favoured meeting the OAN only. Given the support for option 1 the reasoning was largely around the need to reflect national planning policy and more localised issues such as character protection and infrastructure support.
- 1.3.5 Question 26 asked the reasons for the Tonbridge strategy. Responses focussed on the need to protect the Green Belt and the availability of land within the town centre for intensification.
- 1.3.6 Question 29 asked how planning policy should guide town centre development. A considerable number referred to support for the redevelopment of the sites and car parks within the centre in the vicinity of the Angel Centre.
- 1.3.7 Question 43 asked reasons for selecting Green Belt strategy option. Responses included support for Green Belt extension, particularly within the vicinity of Kings Hill, but others expressed concern that Green Belt extension could mean a loss elsewhere. Other concerns relate to a prevention of urban sprawl more generally.
- 1.3.8 Question 48 asked reasons for selecting climate change measures. Responses focussed most specifically upon energy, carbon reduction, flood risk and biodiversity and habitat protection.

## 1.4 Consultation responses

- 1.4.1 In addition to the questionnaire, comments were received against sections of the local plan document. All responses are now included within the [link](#) provided to **Annex 3** of this report. This includes the consultation comment and officer response. The level of detail provided on these responses reflect the early stage in plan-preparation.
- 1.4.2 For data protection purposes this includes the respondent ID and comment only. It should be noted that respondents who provided an email address alongside their response will be alerted through our consultation portal of their ID reference.



There were also 501 responses which did not provide an email address, of which 114 had no postal address or contact details, therefore a letter will be sent to 387 respondents also providing their user ID. The full responses by Chapter are available within **Annex 3**, where respondents will be able to find and view their comment. The following sections set out the key matters raised against each chapter of the local plan.

## **1.5 Introduction and Local Context**

- 1.5.1 Comments expressed concern in relation to the form and format of the consultation and the extent of community awareness of the consultation. Additional comments focused on how comments will be taken into consideration in future versions of the local plan. Reference was also made to the role of the withdrawn local plan and how/whether this has been widely publicised.
- 1.5.2 Respondents also highlighted the wider strategic nature of the Green Belt and the implications of this for the local plan. Comments highlighting the role of the NPPF and the need to adhere to national policy in relation to the approach to housing numbers taken within the borough. A series of responses also highlighted the need for further background evidence to support the settlement hierarchy, and that continuation of the previous approach would not be sufficient without this. General comments in relation to the level and extent of infrastructure provision and road capacity within the borough and the capacity to absorb further growth.
- 1.5.3 Comments relating to local context highlighted demographic changes with more elderly people who need appropriate housing and support, and a need to increase social/affordable housing provision. However, the scale of new housing proposed was cited as being disproportionate to the borough. Others highlighted infrastructure provision issues including that bus provision is inadequate, local roads are overcrowded and greater provision for pedestrians and cyclists and connectivity through public rights of way networks should be made. Other comments focussed on a need to support the retention of good quality agricultural land.

## **1.6 Vision**

- 1.6.1 Comments focused upon the enhanced protection of the rural and historic character of the borough, including through Green Belt, landscape and green space protection. Conversely comments also supported the elements of the vision as identified, but with a need to provide for housing needs through appropriate growth.

## **1.7 Spatial Distribution**

- 1.7.1 Many of the comments in this section referred to specific elements of national planning policy and how the council is required to adhere to this. Specifically the role of Objectively Assessed Needs, and whether this should be met or exceeded, with comments against this section of the plan broadly split. Related to this, some

comments suggested that the SA should have tested a lower than OAN figure, and conversely an OAN plus of up to 20%.

- 1.7.2 These comments also referred to the role of each of the proposed five spatial options, with differing opinions of preference. Option 1 received the greatest level of support, citing concerns about building within the Green Belt. The next most cited option was option 4, in relation to a dispersed pattern of growth with comments relating to utilising brownfield land across all settlements as a preference. Options 2 and 3 had relatively low levels of first preference. The potential for and realism around option 5 (new settlement) was generally questioned, citing concerns around timescale of delivery and likely success.
- 1.7.3 Further comments in this section referred to the role of the settlement hierarchy and the role of settlements including questioning whether Kings Hill or Borough Green should be lower down within the hierarchy. As above, comments highlighted the need for further background to the hierarchy, and how this will influence decisions on the proposed spatial strategy in due course.
- 1.7.4 Similar to other sections, concerns around the infrastructure capacity of the borough as a whole, and the ability to support further growth were questioned. Comments relating to specific infrastructure issues across the borough were raised, including relating to social infrastructure, water and flood risk, transport and accessibility as well as communications capacity. Concern was highlighted in relation to the capacity of Kings Hill.

## **1.8 Housing**

- 1.8.1 While some comments highlighted a need to meet assessed need and boost to housing delivery, with likely shortfall in delivery in early plan period, others contested the detailed calculations/assumptions behind housing provision and affordable housing calculations. The amount of new housing was also identified as disproportionate and unrelated to available infrastructure, including in relation to how housing need also includes need arising from in-borough migration from e.g. London.
- 1.8.2 In terms of location comments focussed upon avoiding placing housing development where this involves green belt/open land loss and coalescence of settlements and ensuring that new development does not overwhelm existing settlements and infrastructure.
- 1.8.3 Support was also provided for delivery on sites ranging for small to large for different household sizes and building types, while others cited that very large new sites should be avoided and that small scale growth for each settlement and higher densities would be more appropriate. Support was provided for a wide variety of suitable/deliverable sites and a flexible mix of types to meet need. Comments also highlighted a need to link new housing to local employment

provision and accessibility, and to recognise the contribution of SME builders as in NPPF.

- 1.8.4 Comments within this section also included support for the provision of additional affordable housing, more social and not for profit housing, self and custom-build provision and new housing for groups including older persons. Support was also provided for re-establishing council house building. Appearance, build quality and environmental performance of new housing were also cited as in need of improvement.

## **1.9 Economic Development**

- 1.9.1 Comments frequently highlighted a lack of employment land, reduction in industrial stock and imbalance of demand for employment against supply, and how this must be addressed by the emerging Local Plan. The labour supply scenario within part 1 of the Economic Development Needs Study was also supported. Support for free or reduced parking charges was also suggested as an incentive to shop locally whereas a lack of investment in strategic and local infrastructure also attracted comments.

- 1.9.2 Other comments highlighted a loss of local employment and businesses from a potential loss of golf course and agricultural land. The importance of the rural economy was also emphasised, including viticulture which should be supported through policies.

## **1.10 Transport**

- 1.10.1 A good level of support was expressed for the transport challenges outlined. However, significant concerns about highway and junction capacity and related congestion that could be created by further development, affecting specific junctions. Related concerns about rat running, the maintenance of roads and that this could worsen with increased traffic and road safety especially for vulnerable road users. Other concerns related to the potential implications of additional traffic upon local air quality, especially within designated AQMA's.
- 1.10.2 Support was provided for improvements for walking, cycling and public transport improvements, in preference to additional road capacity. Where these are provided, they need to be well connected, sensitively designed and delivered at an early stage in the development process. However, others questioned the ability to shift travel behaviour away from car usage.
- 1.10.3 Many comments highlighted the recent reduction in bus services serving Peters Village and Kings Hill and the lack of a frequent bus service from Kings Hill to West Malling station and no bus service between Kings Hill and Tonbridge. The rising cost and availability of home-school bus travel options and need for better integration of bus and rail timetables were also highlighted. Regarding rail, concern was expressed about the connectivity and frequency of services on the main line via Maidstone East and Swanley and that the new hourly service to

London Bridge is at the expense of the peak only Blackfriars service. Support was also expressed for more services and enhanced station facilities.

- 1.10.4 Comments also highlighted insufficient quantity of residential parking in new developments which causes issues including pavement parking and support for more electric vehicle charging points in public car parks.

## **1.11 Tonbridge**

- 1.11.1 Comments in this section focussed on opportunities to increase development within the town centre and that the open car parking is a poor use of space, and a preference for option 1 (densification). Support was also provided for further independent and local businesses within the town centre. Others highlighted the need to promote Tonbridge and its green and heritage assets. Generally public transport connectivity was highlighted as being good, but more could be done to provide mode integration at the station, bus and cycle.

## **1.12 Retail**

- 1.12.1 Comments highlighted issues with the quality, quantity and distribution of retail, particularly in Tonbridge High Street, where retail offer is lacking. Respondents highlighted that to undertake 'quality shopping' they need to go outside the borough. Other comments queried the existing town centre hierarchy, specifically district centre / rural retail centre for Borough Green and Hildenborough.
- 1.12.2 Other comments highlighted that parking is expensive and limited, suggesting removal or reduction in parking charges to entice people to shop locally. Opposition to drive thru restaurants and fast-food outlets also highlighted.

## **1.13 Community facilities**

- 1.13.1 Within this section respondents generally expressed concerns in relation to water supply, sewer capacity, gas, electricity, roads, doctors' appointment availability, bus/rail services and school places. Other comments stated that the definition of infrastructure should also include amenities and assets, green spaces and corridors and not just sports fields. Similarly, that health infrastructure provision should include hospices. Comments also highlighted a diminished sense of community due to loss of facilities and businesses.
- 1.13.2 Specific comments also relate to the role of NHS land and property and the ability to grow and expand on existing NHS sites and on land across the borough. Infrastructure requirements should consider approved but not yet built applications. Support for adding further evidence in relation to open space and indoor sport and recreation facilities. Comments relating to affording education infrastructure key prioritisation in the list of funding requirements as there are evidenced pressures in the North of the Borough.

## **1.14 Natural Environment**

- 1.14.1 Comments against this section expressed concerns in relation to the loss of agricultural land to development, and the impact this could have on food production and food supplies. Several sites were also suggested for designation as Local Green Spaces including East Malling playing field, Westwood Green (59525) and Carnation Green (59449).
- 1.14.2 A lot of the comments focussed on whether the council should be sticking with 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), as per the Environment Act, or seeking to exceed this. Majority of responses do not support exceeding 10% due to viability concerns. There is general support for allocating sites for BNG in the Local Plan. Incorporating biodiversity into the design of new developments was also generally supported. Other concerns related to the loss of Green Belt and impact of development in the AONBs.

## **1.15 Built Environment**

- 1.15.1 Comments tended to highlight how the built and historic environment is vitally important, but all design aspects are equally important. The historic environment is integral to the built environment. Comments also highlighted how the preparation of a heritage strategy is positive and would be welcomed when published.

## **1.16 Green Belt**

- 1.16.1 As highlighted in other sections the fundamental message related to safeguarding the Green Belt and preventing further development within these locations. Comments also identified the need to retain the openness around and preserve the character of individual settlement places. Similarly, others highlighted the role Green Belt protection can play in protecting visual quality, agriculture, nature conservation and ameliorating pollution impacts.
- 1.16.2 Support was also provided for the expansion of the Green Belt in various places, including in East Peckham and around East Malling. Other comments highlighted that other land is available without building on the GB and new homes in current urban areas should be prioritised.
- 1.16.3 Conversely, others highlighted that exceptional circumstances include the need to deliver housing as brownfield land supply is not currently sufficient.

## **1.17 Climate Change**

- 1.17.1 Comments supported a focus on climate change which should be a positive aspect of the plan. A flexible approach is needed on mitigation/adaptation methods to address climate change. Tree coverage/planting would be difficult to impose a set policy on due to viability factors. Modern methods of construction

(MMC's) would be difficult to impose a specific policy on this as its very much market driven and not appropriate at every site.

## 1.18 Appendix B Sites

1.18.1 Since a majority of the comments received were in relation to appendix B it is unsurprising that they tended to raise site specific matters. Table 1 below sets out the key topics raised for each ward (please note old ward boundaries were in place at the time).

Table 1- Appendix B comments

Aylesford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical detail and other site-specific issues relating to flood risk</li> <li>• Comments relating to infrastructure provision and minerals extraction licences at sites</li> </ul>
Barming and Teston	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site specific issues, including relating flood risk</li> </ul>
Borough Green and Long Mill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site specific issues, including loss of Green Belt, AONB, green spaces, and wildlife and infrastructure demands of development within the ward</li> <li>• Concerns over disproportionate size of development, increase in traffic on rural roads, infrastructure demands, shortage of parking and merging of settlements.</li> <li>• Loss of high-grade agricultural land</li> </ul>
Burham and Wouldham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site specific issues, including relating to potential loss of agricultural land and traffic issues</li> <li>• Site specific issues, including relating flood risk</li> </ul>
Cage Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site specific issues relating to access and traffic, infrastructure provision</li> <li>• Issues relating to the role and value of green spaces and the impacts of potential loss</li> </ul>
Castle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site specific issues relating to the role and value of green spaces and local sports facilities</li> <li>• Site specific issues relating to the Green Belt designation in this area and the influence on sites</li> </ul>
Ditton	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site specific issues, including relating to infrastructure demands of development within the ward</li> <li>• Clarification relating to the form of employment proposed on site</li> </ul>
Downs and Mereworth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development within the Greenbelt and loss of countryside.</li> <li>• Loss of biodiversity and wildlife.</li> <li>• Additional impact on infrastructure where the existing cannot already cope.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of agricultural land</li> <li>• Impact on countryside access and loss of footpaths and bridleways</li> <li>• Loss of ancient woodland</li> <li>• Poor access and congestion to local roads</li> </ul>
East Malling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site specific issues relating to loss of Green Belt, agricultural land, open space and biodiversity, impact on heritage assets and aquifer.</li> <li>• Concerns over increase in traffic on rural roads, infrastructure demands and merging of settlements.</li> <li>• Local Green Space sites identified for potential designation including 59450, 59448 and 59449</li> <li>• Technical issue relating to management costs for some green spaces (59448, 59450) being paid by existing property owners as part of the Tile deeds.</li> </ul>
Hadlow and East Peckham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site specific issues relating to loss of Green Belt and access</li> <li>• Substantial site-specific flooding and surface water drainage issues raised</li> </ul>
Higham	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site specific issues relating to infrastructure provision, flood risk, traffic and protected species</li> <li>• Comments relating to the need to adhere to national planning policy, in relation to the Green Belt</li> <li>• Issues relating to the role and value of green spaces and the impacts of potential loss</li> </ul>
Hildenborough	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site specific matters in relation to the loss of green and amenity spaces</li> <li>• Site specific comments relating to flood risk in particular locations as well as local facilities, infrastructure, access and traffic issues</li> <li>• Infrastructure issues including the existence of the large oil pipeline which runs through particular sites and how this relates to development potential</li> <li>• Issues relating to Green Belt designations for sites and how these impact upon the form and character of Hildenborough, and questioning of the 'exceptional circumstances'</li> <li>• Comments relating to air quality and the need for AQMA</li> <li>• Need for a separation from Tonbridge and to protect a separate identity</li> </ul>
Judd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments focusing on particular sites and the impact of potential loss in play space or green space</li> <li>• Site specific issues relating to infrastructure provision, in particular schools, road access and traffic movements</li> <li>• Technical detail and other site-specific issues relating to</li> </ul>

	<p>flood risk</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments relating to the extent of potential development within Tonbridge</li> </ul>
Kings Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of green and amenity spaces and the effect this has on both health/well-being and biodiversity/wildlife</li> <li>• Loss of ancient woodland</li> <li>• Objections to building on or near Local Nature Reserve. Harm to conservation area</li> <li>• Concern regarding the potential loss of golf course</li> <li>• Infrastructure issues including pressures on parking, traffic, doctors' surgeries and school places</li> <li>• Kings Hill is already overdeveloped.</li> </ul>
Larkfield North	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site specific matters in relation to the loss of green and amenity spaces and the impacts of loss of car parking</li> </ul>
Larkfield South	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site specific matters in relation to the loss of green and amenity spaces and the impacts of loss of car parking</li> <li>• Comments relating to the lack of social infrastructure provision to support any new development within this location</li> </ul>
Medway	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Comments relating to the role of the Green Belt and infrastructure provision, including access, highway capacity and traffic issues</li> <li>• Technical site-specific issues relating to flood risk</li> </ul>
Snodland East and Ham Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site specific issues relating to green infrastructure, infrastructure provision and flood risk</li> <li>• Technical site-specific issues relating to flood risk</li> <li>• Identified site deemed unavailable</li> </ul>
Snodland West and Holborough Lakes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site specific issues relating to green infrastructure and infrastructure provision</li> <li>• Identified site deemed unavailable</li> </ul>
South Aylesford	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Technical site-specific issues relating to flood risk</li> </ul>
Trench	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site specific comments relating to the role of the Green Belt and the evidence required for any potential release</li> <li>• Site specific matters in relation to the loss of green and amenity spaces</li> <li>• Comments highlighting innovation and how this should be required in placemaking, e.g. through use of technology</li> <li>• Site specific comments including access, highway capacity and traffic issues</li> </ul>
Vauxhall	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site specific matters in relation to the loss of green spaces and sports grounds, and car parking</li> <li>• Comments relating to access and traffic issues</li> </ul>



Wateringbury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concerns regarding the capacity of infrastructure including doctor's surgeries and schools and local facilities</li> <li>• Air quality issues at the detriment to wellbeing of residents</li> <li>• Comments relating to the Green Belt and support for brownfield development in advance of greenfield, and concern about loss of high value agricultural land</li> <li>• Comments relating to the role of Kings Hill in the settlement hierarchy given the number of facilities present</li> <li>• Site specific comments, with some support for smaller sites, but objection to the scale of larger sites, including for the impact on the character of the area</li> <li>• Site specific comments relating to the potential loss of the golf course</li> <li>• Site specific issues relating to traffic, access and highway capacity and harm to conservation areas</li> <li>• Site specific flooding and surface water drainage issues and potential harm to aquifers, and concerns around water supply</li> </ul>
West Malling and Leybourne	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site specific issues relating to loss of Green Belt, green space, AONB, impact on Conservation Areas.</li> <li>• Concerns over increase in traffic on rural roads, infrastructure demands and merging of settlements.</li> <li>• Lack of infrastructure concerns</li> <li>• Loss of agricultural land</li> </ul>
Wrotham, Ightham and Stansted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Site specific issues, including relating to AONB, transport and access and flooding issues</li> <li>• Comments relating to the role of the Green Belt in this locations, including prevention of settlement coalescence</li> </ul>

## 1.19 Sustainability Appraisal responses

1.19.1 In addition to the above, over 2500 comments were received against the Sustainability Appraisal. Where relevant, these comments are in the process of being analysed by the consultants, who will then amend the Sustainability Appraisal document where required. These comments will form part of the SA appendix report and/or the local plan consultation statement alongside Regulation 18B.

1.19.2 Many responses queried the scoring of individual sites against the SA objectives, rather than commenting on the options, highlighting perceived inconsistencies in site scoring, and limited justification to explain these. Some respondents indicated the SA was too complicated and unwieldy, while others felt it was too simplistic and not based on sufficient evidence. Other responses considered that an option for delivering below OAN should have been tested, that the Green Belt was not considered when scoring sites or that the frequency transport services has not been factored into the assessment.

- 1.19.3 Other comments included loss of high-quality agricultural land, and the resulting impact on food production was not given sufficient weight in the SA. Concerns that the SA doesn't factor in existing infrastructure deficiencies or that climate change was not given sufficient weight in the SA. Others highlighted some inaccuracies in the data/assessment e.g. where a doctor's surgery had recently closed.
- 1.19.4 Other responses related more to the local plan, with some support for Spatial Strategy Option 1 and support for preventing the coalescence of settlements outside the Green Belt.

## 1.20 Next Steps

- 1.20.1 As above it is proposed that the team communicate with all respondents to inform them of their respondent IDs to allow them to search for the council response. The team will also be working with the Communications team to communicate that the outcomes of the Regulation 18 consultation are available to view, the next steps and the new local plan timetable.

## 1.21 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 1.21.1 There will be direct financial and value for money considerations associated with local plan preparation. To be able to meet deadlines within the proposed transition period (set out within the government's NPPF consultation) for the preparation of the local plan this means that there will be increased spend over the next five years. This was reported to members at the June meeting of this committee.

## 1.22 Legal Implications

- 1.22.1 Local Planning Authorities are required to prepare and keep an up-to-date development plan for their area. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase 2004 (as amended) and the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended) set out the requirements and the statutory process for the preparation of a Local Plan.

## 1.23 Risk Assessment

- 1.23.1 The preparation of the new local plan will provide the council with an up-to-date Local Plan on adoption. This will alleviate the current risks associated with not having an up-to-date development plan in place, however current government proposals within the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill would mean that the penalties of not having a plan in place may be weakened. There are reputational risks should the local plan programme not be delivered on time.
- 1.23.2 **Annex 4** shows the current local plan risks and issues, which includes two high risk items where risk escalation measures have been triggered. These relate to changes in political direction or delay to procurement or amendment of scope of the Green Belt study, including in light of NPPF consultation outcomes.

## 1.24 Equality Impact Assessment

1.24.1 The decisions recommended through this report have relevance to the substance of the Equality Act 2010. The stages in plan preparation will be undertaken in accordance with the new Statement of Community Involvement which ensures that planning policy consultations are accessible to all, irrespective of protected characteristics. An Equalities Impact Assessment is being undertaken alongside the preparation of the next stages of the Local Plan.

## 1.25 Recommendations

HPSSC is asked to recommend to Cabinet:

1.25.1 NOTE the output of the Regulation 18 consultation.

Background papers:

Annex 1- Full questionnaire outcomes

Annex 2- Questionnaire text answers

Annex 3- [Link](#) to Full consultation response documents

Annex 4- Current risks and issues

Annex 5- HPSSC December 2022 report

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## **GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT - SERVICE DELIVERY REVIEW**

### **Item CE 23/31 referred from Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee of 19 July 2023**

(Reasons: LGA 1972 - Sch 12A Paragraph 3 - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information))

Careful consideration was given to the future delivery options of the grounds maintenance services, taking into account a review report provided by Waste Consulting LLP (WCL), attached at Annex 1, and a further options analysis report prepared by services, attached at Annex 2.

Service Specification of the current contract, as summarised in Annex 3, provided additional cost information to enable Members to review and identify potential areas of saving, in addition to the areas which had been identified and proposed by services as outlined in 1.5.3 of the report.

With regard to the environmental additions/improvements, a number of possible considerations were highlighted in the consultancy report, including the reduction in cutting frequency, replacing annual planting (bedding) with more sustainable options, reviewing the use of chemicals and additional tree planting. However, Members were reminded that consideration would need to be given to what was operationally achievable and financially deliverable.

There was an in-depth discussion on the additional potential areas of saving and the environmental considerations, with reference being made to preserving natural environment and seeking support from local businesses. Members were invited to put forward further suggestions to services for inclusion in the consideration of formal alterations to the service specification, which were anticipated to be brought to Members for approval at a future meeting of the Scrutiny Select Committee.

Members had due regard to the legal implications, financial and value for money considerations, risk assessment, equality impact assessment and policy considerations.

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

- (1) with regard to the option for future delivery of grounds maintenance services, an external procurement exercise be progressed, and the work previously undertaken by the external consultants, WCL, be updated, including the preparation of a Public Sector Comparator;
- (2) the proposed list of potential areas of saving in respect of the service specification of the contract, as outlined in 1.5.3 of the report, be noted, and further consideration be given to additional potential areas of saving; and

- (3) further consideration be given to the current and future options within the contract with regard to the Climate Change agenda.

**\* Referred to Cabinet**

## **RISK MANAGEMENT**

### **Item AU 23/31 referred from Audit Committee of 24 July 2023**

The report of the Management Team provided an update on the risk management process and the Strategic Risk Register.

Following the publication of the Corporate Plan, the decision had been taken to split the previous risk of Corporate Plan and Savings and Transformation Strategy (STS). By itself, the Corporate Strategy was an amber risk and not red as previously categorised when combined with the STS. There were no changes to those risks categorised as red at the time of the last meeting, but Members noted, that following the outcome of the local elections in May, the risk titled 'Political factors including stability of political leadership and decision making' had been escalated to red.

**RECOMMENDED\*:** That the updates to the Strategic Risk Register since the last iteration, with particular emphasis on those risks categorised as RED, be noted.

**\*Referred to Cabinet**

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# TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

## AUDIT COMMITTEE

24 July 2023

### Report of the Management Team

#### Part 1- Public

#### Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet

## 1 RISK MANAGEMENT

**An update on the risk management process and the Strategic Risk Register.**

### 1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 The Risk Management Strategy sets out the Council's risk management objectives and details the roles and responsibilities of officers, Members and the Council's partners in the identification, evaluation and cost-effective control of risks.
- 1.1.2 The Council's risk management arrangements are designed to ensure that risks are reduced to an acceptable level or, where reasonable, eliminated thereby safeguarding the Council's assets, employees and customers and the delivery of services to the local community. Examples of risk include budget deficit, cyber/data loss, environmental and reputational.
- 1.1.3 The Council endeavours to pursue a forward-looking and dynamic approach to delivering services to the local community and will not be averse to taking a degree of commercial risk. However, it will always exercise a prudent approach to risk taking and decisions will be made within the parameters of the Council's internal control arrangements, i.e. Constitution, Procedural Rules, etc. These arrangements will serve to ensure that the Council does not expose itself to risks above an acceptable level.
- 1.1.4 The current Risk Management Strategy was endorsed by this Committee in January and subsequently adopted by Full Council on 21 February 2023.

### 1.2 Risk Management Escalation Process

- 1.2.1 Effectively risks are assessed/scored in terms of their likelihood/impact.
- 1.2.2 Any risk evaluated as 'High Risk' (score of 15 or above) will be deemed by the Council to be beyond 'risk tolerance' and to have exceeded its 'risk appetite' and will be escalated immediately. Such risks should be added to the service's risk register and discussed at the earliest opportunity within the Service Management

Team (SMT) to inform a decision as to whether this should be escalated to Management Team by the respective Service Director. Management Team should then consider whether the risk is significant enough for inclusion in the Strategic Risk Register and action this if relevant. A record should be maintained of risks discussed at both SMTs and Management Team and the outcome of those discussions.

- 1.2.3 Similarly risks identified as “Medium Risk” may be escalated to the appropriate SMT for advice and to ensure they are kept fully aware of the current risks being faced. Risks determined as “Low Risk” should be managed within the service team. It is recommended that SMTs consider periodic review or moderation processes for Service Risk Registers to ensure they are happy with the scores risks have been given and confirm whether there are ‘Medium’ or ‘Low’ risks they wish to consider further.

### 1.3 Strategic Risk Register

- 1.3.1 The Strategic Risk Register (SRR) is considered to be a ‘live’ document and is updated, as often as is required, by the Management Team. An update of the current strategic risks and how they are being managed as at the time of writing is appended at **[Annex 1]**.

- 1.3.2 Management team have taken the decision to split the previous risk of Corporate Plan and Savings and Transformation Strategy (STS) following the publication of the Corporate Plan at Council on the 11<sup>th</sup> July. By itself, the Corporate Strategy is an amber risk and not red as previously categorised when combined with the STS.

- 1.3.3 The risks categorised as **RED** at the time of the April meeting is given below and **remains the case**.

- 1) Financial position/budget deficit
- 2) Economic Stability
- 3) Savings and Transformation Strategy
- 4) Local Plan
- 5) Organisational Development including recruitment and retention/skills mix
- 6) Homes for Ukraine Scheme
- 7) Implementation of the Agile software system

- 1.3.4 Since April following the elections one further risk has been escalated to a red risk being

8) **Political factors including stability of political leadership and decision making**

1.3.5 Members are asked to note the updates in red font since the last iteration of the Register.

1.3.6 Following the recommendation on the Auditor's Annual Report made in January 2023 minute AU23/4 refers, a direction of travel on the risk scoring has been included on the annex.

**Direction of Travel key:**



Downward or positive movement



No change in movement



Upward or negative movement

1.3.7 There have been changes in scoring in respect of the following areas of the register

- **Corporate Plan - showing a downward / reduction in scoring**
- **Political factors including stability of political leadership and decision making, due to the recent elections and party breakdown Management Team feel there is a higher risk of change and have therefore increased the scoring appropriately**

No other scores have been changed.

## **1.4 Ongoing Risks and Risks Identified by Service Management Teams and Management Team**

1.4.1 To give Members some reassurance as to the effectiveness of risk management outcomes from the risk management escalation process are reported to the meetings of this Committee unless that is there is something that needs to be brought to Members' attention in the interim.

1.4.2 A schedule of ongoing risks and risks identified by Service Management Teams and Management Team since the last report to this Committee in April is appended at **[Annex 2]**.

## **1.5 Legal Implications**

1.5.1 There is a Health and Safety requirement for effective risk management to be in place and the Strategy supports this requirement.

- 1.5.2 There is also a requirement in the Accounts and Audit Regulations that accounting control systems must include measures to ensure that risk is appropriately managed.

## **1.6 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

- 1.6.1 Financial issues may arise in mitigating risk which will be managed within existing budget resources or reported to Members if this is not possible.
- 1.6.2 Effective risk management arrangements make a positive contribution to ensuring value for money is provided in the delivery of services.

## **1.7 Risk Assessment**

- 1.7.1 Sound risk management arrangements aid the Council in effective strategic decision-making. The Council's approach to risk should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure it is up to date and operating effectively.
- 1.7.2 Officers have now been provided with Risk Management Training to assist with service and operational risk assessment in order to aid the escalation process to Management Team. Further Risk Management Training is being sourced for all Members of the Council and officers will be providing details in due course.

## **1.8 Equality Impact Assessment**

- 1.8.1 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.

## **1.9 Policy Considerations**

- 1.9.1 Risk management is relevant to all areas of the Council's business.

## **1.10 Recommendations**

- 1.10.1 Members are asked to **NOTE** the updates to the Strategic Risk Register since the last iteration with particular emphasis on those risks categorised as **RED**, and the direction of travel of all risks.

Background papers:

contact: Sharon Shelton

Nil

Sharon Shelton

Director of Finance and Transformation on behalf of the Management Team



No	Risk Title	Risk Type	Consequences	Date identified	Likelihood Score	Impact score	Overall risk score	Current Mitigation	Desired Likelihood Score	Desired Impact score	Desired risk score	Actions required to ensure mitigation remains	Links to Corporate Objectives / Strategies	Lead on behalf of Management Team	Direction of Travel	Review Date
1	Safeguarding and PREVENT	S, R	Significant impact should a child, young person or adults at risk come to harm, including radicalisation and child sex exploitation, and TMBC are unable to demonstrate appropriate processes were in place.	01/04/2017	3	4	12	<p>The responsibility for safeguarding is with the Chief Executive, rather than an individual service and a review implemented.</p> <p>Audit Review undertaken, identifying areas of weakness to be address, progress to date with positive direction noted.</p> <p>Training delivered to all Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers.</p> <p>Secure Database in place, with secure access, for recording of safeguarding concerns and referrals onto other agencies</p> <p>Community Hub telephone contact line remains available and support can be re-established for any urgent need or in the event of further lockdowns and/or tighter restrictions.</p>	3	4	12	<p>Continue to refer Safeguarding concerns to appropriate agencies where necessary and also raise with partners at the weekly CSU meetings. Undertake actions from the latest Safeguarding Audit and update Safeguarding Policy.</p>	Safeguarding Policy	Chief Executive	↻	As required
2	Financial position/budget deficit	F, R	<p>Financially unstable organisation. Failure to deliver a balanced budget, detrimental impact on quality of service, increased intervention.</p> <p>Failure to maximise New Homes Bonus (for as long as it exists).</p> <p>Coronavirus pandemic had significant economic implications for the Council, businesses and residents.</p> <p>Current economic climate due to escalating inflation has significant economic implications for the Council, businesses and residents</p>	01/04/2017	4	4	16	<p>The Council provides an annual statement (as a minimum) on the following areas;</p> <p>Treasury Management and Investment Strategy.</p> <p>Robustness of estimates and adequacy of reserves.</p> <p>Effective monitoring control procedures.</p> <p>Savings and Transformation Strategy (STS) reviewed and updated.</p> <p>Unqualified Audit and Value for Money Opinion contained with Annual Audit Letter.</p> <p>Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) updated and shared regularly with Cabinet to keep members aware of current financial situation.</p> <p>Business Rates income monitored. Decision taken with partners for TMBC to re-join the Kent pool for 2023/24</p> <p>Local government finance settlement for 23/24 better than expected. However beyond 24/25 uncertainty remains</p> <p>The current bank rates as set by Bank of England are currently assisting the investment income derived from investments. The outturn for 2022/23 as reported to Cabinet in June showed an additional contribution to General Revenue Reserve.</p> <p>Energy prices liability with Leisure Trust being managed as a service fee - funding provided from Budget Stabilisation Reserve</p>	3	3	9	<p>Areas of potential savings yet to be identified and prioritised, with commitment to delivery of those selected.</p> <p>Commissioning of service reviews via MT to identify potential areas of transformation and savings.</p> <p>Review of key strategic assets to be completed, including office accommodation.</p> <p>Continue to provide regular reports to Cabinet and work to identify potential sources of saving/income generation.</p> <p>MT considering the employment of a fixed term transformation resource to assist with identification and delivery of efficiencies</p> <p>Assess the potential financial impact of the Government's Extended Producer Responsibility (ERP) scheme in relation to Waste and Recycling which is currently still being drawn up. At the present time without further information it is unclear how this will impact in the Council's finances (positively or otherwise)</p> <p>Await and assess the outcome of the Government's consultation and review of New Homes Bonus. This was anticipated Spring 2023</p> <p>Three key financial risks were highlighted to Members: namely Waste, Homelessness and Local Plan. All three have significant financial implications for the Council in different ways. Consultants were engaged in respect of Homelessness to find ways of reducing cost and finding more efficient ways of delivering the mandatory function. Discussions with Waste contractor continue with regards to performance and garden waste. Resubmission of local plan has been reported to Members and decisions made about way forward. The additional costs were factored into budget reports from 22/23.</p> <p>Use of reserves likely over Medium Term in order to support revenue budget but it is imperative that savings are identified and delivered.</p>	Vision- to be a financially sustainable Council. Taking a business-like approach.	Director of Finance and Transformation	↻	Sep-23



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3	Economic Stability	F	Financial impact and effect on the economy as well as uncertainty around current EU legislation, i.e. what replaces it, could have a significant financial impact and lead to legislative changes impacting on finance and resources. A number of key threats to business continuity including: border delays and congestion impacts on the Kent road network creating difficulties for local businesses, TMBC staff and potential air quality issues; loss of KCC staff e.g. welfare/social services support; potential loss of TMBC waste contract workforce, general increase in costs as imports become restricted.  Coronavirus pandemic has significant economic implications for businesses and residents.  Current high rates of inflation likely to have wider impact on community and businesses	01/04/2017	4	4	16	Kent-wide working to understand, plan for and react to pressures.  Regular review of; MTFS reflecting economic factors  Treasury Management and Investment strategies.  All staff equipped to be able to work from home and deliver public services and arrangements set out in adopted working policy  Delivery of Household Support funds in liaison with KCC  Delivery of government schemes (e.g. related to energy) to mitigate impacts on households	3	4	12	Council continuing to work with Kent Resilience forum and County Partnership groups as needed  Keep Business Impact assessments under review.  Business continuity planning updated to ensure smooth running of services to public.  Finalisation of government energy support schemes (now closed)  Household Support Fund tranche 4 approved by Cabinet July 2023 and to be rolled out	N/A - external risk.	Chief Executive / Director of Finance and Transformation/ Management Team		Sep-23
4	Corporate Strategy	F, R, S	The lack of an up to date Corporate Strategy could lead to a lack of strategic direction for the Council, and lead to a lack of clarity about priorities, and the ability to meet objectives and make savings.	04/01/2017	4	3	12	Following the Peer Challenge Review (PCR), a draft Corporate Strategy was produced and benefited from staff consultation in November 2022 and Cabinet and O&S consideration ahead of going out to public consultation in Jan-Feb 2023. The findings from this consultation, along with aligned KPIs and draft Action Plan went to Cabinet and O&S in Spring 2023 and the final version will go back to Cabinet and Council in July 2023 for adoption.	3	2	6	Final adoption of the Corporate Strategy 2023-2027, along with annual action plan and KPI's that will ensure overview of performance.	The current Corporate Strategy to be a financially sustainable Council 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, and maximising commercial opportunities. New Corporate Strategy has a vision to "be an innovative and forward thinking council that leads the people and businesses of the borough towards a vibrant, prosperous and sustainable future".	Chief Executive		Nov-23
4a	Savings and Transformation Strategy	F, R, S	Failure to meet objectives and/or make savings, including those arising from the planned West Kent Waste Partnership. Impact on quality of service, budget overspends, salami slicing, etc. staff motivation impacted and increased risk of fraud or error.  Coronavirus pandemic and the subsequent economic crisis has significant economic implications for the Council, businesses and residents.	01/04/2017	4	4	16	STS reviewed and updated in line with review of MTFS. With regular reports to update MT and Members  MTFS and STS updated and approved by Council in Feb 2023. Funding gap estimated to be £1.7m, with tranche 1 of this (£0.5m) to be delivered by April 2024.	3	3	9	Areas of potential savings to be formally identified and prioritised, with commitment to delivery of those selected.  Commissioning of in service reviews via MT to identify potential areas of transformation and savings. MT considering employment of fixed term transformation resource to assist in identification and delivery of efficiencies  Strategic asset management review to deliver new income.  Delivery of the savings targets is PARAMOUNT for the financial stability of the Council. Work underway by Cabinet/MT to identify tranche 1 savings of £0.5m	The current Corporate Strategy to be a financially sustainable Council focusing on ensuring good value for money	Chief Executive / Director of Finance and Transformation/ Management Team		Sep-23



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5	Local Plan	F, R	Lack of sound legal footing for Plan through inadequacies in evidence base, legal advice or process, including duty to cooperate. Leading to widespread public concern, or risk of failure at Examination. External factors or widespread planning reforms leading to delays to timetable, reputational risks around plan-making and impacts on development management processes through protracted period with no up-to-date plan. Absence of corporate or external co-ordination leading to a lack of infrastructure to support future development.	01/04/2017	4	4	16	Members are updated via informal email updates and reports to the Housing & Planning Scrutiny Select Committee  Reg 18 concluded in late 2022  Members considering options for progression at HPSSC March 2023, with an aim to have a <del>Proposed informal engagement with members on emerging spatial strategy in Spring 2023</del> The Council has decided to continue progressing the Local Plan under the current legislative and Proposed informal engagement with members on emerging spatial strategy in Spring 2023	3	3	9	Regular review of Government policy announcements that may impact on delivery, including housing standard methodology and WMS relating to Planning  Ongoing engagement with Counsel  Ongoing engagement with Members  Regular analysis of budget position  Regular analysis of programme - within Policy team on a weekly basis, reporting to Head of Planning/DPHEH bi-weekly.	Local Plan assists in economic growth, delivering the supply of future housing and addressing affordability. Procedures set by National Government	Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health		Sep-23
6	Organisational development inc. staff recruitment and retention/skills mix. Impact of loss of capacity caused by recruitment difficulties upon delivery of corporate objectives. Increase in rate of inflation and consequent pressure on level of pay award.	F, R, S	Lack of resources or the right skills to deliver required outcomes, loss of key professionals/senior officers due to pay constraints and pressures, reduced staff morale and quality of work, leading to financial loss, reputational damage and detrimental impact on staff wellbeing.	01/04/2017	4	4	16	Review of staff resources and skills via service reviews.  Organisational structure reviews are part of S&TS to achieve efficiency, coordinated service delivery and reflect changing legislative and policy requirements and priorities.  <b>New market supplement and 'golden hello' recruitment and retention salary package offer being proposed to General Purposes Committee on 3 July 2023. Focused on the recruitment and retention of RTP1 qualified planning staff.</b>	3	4	12	Succession planning along with Development of further skills and expertise through strategies such as shared services and specialist Commissioning.  Engagement of external consultants and specialists where required.  Resilience and rationalisation of existing structures.  <b>Recruitment and retention strategy reviewed by MT. R&amp;R report to be submitted to GP Committee and Council in July 2023 re hard to recruit to posts</b>  Pay award for 2023/24 5% for all staff, from April 2023. Backdated 5% to Jan 23 for scales 1-6  Structural reviews approved by Members on an ongoing basis.  HR staff recruited with specialist experience in recruitment. This was demonstrated with a revised methodology for the recruitment of the DPHEH and Head of IT.  Workforce Strategy approved by General Purposes Committee in June 2022	HR Strategy Savings and Transformation Strategy	Director of Central Services and Deputy Chief Executive/ Chief Executive		Oct-23
7	Health and Safety	F, R, S	Significant reputational impact should a service user, officer, member or contractor come to harm and TMBC are unable to demonstrate appropriate processes were in place.	01/04/2017	3	4	12	Lone working policy and service based practices to be continuously monitored.  Health and Safety considered by management at weekly SMT meetings.  Staff involvement with Health & Safety Group  Ongoing review undertaken to react to potential key risk areas.  Organisational learning and response to national events.  Incident and near miss reporting.	2	3	6	Embedding and dissemination of good practice through staff briefings.  Corporate Health and Safety Group (chaired by DPHEH) identifying cross organisational issues with feedback to Management Team and Health and Safety Officer.  All services have reviewed all their Health & Safety local Procedures in particular Lone working and service specific risk assessments.  Staff survey on H&W completed spring 2021, results reviewed and a future survey will be incorporated into general staff survey approach  Corporate Health & Safety Policies and procedures are up to date and reviewed regularly which all staff can access.  Continuing focus on risk assessment process including reviews as a result of Coronavirus pandemic. Further staff wellbeing survey to focus on working at home and wellbeing.	Staff wellbeing and customer care underpin the Council's fundamental service and corporate objectives	Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health		Oct-23

Direction of Travel key



Downward or positive movement



No change in movement



Upward or negative movement

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8	Compliance with legislation	F, R	Failure to meet legislative requirements or statutory obligations may result in loss of personal data, financial penalties and/or damage to the Council's reputation.	01/04/2017	3	4	12	<p>The Council has a nominated Data Protection Officer and a separate Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO)</p> <p>Assessment of Legal implications included within all reports to Members.</p> <p>GDPR requirements are addressed by two officer groups, Information Governance Group and Procurement OSG, which includes Legal representation.</p> <p>CPD and Professional Monitoring offered to all staff</p> <p>The Council has undertaken both Corporate Governance and GDPR reviews / audits. Code of Corporate Governance reported to members on an annual basis.</p> <p>Legal Services give sign off of key corporate projects</p>	2	3	6	<p>The Council continues to disseminate new legislative requirements to both Officers and Members.</p> <p>Officers ensure that professional update training is undertaken.</p> <p>Members received GDPR training in July 2018, with all officers completing e-learning on GDPR by May 2018. GDPR training is a requirement for all new starters and is offered through the TMBC Learning portal.</p> <p>Revised constitution approved by Members in July 2019. Further amendments submitted since that date to Council as and when required. Governance changes approved in April 2022 led to further revisions to Constitution. Regular review by Monitoring Officer and reports to full Council (most recently at Annual Council 2023).</p> <p>Additional GDPR and Cyber Awareness Training undertaken by all staff and members, completion date of October 2019.</p>	Information Governance Policy	Director of Central Services and Deputy Chief Executive		As required



Direction of Travel key



Downward or positive movement



No change in movement



Upward or negative movement

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9	Cyber Security	F, R	Loss of data and legislative breach, leading to financial penalties and reputational impact.	01/04/2017	3	4	12	<p>The Council has; Information Security Policy deployed via Policy Management System.</p> <p>Implemented network security measures including access controls.</p> <p>Considered cyber insurance. Established an Information Governance Group. Appointed a Member Cyber Champion.</p> <p>Rolled out Cyber awareness training to all staff and Members via eLearning.</p> <p>Deployed 'Next generation' Palo Alto firewall technology for improved visibility and control. Deployed software solution to identify potential confidential data held on file servers. Deployed DLP software at email egress point.</p> <p>Implemented secure email in accordance with NCSC guidelines.</p> <p>Maintained dual level firewall security with the KPSN gateway being primary and the Council's own firewalls secondary. Implemented Solarwinds Security Event Manager.</p> <p>1 member of IT team obtained Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP) qualification October 2020.</p> <p>Implemented cloud backup and DR facilities to improve resilience; and embedded cyber security into DR and BCP processes.</p> <p>Continued to monitor Cybersecurity alerts via LGA Cyber Security email; through membership of NLAWARP and CISP; and attending information sharing events such as Kent Connects Information Security Group.</p> <p>Cloud based web and email filtering has been deployed to improve availability and resilience.</p> <p>Completed firewall ruleset review following migration to Cloud to ensure our configuration is in line with best practice guidelines.</p> <p>Carried out phishing simulation exercise as first phase of awareness training for staff and members, to highlight areas of risk and to identify training needs. Subsequent online training sent out to all staff and members.</p> <p>Carried out phishing training quiz for all staff as second phase of phishing awareness campaign. Quiz was extended to Members although take-up has not been as successful. Further training to be targeted.</p> <p>Developed and deployed wallpaper/ lock screen to all TMBC laptops and PCs, with cyber security reminder to further reduce risk by increasing awareness.</p> <p>Head of IT appointed Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) from October 22. This role has responsibility for information and data risk and protection.</p> <p>Obtained Cyber Essentials accreditation in November 2022, demonstrating that our technical controls are designed to defend against the most common cyber threats.</p> <p>NCSC approved cyber security training has been evaluated and made available via the Council's new LMS.</p> <p>Achieved 'Substantial' rating for Cyber Security at Internal Audit Report TM19-2023 &amp; TM07-2023 - Cyber Security and ICT Infrastructure (Combined Report).</p>	3	3	9	<p>The Council has; Prioritised the resources (both financial and staff) to ensure relevant updates and security mitigations are carried out in a timely manner.</p> <p>Scheduled annual IT Health Check (ITHC), quarterly PCI scans, and monthly vulnerability scans, feeding into remediation plans. July 2022 PCI scan passed. Investigating and resolving detected security issues from latest ITHC 8/8/22 - 12/8/22. Next ITHC August 2023.</p> <p>Regular email messages are sent out to all staff and Members on cyber security vigilance.</p> <p>Continuing to investigate emerging threats and cyber alerts, communicating with 3rd party suppliers to check compliance/obtain security updates and implementing mitigations as required to reduce likelihood of compromise.</p> <p>Training for IT staff on security aspects of Cloud environment is underway.</p> <p>Investigating further improvements to DR capability with specific regard to recovery from cyber incidents.</p> <p>Ensuring new staff have been invited to undertake training cyber security training. Further training and audits will follow to ensure the Council is as aware and prepared as possible to respond to potential cyber attacks.</p> <p>Continued ongoing development training to ensure that knowledge is kept up to date.</p> <p>An in-depth phishing training package, to highlight specific risks and increase staff awareness, has been deployed to all staff. Completed by 76% of staff as at 30/6/23.</p> <p>Procured NCSC approved cyber security training for Members from Matobo. Messaging/invitation to take part to be agreed prior to deployment.</p> <p>Deployed NCSC approved cyber security training for Staff from Matobo. Mandatory training, completion being monitored and reminders to be sent as required.</p> <p>We are currently working towards Cyber Essentials Plus accreditation to independently verify the Council's cyber defences and highlight areas for improvement.</p> <p>Pilot underway for enrolling and managing devices in Intune as a replacement for SCCM and to leverage additional security features including network blocking when malware is detected, and enforcement of encryption as a potential replacement for Checkpoint.</p>	IT Strategy	Director of Finance and Transformation		Sep-23



Direction of Travel key



Downward or positive movement



No change in movement



Upward or negative movement

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10	IT Infrastructure	F, R	Failure to adequately invest resulting in inability to keep pace with technological change, leading to systems that are not fit for purpose to meet organisational need.	01/04/2017	3	4	12	<p>IT Strategy has been reviewed, updated and extended to 2023 (previously 2018-2022) with linkage to MTFS and Savings and Transformation and Digital Strategy.</p> <p>Invest to save opportunities and funding identified and projects have been initiated.</p> <p>Digital Strategy - developed and approved by Members in July 2019.</p> <p>Replacement of legacy business systems and greater use of digital alternatives (cloud based) projects have been initiated.</p> <p>Disaster Recovery solution (cloud based) has been implemented.</p> <p>All staff are able to work remotely via laptops and secure 'always-on' VPN.</p> <p>iPads and required software rolled out to Councillors, MT Members, Senior Management and in-field Staff.</p> <p>Data quality policy has been introduced to ensure improvement and efficiency can be achieved.</p> <p>Introduced Microsoft Teams for virtual meetings for members and staff.</p> <p>Implemented hybrid media conferencing solutions for on-site and remote workers.</p> <p>Multi-factor authentication solution enabled for remote access to O365 to improve security and business continuity.</p> <p>Migrated Telephony to the Cloud to improve business continuity and functionality.</p> <p>Multi-media Cloud based Contact Centre management solution implemented to improve functionality, availability and business continuity.</p> <p>Migrated production environment from on-premises to Cloud to improve and sustain business continuity and service availability.</p> <p>New CMS solution and website implemented to improve digital engagement for residents and businesses.</p> <p>Implemented cross-region Cloud backups for the new Cloud production environment to improve resilience.</p> <p>Implemented 'My TMBC' mobile app facilities to enable proactive and responsive engagement with residents and businesses in parallel with the Council's new website.</p> <p>Implemented corporate/enterprise document management system.</p> <p>VPN migrated to Cloud and Multi-factor authentication implemented for remote access over VPN to improve security and business continuity.</p> <p>All staff migrated to Office 365 to improve flexibility and reliability.</p> <p>MFD equipment and associated print management software renewed in March 2023.</p> <p>Microsoft Enterprise Subscription Agreement re-procured; new 3 year contract from June 2023. Licenses migrated from E3 to E5 to provide additional functionality and improved security features.</p> <p>Implemented the use of AI bots for automation of switchboard via the multi-media Cloud Contact Centre solution, in line with the Digital Transformation agenda in March 2023.</p> <p>Implemented new DR sandbox subscription in Azure Cloud IaaS in June 2023 for testing restore from backup to provide assurance of the Council's ability to recover critical systems and data.</p> <p>Achieved 'Substantial' rating for ICT Infrastructure at Internal Audit Report TM19-2023 &amp; TM07-2023 - Cyber Security and ICT Infrastructure (Combined Report).</p>	3	4	12	<p>Active engagement of Officer and Member Groups in the implementation of digital agenda and changes to the Website format and content.</p> <p>Mobile working solution for in-field workers currently being developed and undergoing field testing.</p> <p>Further development of corporate/enterprise document management system and expansion in usage across the Council is being planned.</p> <p>Further development of the multi-media Cloud Contact Centre solution, to exploit state of the art technology and features to improve customer experience in line with current industry standards, is in progress. Wider use of AI bots for automation of contact centre endpoints is currently under development.</p> <p>Implementation of an immutable backup solution to improve resilience to cyber-attack is nearing completion. All VMs in the Cloud and on-premises are being successfully backed up. Further work required to improve Oracle backups.</p> <p>Replacement of Varonis GDPR solution with features available in Microsoft E5 licenses is currently in test, to simplify management and reduce costs.</p> <p>Review of wired and wireless network infrastructure, in line with planned Gibson Building accommodation changes, is in progress. Proposals and quotations requested from suppliers.</p> <p>Planning migration from Server 2012 R2 in line with EOL notification. To be completed by end of Q2 2023/24 for on-premises VMs. Azure hosted VMs have up to 3 years extended support for 2012 R2.</p> <p>Review of end user IT equipment is underway to inform future device policy.</p> <p>Implementation of Agile Applications cloud based solution as a replacement for IDOX DMS, Uniform and TLC is underway to provide a cost-effective and modern service delivery platform.</p> <p>Digital Strategy and IT Strategy currently under revision.</p>	IT Strategy	Director of Finance and Transformation		Sep-23

Direction of Travel key



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11	Business Continuity and Emergency Planning	F, R, S	Failure to provide statutory service or meet residents' needs resulting in additional costs, risk of harm and reputational impact. Impact/pressures on services and resources. Failure to ensure proper safeguards to prevent or to respond adequately to a significant disaster/event e.g. terrorist attack at a large scale public event or fire.	updated January	3	4	12	The Council has in place;  Business Continuity Plan.  Corporate Business Continuity Risk Register  Emergency Plans  Disaster Recovery Plans  Inter-Authority Agreements  Mutual Aid Agreement  Partnership agreement with Kent Resilience Team.  Emergency Planning Support Officer.  Duty Emergency Coordinator System and Duty Officer System introduced to provide greater resilience.  Covid Secure rest centre plan has been developed	3	4	12	Emergency planning documentation undergoing constant review and key aspects exercised .  Increase % of staff trained in roles identified in the Emergency Plan Training organised by Kent Resilience Team . Business Continuity working group established to review and update existing Plan. Updated plan to be considered by Management Team and tested by a training exercise. Duty Officer rota in place to support Duty Emergency Coordinators out of hours. All staff fully trained before commencing duties. Out of Hours Manual reviewed and regularly updated. DSSLTS sits on Kent Resilience Forum Strategic Board. Actions taken in response to the Covid 19 pandemic will be reviewed and lessons learnt for the future. Any approved changes will be reflected in the Corporate Business Continuity Plan. Business Continuity Group including all members of Management Team meets twice weekly to oversee and coordinate response to pandemic. Annual Emergency planning review to be reported to Management Team. Pandemic response dealt with as emergency through Kent Resilience Forum. Reports regularly presented to Cabinet. More detailed reports covering Review Reorientation and Recovery presented to relevant Advisory Boards. Training courses are being delivered in a Covid safe manner for roles within the Emergency Plan. Recruitment into roles in the Emergency Plan is ongoing. Emergency Planning Officer's hours increased to full time during pandemic. Virtual Emergency Management systems are being developed to allow a virtualised Emergency Control Room and data handling.	Business continuity underpins the delivery of the Council's essential services	Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services	↻	Sep-23
12	Devolution	F, R, S	Uncertainty about future operating models and changes / opportunities in responsibilities or service provision leading to financial pressures, impact on quality of services, reputational damage.	01/04/2017	3	3	9	Continual scanning of national / regional and Kent wide agenda by CE / Corporate Services manager. Participation in county wide debate via Joint Kent Chief Execs and Kent Leaders meetings. Update DEC 18 - County wide devolution discussions have been formally ceased. Horizon scanning and continued participation in Kent Leaders and CE meetings is ongoing.  County Deal discussions are invited and Kent Leaders are giving preliminary considerations albeit that there is no agreed view at this stage.	3	3	9	White Paper on Devolution is to be published in the Autumn. Analysis of this will be a priority action. This is now replaced by the anticipated "Levelling Up" prospectus in 2022	External risk/national issue	Chief Executive	↻	As required



No	Risk Title	Risk Type	Consequences	Date identified	Likelihood Score	Impact score	Overall risk score	Current Mitigation	Desired Likelihood Score	Desired Impact score	Desired risk score	Actions required to ensure mitigation remains	Links to Corporate Objectives / Strategies	Lead on behalf of Management Team	Direction of Travel	Review Date
13	Partnerships inc. shared services	F, R, S	Reliance on partners to deliver key services, including private sector companies. Could include specific partnership or shared service models such as the Leisure Trust and risks around service delivery and impact on staff morale / retention if base moves from TMBC . Potential resistance to shared services / partnerships impacting on ability to deliver Savings & Transformation Strategy. Private sector partnerships failing having consequences for service delivery.  Coronavirus pandemic has significant economic implications for the Council, businesses and residents.	01/04/2017	3	3	9	Regular liaison meetings with partners. Partnership Agreements in place and reviewed as appropriate. Good communication with staff.  Officers maintain awareness of issues relating to private sector partners and plans formulated for service delivery in the event of failure via business continuity.  KCC undertaking Audit and Fraud function from 1 October 2021 on a newly agreed delegated functions arrangement. As previously report to Audit Committee and Cabinet, this arrangement will provide greater resilience and breadth of experience/knowledge.  Partnership work and liaison with key voluntary sector groups will continue via the Local Strategic Partnership meetings and community development meetings in priority wards.	3	3	9	Strengthening of the West Kent Partnership, including joint delivery of economic initiatives through the UKSPF and REPF. New Waste Services Contract in partnership with Urbaser, TWBC and KCC commenced 1st March 2019. Formal Inter Authority Agreement and Partnership Agreement in place. Ground Maintenance Contract extended in light of good performance of contractor.  The Council is working within guidance issued by Cabinet Office "Guidance on responsible contractual behaviour in the performance and enforcement of contracts impacted by the Covid-19 emergency " and Procurement Policy Notes to support contractors and suppliers.  The Council will continue to administer the grants to key voluntary sector bodies, with progress to be reported annually. Additional Government grants as a result of the response to the pandemic (Emergency Assistance Grant and Covid Winter Grant) will be promoted to local voluntary sector organisations and applications for funding will be agreed.	Savings and Transformation Strategy	Chief Executive		As required
14	Welfare reform inc. Housing need	F, R, S	Safeguarding impact on TMBC residents due to reduction in benefits, introduction of UC and increase in applications for DHP, etc. Failure to adequately understand and meet housing needs and return unsuitable properties to use leading to increase in homelessness or occupation of unsuitable homes. Financial impact of increased emergency accommodation and failure to maximise new homes bonus.  Coronavirus pandemic has significant economic implications for the Council, businesses and residents.  Ukrainian refugee temporary resettlement program - We are awaiting full guidance on Local Authority responsibilities. Kent Resilience Forum are acting as	01/04/2017	4	3	12	Cross sector working (e.g. welfare reform group) to identify issues and solution.  Providing advice to residents on welfare and housing issues, or signposting to relevant providers.  Working with partners to identify land and funding opportunities. Working with Registered Provider Partners to ensure needs of residents are being met. Working with owners to bring long term empty properties back into use.  New initiatives for Temporary Accommodation, including purchase of flats and properties to be converted. commissioned consultancy work in respect of Homelessness function (TA) Concessionary charges for key services. EQIA assessment of key decisions included in all Board reports. HRA implications assessed and GPC agreed new posts to deliver service which have been recruited to. Universal Credit rolled out Nov 18 for Tonbridge & Maidstone Job Centres. Signposting now to UC rather than HB for new working age claimants. CTR Scheme approved for 23/24 . Government council tax support of up to £25 being credited to bills for those on lower incomes  Household Support fund tranche allocated by KCC  Councils asked to administer further energy support schemes on behalf of government  New housing panel in place to work alongside RPs in considering best use of available properties.	3	3	9	Improved working with TA providers leading to more guarantees of available accommodation and developing a TA Procurement Strategy  Improved working with main housing provider to identify trends/specific cases across borough to jointly agree approach to preventing homelessness using housing provider mechanisms, DHP payments and homeless prevention funding where needed.  New temporary accommodation purchased in Pembury Rd. HMO refit works concluding and looking at management options for late 2022  Continue to facilitate Welfare Reform group and widen participation from external partners so as to ensure best support for those affected by welfare reforms in T&M.  work with Kent councils collaboratively to ensure grants and support targeted to those most in need  <b>Finalise energy rebate schemes (all now closed)</b>  Deliver District responsibilities of Ukrainian resettlement scheme.  <b>Deliver payments in respect of latest Household support fund Tranche 4 in liaison with KCC.</b>	Promoting Fairness - acting transparently at all times and being accountable for what we do, and promoting equality of opportunities. 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.	Director of Finance and Transformation/ Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health		Sep-23

Direction of Travel key



Downward or positive movement



No change in movement



Upward or negative movement

No	Risk Title	Risk Type	Consequences	Date identified	Likelihood Score	Impact score	Overall risk score	Current Mitigation	Desired Likelihood Score	Desired Impact score	Desired risk score	Actions required to ensure mitigation remains	Links to Corporate Objectives / Strategies	Lead on behalf of Management Team	Direction of Travel	Review Date
15	Political factors including stability of political leadership and decision making	F, R	Decisions required to achieve objectives including corporate strategy and savings and transformation may not be made and therefore required savings not achieved.	01/04/2017	4	4	16	<p>Significant focus on temporary accommodation and in borough provision as well as framework agreement with private providers.</p> <p>Close liaison with Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet in developing the Savings &amp; Transformation Strategy.</p> <p>Clear and comprehensive reports to support Members in making appropriate decisions to support the S&amp;TS.</p>	3	3	9	<p>Member briefings and training sessions.</p> <p>Political Awareness Training for Officers has been arranged for September 2023 by the LGA,</p>	Underpins delivery of overall strategy and Savings and Transformation.	Chief Executive	↑	As required
16	Flooding	F, R, S	Impact on resources to support emergency planning, financial impact due to damage, loss of resources, etc. Residents and staff put at risk of harm. Impact on key flood risk areas - Tonbridge, Hildenborough, East Peckham and Aylesford.	01/04/2017	3	4	12	<p>Working with partners through the Medway Flood Partnership (including EA/KCC/LEP) to secure funding and implement flood defence schemes which will reduce risk of future flooding, including LEHES and property resilience works at East Peckham.</p> <p>Assistance provided to Parish/Town Council's to help develop local Flood Plans. Team of Volunteer Flood Wardens in place.</p>	3	4	12	<p>Work with partner organisations via Kent Resilience Forum and the Medway Flood Partnership continuing.</p> <p>Council Officers dial into Severe Weather Advisory Group meetings.</p> <p>Regular attendance at KRF training sessions.</p> <p>Ongoing support for Tonbridge Flood Group.</p> <p>Funding allocated in Council's Capital Plan to support works to Leigh Flood storage area which will be completed by 2025.</p> <p>£20,000 from Business Rates Retention Pilot Reserve approved for Natural Flood Management Schemes in the Borough (Leybourne Lakes and Ightham Mote) with projects nearing completion.</p>	Emergency Plan Contingencies Act 2004 Kent Emergency Response Framework West Kent Partnership and Medway Catchment Partnership	Civil Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services	↻	Sep-23
17	Homes for Ukraine Scheme	F, R, S	Districts are required to undertake home assessments for potential host households to support Ukrainian refugees fleeing the conflict. Increased workload expected as likelihood of breakdown in housing arrangements as we have exceeded the 6 month mark. Requests for rematches are increasing and there is a risk of homelessness and duty to place in T.A. therefore work needs to be undertaken to facilitate rematches and/or support into private rented sector. This is an escalating risk given the longevity of the hosting arrangements. As of 1 April 2023, TMBC have taken on wider support role for Ukrainians in the borough under HFU scheme.	01/09/2022	4	4	16	<p>Some reserve host families have been identified but larger families pose a bigger risk. Re-matches are unsustainable in the longer term. Work underway to support more families into PRS.</p>	3	4	12	<p>Additional support into Private Rented Sector required. Full time Resettlement Worker now in post and part time Housing Officer to start in August 2023.</p>		Chief Executive	↻	As required



No	Risk Title	Risk Type	Consequences	Date identified	Likelihood Score	Impact score	Overall risk score	Current Mitigation	Desired Likelihood Score	Desired Impact score	Desired risk score	Actions required to ensure mitigation remains	Links to Corporate Objectives / Strategies	Lead on behalf of Management Team	Direction of Travel	Review Date
18	Waste/ Recycling Contract	F, R, S	<p>Failure to provide new service and deliver described outcomes in accordance with contract timescales and health and safety obligations. Significant reputational risk. Risk of challenge from tenderers.</p> <p>Failure to achieve financial targets for garden waste and performance payments scheme linked to changes in collection and disposals methods explained below and links to finance above.</p> <p>Coronavirus pandemic has significant economic implications for businesses and residents.</p> <p>Future sustainability of contract.</p> <p>Risk associated to the outcome of current government consultations on three waste aspects (Collection Consistency, Garden Waste and Extended Producer Responsibilities). Potential for alteration to levels and mechanisms for Council income associated to these areas including, but not restricted to, KCC Performance Payments and Garden Waste Subscriptions, this links to the Council's long term financial stability</p>	01/07/2018	3	4	12	<p>Partnership arrangement with TWBC, with allocation of key tasks.</p> <p>Internal Project Group reporting regularly to MT and Members.</p> <p>Joint Member meeting established with TW's to guide strategic approach</p> <p>External advice sought from specialists on key decisions including Legal.</p> <p>New inter authority agreement with KCC encourages improved recycling performance and shares risks and rewards.</p> <p>IT, Communications and Operations identified as crucial work streams and individual working groups established to manage and implement these work areas.</p> <p>Waste services have been affected by pandemic and national HGV shortage. Agreed with contractor to temporarily ceasing collection of garden waste, Saturday freighter and bulky waste booking system for a period of time to allow focus on recycling and general waste. Garden Waste and bulky booking has resumed.</p> <p>With regard to garden waste collections, residents will have subscriptions extended to compensate.</p> <p>New GW subscriptions were reinstated on 4.04.22.</p> <p>Street cleansing was not suspended but has been impacted as other services have taken priority.</p> <p>Council recently approved supplementary payments, financial support in relation to vehicle leasing. This will enable re-rounding to progress leading to improved service.</p> <p>Consultations currently being monitored through the KRP and updates being channelled through the Kent Chief Executives meetings</p>	3	3	9	<p>Continuation of Partnership working with TW's and monitoring through established Steering Group.</p> <p>Continuation of Member working group to steer strategic approach.</p> <p>Contract monitoring and the firm use of remedies to improve performance including the contractual default procedure.</p> <p>CE's continuing to liaise with Urbaser to discuss future sustainability of the contract.</p> <p>Monitor and phase roll out to flats and any impact of other frontline collections.</p> <p>Reports on progress submitted to appropriate meetings/committees</p>	Delivery of cost effective service to meet customer needs.	Director of Street Scene, Leisure & Technical Services	↻	Sep-23
19	Implementation of Agile system	F, S	<p>Service impacts from level of staff time required to develop the Agile product for use as operating system.</p> <p>Significant level of concern from staff about implementation process results in a lack of confidence in implementation, which will adversely impact service delivery and record keeping</p>	01/11/2022	4	4	16	<p>Programme of liaison meetings with Agile in place including Board and weekly catch ups</p> <p>Employment of Business Change PM to manage project on behalf of TMBC and coordinate all issues</p> <p>Weekly meetings with CM for Finance &amp; Housing, who is the Cabinet Lead for Agile.</p> <p>Internal meetings with staff, managed by Business Change Project Manager</p> <p>Issues log in use</p> <p>Issues escalated to Agile management</p>	2	2	4	<p>Further escalation of issues to Agile CEO</p> <p>Weekly review of project plan and considerations of service impacts required to meet go live programme - to be reported into MT on a regular basis</p>	Digital Strategy	Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health	↻	Sep-23

Direction of Travel key



Downward or positive movement



No change in movement



Upward or negative movement

No	Risk Title	Risk Type	Consequences	Date identified	Likelihood Score	Impact score	Overall risk score	Current Mitigation	Desired Likelihood Score	Desired Impact score	Desired risk score	Actions required to ensure mitigation remains	Links to Corporate Objectives / Strategies	Lead on behalf of Management Team	Direction of Travel	Review Date
20	Elections	R	Failure to comply with legislation, miscounts and significant reputational impact.	14/12/22	3	4	12	Ensure experienced staff are in place, corporate team reviewing activity and monitoring progress.  Further Election Bill changes  Parliamentary Boundaries  Parliamentary election - date unknown, possible May 2024 or October 2024?	2	4	8	Broadening of staff skills and experience to build resilience.  Discussions on core staffing for Elections and use of more IT modules to reduce workload and progress digital transformation. Increase in temp staffing resources to mitigate delayed implementation of two IT system modules. <b>Following elections this needs to be reviewed.</b>  Implementation of changes to Postal Votes, Overseas electors, EU Citizenship. Core team keeping up to date with all notifications from EC and Cabinet Office and undertaking any training required.  Changes to Parliamentary Boundaries to be completed this year including a further Polling District review. DA waiting for final recommendations to be able to implement.  MT horizon scanning on any increased chance of snap General Election. RO and DRO's assessing risks. Risk has diminished at the moment.	Statutory requirement	Chief Executive	↻	Sep-23

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**Ongoing Risks and Risks Identified by Service Management Teams and Management Team**

	Risk Identified	Background	Removed or ongoing	Reason for removal / ongoing
<p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 57</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Chief Executive and Central Services</p>	Larkfield Leisure Centre	All showers are currently open	Removed	Ongoing. Following negative sampling results, biocide levels are being decreased and the effects monitored (to be deleted)
	Homes For Ukraine Scheme	Moved to Strategic Risk Register		
	UKSPF Programme (inc. REPF)	Having had our T&M Investment Plan approved by DLUHC, implementation of projects required over the next few years (up to March 2025)	Ongoing.	Need to keep under review to ensure that delivery on track so that future years funding is not compromised (based on annual funding award)
	Gibson Building	Cabinet agreed in Sept 2022 that the main offices of the Council should remain located at Kings Hill and that Officers should investigate the feasibility of progressing option 4 set out in the report.	Ongoing.	Need to keep under review to ensure that changes in office accommodation deliver value for money and deliver identified savings.
	Tonbridge Castle Gatehouse Roof	Water ingress from roof in Great Hall. Feb 2023 rot discovered in roof beam ends. Facility closed until remedial stabilisation works undertaken in June/July 2023. Need for permanent works in autumn 2024, yet to be scoped and costed	Ongoing	Remedial works being prioritised. On completion, permanent works will be scoped and costed
	Elections	Introduction of Elections Bill changes	Ongoing.	Further Election Bill changes, including new Postal vote portal, Postal vote renewals changing to every 3 years. Overseas electors renewal every 3 years, changes to EU citizenship eligibility
	Elections	Move over of Election calls to Customer Contact	Ongoing.	Hope to move over all election calls to Customer Contact before 8July. Training being undertaken and FAQs being written and shared.
	Elections	Changes to Parliamentary boundaries	Ongoing.	Increased work load to implement changes and more complex for running future Parliamentary elections, due to sharing constituencies with other authorities. Further review of polling districts.

**Ongoing Risks and Risks Identified by Service Management Teams and Management Team**

	Risk Identified	Background	Removed or ongoing	Reason for removal / ongoing
Page 58 Finance and Transformation	IT Security (formerly COCO Compliance)	Review of IT Infrastructure identified several areas of weakness for IT standards compliance	Ongoing	Number of risk removed, expected that remaining risks, once removed, will allow full compliance.
	Economic Stability	Economic issues surrounding Council Finances	Ongoing	Part of Strategic Risk Register.
	Council Tax and NNDR Billing	Potential delay in distribution of Bills due to on going Postal Worker strike issues	Removed	Bills received by taxpayers in timely manner
	Recruitment of staff	Recent resignations will cause vacancies in several sections, and therefore could lead to service delays	Ongoing	Reports to GP approving staffing changes and recruitment has commenced to vacant posts.
	Corporate Insurance	Increases and changes to premiums for 2023/24 insured year	Ongoing	The Councils Insurers have made changes to the charges included within the premiums. Therefore changes will be required to capital and revenue project evaluations to include insurance assessment.
	Payroll	Key information being supplied to Payroll in a timely manner, causing risk of staff and members not being paid.	New	The Payroll Team pay over 250 Staff and Councillors on a monthly basis. Due to the date of payment, being the closest working day to the 15th of the month, information to be included in the pay run must be received no later than three working days into the month. In recent months some delays have occurred on the submission of data due to incomplete or incorrect information being supplied. this has jeopardised the payment to all staff requiring addition unsocial hours to be worked by the payroll team.
	Computer Server failure	Weekend failure of server for Revenues and Benefits Software.	Ongoing	Issues with Software failure being identified by both staff and software
	Security and Access to Information	Access to information with shared access with DWP	Ongoing	Review of staff access to be carried out and further additional checks to be carried out.
	Supported Accommodation	Change in KCC approach for care need could have impact on ability to recover Housing Benefit Subsidy	Ongoing	Meetings arranged to assess full impact to district councils

**Ongoing Risks and Risks Identified by Service Management Teams and Management Team**

Risk Identified	Background	Removed or ongoing	Reason for removal / ongoing
Temporary Accommodation (TA)	TA consultancy review undertaken Dec 2021, actions implemented in 2022. Cost of living crisis and DA legislation implementation are impacting on maintaining TA levels within the agreed range.	Ongoing	TA costs remain high, as does level of need. Project underway to look at sustainable TA portfolio approach to help manage unit costs for TA. This is alongside ongoing work/training in service to support demand.
Temporary Accommodation (TA)	Personal injury claims	Ongoing	Updated inspection regime being developed by officers.
Food & Safety	Increased risk of food complaints/poisoning. Additional resources to manage backlog of inspections.	Ongoing	During the Covid-19 crisis the ceasing/reduction in the food hygiene inspection regime may result in food safety issues. There will also be a backlog of food safety inspections due to restrictions on visiting/businesses closed. Agreed catch up programme in place utilising COMF funding.
Increased number of planning appeals/inquiries	Application determination timescales not being met, more speculative development, creates reputational risks and increases likelihood of appeals.	Ongoing	Volume and complexity of applications coming forward in parallel with local plan progression and given current uncertainties in timescales for adoption. MT agreed agency planning funding for short term. Head of Planning conducting service review summer 2022
Staffing challenges in Planning services	Ongoing recruitment and retention difficulties in the sector and in T&M specifically. Several recruitment campaigns carried out.	Ongoing.	MT agreed that development of a Workforce Strategy will include recruitment and retention. Part 2 report to GP in July 2023 to look at immediate pressures. This will likely be followed by a new recruitment campaign and therefore this risk remains.
Local Plan	Reg 18 carried out in Autumn 2022. Changes to NPPF and proposed changes to system via LURB published December 2022. Assessing options for delivery of a Local Plan.	Ongoing	Members to make a decision on a revised Local Development Scheme in Summer 2023. This is subject to a number of challenges including ongoing delays in Govt announcements on national planning policy. The Council has decided to continue progressing the Local Plan under the current legislative and National Planning Policy Framework. It will be critical that the new plan is prepared in compliance with the regulatory framework and relies on a robust evidence base that meets the requirement of the NPPF so that the plan can be found to be sound at the examination stage. Timing is of the essence as the Local Plan will need to be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate by 30th June 2025. The Council has recently engaged Trowers and Hamlins Law Firm to advise and support the Planning Policy Team up until adoption stage.

**Ongoing Risks and Risks Identified by Service Management Teams and Management Team**

Risk Identified	Background	Removed or ongoing	Reason for removal / ongoing
Bridge inspections	Bridges on Council owned land identified as service risk. Internal Officer Group established and bridge audit progressed. Identified as Service Pressure Aspiration. Revenue budget approved to inspect and repair bridges over 2 years and annual inspections to be progressed. Structural assessments being undertaken.	Ongoing	Second year programme of work currently being progressed. Further survey undertaken and report to be analysed. Remembrance Garden and Maintenance bridges reassessed to check if structurally stable. Remembrance Garden bridge confirmed safe for 5-7 years, Maintenance bridge confirmed safe for 3-5 years. Structural assessment being undertaken re Haysden Country Park bridge replacement.
Bluebell Hill Car Park	Ongoing anti-social behaviour	Complete	Car park closed and site secured . Longer term review of asset to be progressed by Proerty Services.
Pay & Display machines	Continual issues with contractor, G4S in terms of cash collection.	Ongoing	Considering alternative options as very few companies in market place willing to undertake work.
TAGA dispute	Allotment holder taking legal action against TAGA.	Complete	Legal action dropped and matter resolved.
Utilities costs	Significant energy price increases at leisure centres is resulting in financial cost to the Council under the risk sharing agreement in the Management Agreement with the Trust.	Ongoing	Trust providing regular updates via Strategic/Service Fee meetings - cost of swim charges increased to help contribute to additional cost, energy saving initiatives being investigated and implemented and central government being lobbied. Government recently announced support package within the Budget statement.
Tonbridge Swimming Pool / Larkfield Leisure Centre	Low supply of chemicals for treating pools available across Europe. May lead to closures.	Ongoing	Trust exploring all opportunities to secure supply. Alternative means of cleansing investigated by Property Services and order to be placed for new system. Funded through BRREP and contribution from Leisure Trust.
Tonbridge Castle	Resident complaint regarding resurfacing material for path not being suitable for wheelchair access.	Complete	Risk assessment undertaken. Loose stone cleared and signage added.. Additional coat of bonding applied to path. DDA audit being undertaken . Formal complaints procedure completed through all 3 stages - referred to Ombudsman.
KRF Review	The KRF have undertaken a review and plan to make adjustments to how the forum operates.	Ongoing.	Risks associated with increased responsibility being undertaken by LA's . The impact of this could be very significant .
Business Continuity & Emergency Planning	The current structure of the LRF and legislation has been added to. The Kent Resilience Forum is undergoing a review with significant changes to how the Kent Resilience Team will provide support and guidance to Local Authorities. The UK Government has also recently published a new 'UK Government Resilience Framework'. Further guidance is expected but the theme is around increasing locally led resilience and planning at the LA level.	Ongoing	Need to track new guidance and review how we contribute and participate in the Kent Resilience Forum. We also need to be able to ensure that we maintain a fit-for-purpose organisation to enable suitable response.

## **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2023-2027 - CONSULTATION DRAFT**

### **Item FRP 23/21 referred from Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee of 25 July 2023**

Member approval was sought on the consultation draft of the Economic Development Strategy 2023-2027, attached at Appendix 1, which was set within the context of the Corporate Strategy 2023-2027 recently approved by Council.

The draft Economic Development Strategy set out a vision that covered four key elements – resilience, dynamism, inclusivity and sustainability. Seven themes underpinning the vision were outlined in 1.2.2 of the report and detailed in Appendix 1, each with a number of actions identified with an aim to support the economy.

Subject to approval of the draft Strategy, a four-week public consultation was intended to be undertaken in September 2023 to seek views of the key economic partners, including members of the West Kent Partnership, local business support providers, business representative bodies, such as the Chambers of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses, as well as individual local businesses in the borough. Outcome of the consultation was anticipated to be reported to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Select Committee to seek formal adoption of the Strategy.

Members had an in-depth discussion in respect of the linkage between the Action Plan and the Economic Dashboard and the proposed plan to review the performance of the Strategy on an annual basis.

During discussion, the focus on the climate change agenda and sustainable growth was highlighted, with particular reference made to reducing carbon footprint and supporting the local business community to move towards carbon net zero. Collaborative working with education providers was considered another key in delivering the plan with regard to ‘a greener more productive economy’.

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

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) the consultation draft of the Economic Development Strategy 2023-2027, as set out in Appendix 1, be approved.

**\* Referred to Cabinet**

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**TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**FINANCE, REGENERATION AND PROPERTY SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE**

**25 July 2023**

**Report of the Chief Executive**

**Part 1- Public**

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

**1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2023-2027 – CONSULTATION DRAFT**

**This report presents an initial draft of the Economic Development Strategy 2023-2027 and timetable for consultation and adoption arrangements.**

**1.1 Background**

1.1.1 In 2021, the council adopted an Economic Recovery Strategy 2021-2023, a short-term strategy document focussed on supporting the local economy as it recovered from the worst of the covid-19 pandemic. With the infrastructure that was put in place to tackle the pandemic (such as the business hotline and grants programmes) now dismantled, and with new challenges in the economy and new funding opportunities presenting themselves, it is now time to produce a new strategy that supports our local businesses with the issues they now face.

**1.2 Economic Development Strategy 2023-2027**

1.2.1 The strategy provided in **Appendix 1** is set within the context of the draft Corporate Strategy 2023-2027 and sets out a vision that covers four key elements – resilience, dynamism, inclusivity and sustainability:

***“Maximising the unique strengths of the local area to help create a resilient, dynamic and inclusive economy that fosters sustainable growth.”***

1.2.2 There are 7 themes underpinning the vision, each with a number of actions aimed at supporting the economy. They are:

- Promoting the borough
- Supporting local business
- Land and premises (and supporting infrastructure)
- A greener more productive economy
- A thriving rural economy

- An inclusive economy
- Vibrant town centres.

1.2.3 Updates on the action plan will be provided on an annual basis, along with the economic dashboard, which will also provide comparator data with other West Kent authorities.

### **1.3 Framework for Consultation and Adoption:**

1.3.1 If approved for consultation, then it is essential that this draft strategy is exposed to external scrutiny prior to its formal adoption, in order to ensure that it is as accurate and comprehensive as possible. We will seek the views of our key economic partners including members of the West Kent Partnership, local business support providers, business representative bodies such as the Chambers of Commerce and the Federation of Small Businesses, as well as individual local businesses in the Borough.

1.3.2 It is suggested that the consultation is undertaken for a four-week period starting in September 2023. During this period, the following will be undertaken to ensure that the opportunity to provide comments on the draft strategy document is as easy and straightforward as possible:

- Direct email to database of key economic partner contacts.
- Inclusion of the consultation draft on the TMBC business webpages.
- Programme of social media messaging – Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn
- Inclusion of an article in two editions of the Tonbridge and Malling Business e-bulletin, which goes out to over 900 business contacts.

1.3.3 In October 2023, all the comments received will be processed, and where appropriate, the strategy will be amended accordingly. The intention will be to report on the outcome of the consultation to the Committee in November 2023, highlighting any amendments that have been made, and to seek formal adoption of the strategy by Cabinet in Winter 2023/4.

### **1.4 Legal Implications**

1.4.1 The matters raised in this report are considered to be routine, uncontroversial or not legally complex and a legal opinion has not been sought on these proposals.

### **1.5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

1.5.1 None arising directly from this report.

### **1.6 Risk Assessment**

1.6.1 Not applicable.



## 1.7 Equality Impact Assessment

- 1.7.1 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote to low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act.

## 1.8 Policy Considerations

- 1.8.1 Economic Development
- 1.8.2 Skills and Employability
- 1.8.3 Inward Investment
- 1.8.4 Tourism Development

## 1.9 Recommendations

- 1.9.1 That the report **BE NOTED**
- 1.9.2 That the consultation draft of the Economic Development Strategy 2023-2027 **BE RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet for approval.

The Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Regeneration and Property confirms that the proposals contained in the recommendation(s), if approved, will fall within the Council's Budget and Policy Framework.

Background papers:

Nil

contact: Jeremy Whittaker,  
Strategic Economic  
Regeneration Manager

Julie Beilby  
Chief Executive

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# Economic Development Strategy 2023-2027

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**Dynamic – Resilient – Inclusive - Sustainable**

**July 2023**

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- Theme 3: Land and premises (and supporting infrastructure).
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- Theme 5: A thriving rural economy.
- Theme 6: An inclusive economy.
- Theme 7: Vibrant town centres.

## 05 Working in Partnership

## 06 Action Plan

## 07 Economic Dashboard

# 01 Foreword

Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council recognises the leading role it can play in helping to drive forward sustainable economic growth, and shape the borough into a place that offers a high quality of life for residents, businesses and visitors alike.

This is a responsibility that we take on with enthusiasm, but it is by no means a small undertaking in the current economic climate. The COVID-19 pandemic has left a considerable legacy, with the sizeable impact on economic and personal well-being resulting in changes in the way many people live their lives and how businesses continue to operate.

At the same time there is a growing imperative for action in mitigating the worst effects of climate change – making sure that the council leads by example, but also supporting the local business community to move towards carbon net zero.

These are challenging times, but it is vital that the council proactively uses the resources at its disposal to help steer our economy towards a prosperous, inclusive and sustainable future. Our Economic Development Strategy 2023-2027 sets out how, with our partners, we aim to achieve this.



**Cllr Robin Betts**

**Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Regeneration and Property**

**July 2023**

## 02 Strategic Context

The council is in the process of adopting a new Corporate Strategy 2023-2027 which sets out a bold new vision for the borough:

***“To be an innovative and forward-thinking council, that leads the people and businesses of the borough towards a vibrant, prosperous and sustainable future.”***

One of the priorities that underpins the vision focusses specifically on the local economy and the role that the council and its partners can play in supporting it. The priority, which emphasises the need for sustainable growth, is:

***“Investing in our local economy to help support residents and businesses and foster sustainable growth.”***

These statements provide a strong starting point for the direction that this strategy needs to take.

When the council’s last economic strategy was produced in 2020/21 (Economic Recovery Strategy 2021-23), the emphasis was very much on navigating through the COVID-19 pandemic. However, a number of key considerations now need to be factored into our thinking when formulating our new strategy document and identifying our priorities. These include:

- The economic uncertainty arising from high inflation, tight labour markets and supply chain disruption, as well as the longer-term impact and opportunities arising from Brexit.
- Moving towards a net zero carbon economy in a way that incentivises the use of new technologies and green skills development as well as the enhancement of our natural environment.
- The need to align this economic strategy closely with the re-positioning of the West Kent Partnership and its new priorities, the Kent & Medway Economic Development Strategy and our UK Shared Prosperity Fund Investment Plan in order to support our local economy effectively.
- Gross Value Added (GVA) per head data has highlighted the strong role that West Kent plays in contributing towards the Kent economy – for example in Tonbridge and Malling the GVA per head is £36,690 compared to £27,907 across Kent as a whole. However, when compared to other locations equidistant to London, such as Guildford, it is clear that there is room for improvement.
- The challenge for our High Streets as they evolve from purely ‘shopping centres’ to provide a wider array of services.
- Supporting the rural economy as it undergoes a period of change, particularly with the switch away from the Direct Payment system in the farming sector and changes in the labour market.

### 03 Key Strengths & Challenges

Like any borough, Tonbridge and Malling has numerous strengths and challenges that have an impact on its potential for success. In addition to being well located with good transport links, the borough also has a strong business community, and an attractive environment.

However, many of these strengths also bring challenges. For example, for much of the borough development is constrained due to environmental and landscape designations (such as the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Green Belt), and whilst proximity to London and good accessibility to international gateways brings wealth into the area, it also contributes to higher housing prices, greater employment costs and congestion.

<b>Strengths:</b>	<b>Challenges:</b>
<p>Location – proximity to London and to international gateways</p> <p>Good strategic transport network – good road and rail links that enable high levels of accessibility.</p> <p>An attractive environment that creates a high quality of life.</p> <p>A strong business community with a diverse number of key sectors that ensure local resilience.</p> <p>A proactive and well-run local authority, with a strong partnership network.</p> <p>Comparatively low level of unemployment amongst the local work force.</p>	<p>Identifying new employment sites to meet future need.</p> <p>Loss of existing commercial premises through Permitted Development Rights.</p> <p>Limited Higher Education provision in the borough.</p> <p>Recruitment challenges for local businesses.</p> <p>Housing price affordability.</p> <p>Transport infrastructure often congested at peak times.</p> <p>Rural isolation – especially with local public transport services reduced and some areas of variable broadband coverage.</p> <p>Ineligibility for many public funding opportunities due to perceived affluence.</p>

## 04 Vision & Strategic Priorities

***“Maximising the unique strengths of the local area to help create a resilient, dynamic and inclusive economy that fosters sustainable growth.”***

During the early 2020s, the local economy has been impacted by a series of national and global events. We have worked closely with local businesses to ensure that we have managed to avoid the very worst impacts of these events, and it has demonstrated that we are fortunate to have a **resilient** and **dynamic** business community. This is something that we need to build upon in order to provide greater protection against any future challenges.

We also need to ensure that everyone sees the benefit of improvements in our economy, and that no-one is left behind. By being **inclusive** in our approach, we can help to increase skills levels and reduce unemployment through helping to create local opportunities.

Reducing our own carbon footprint, and encouraging others to do the same, is a central part of our Climate Change Strategy. In line with the aims and objectives of this strategy, we need to ensure that this Economic Development Strategy has a strong focus on **sustainable growth** that can reap benefits for our businesses and positively impact future generations.

With these key elements to our vision in mind, 7 themes have been identified that make up our approach in this strategy:

### **Theme 1: Promoting the borough:**

Tonbridge and Malling borough has lots of great things to shout about, and a wide range of successful businesses across a number of sectors. By promoting the area, as part of a wider West Kent initiative, it will help to increase investment, attract visitors and help to foster a stronger identity that will help to support our business community.

### **Theme 2: Supporting local business:**

Starting or growing a business is no easy task with just under 40% of businesses failing to last three years and nearly 90% of businesses in the borough being classed as ‘micro’. The council and partner organisations can offer areas of support to business, such as establishing advice and mentoring programmes, providing grant support and running events that support networking opportunities or enable businesses to find new members of staff.

### **Theme 3: Land and premises (and supporting infrastructure):**

The adoption of a Local Plan that identifies new employment sites is key to ensuring that existing businesses and inward investors have the room to grow and are supported, where required, in that journey. There are also a number of strategic investment sites in the borough that are vital to the strengthening of the local economy, and it is therefore important that the council engages fully with these to ensure that they are delivered in a timely fashion and offer the maximum benefit locally.

### **Theme 4: A greener more productive economy:**

Whilst growth is clearly important, it is essential that the economy de-carbonises in order to reduce its impact on the environment and mitigates against the worst impacts of climate change. A growing economy can be a green economy: between 1990 and 2019 the UK reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 41% while the economy grew by 78%. Many businesses are well-advanced on their journey towards Net Zero, reaping the benefits of greater efficiencies and shielding themselves from the volatility of the energy markets, but others still need support along the way. There are also new challenges such as making sure that there are sufficient skills locally to enable the decarbonisation of the economy and our homes, and the support infrastructure is available to enable growth in the use of electric vehicles.



**Theme 5: A thriving rural economy:**

The borough is mainly rural in nature, and as such our rural businesses play a strong part in the overall performance of our local economy. As well as fantastic land-based businesses, institutions such as East Malling Research Station (NIAB EMR) and Hadlow College (part of North Kent College), there are a diverse range of innovative rural businesses covering a range of sectors. With recruitment challenges and the loss of some funding sources, it is important that we offer support to contribute towards a flourishing rural economy.

**Theme 6: An inclusive economy**

Despite Tonbridge and Malling being perceived as affluent, not everyone enjoys equal access to opportunities. This is best illustrated by the variation in unemployment rates and deprivation indices across the borough. We will collaborate with local schools, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), Kent County Council and community organisations to create opportunities that contribute towards a more inclusive society.

**Theme 7: Vibrant town centres**

High streets are the beating hearts of our towns, and in recent years they have had to deal not only with the impact of economic downturns and the covid-19 pandemic, but also the shift in spending behaviour as online retailing expands. We will support our town centres as they adapt to change, to ensure they are attractive places to socialise, shop and be entertained.

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## 05 Working in Partnership

The Borough Council recognises the key role it has to play in helping the local economy to recover and grow, both in terms of setting a strategic framework for its approach as well as through the various initiatives it undertaken order to contribute towards the creation of a better economy.

However, our positive impact can only really be maximised by working with partners that also play an equally important role and can offer specialist skills, experience, knowledge and additional resources. As such, we are committed to working with partners organisations to achieve the actions set out in this strategy. Key individual partners are too numerous to include individually in this chapter, but the following partnerships will be essential in supporting the council to meet the needs of the local economy:

**UK Shared Prosperity Fund Partnership (UKSPF):** the council is working closely with Central Government and local organisations to deliver its Levelling Up Programme. An important part of the delivery of this programme is the role of a 'Local Group' comprising community and business representatives, which provides oversight, advice and support in advancing UKSPF funded initiatives.

**Kent and Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP):** is currently one of the four federated partnerships which comprises the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). KMEP is focussed on driving forward economic growth and prosperity in Kent and Medway and is governed by a Board with membership drawn from business, local government and education establishments. KMEP delivers the objectives set out in Kent and Medway's Growth Plan, and in recent year has supported the borough in securing investment through government initiatives such as the Local Growth Fund and Growing Places Fund.

**West Kent Partnership (WKP):** is the strategic economic partnership covering the local authority areas of Tonbridge and Malling, Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells. The three areas work closely together to leverage the resources available to them in order to deliver more for our local businesses and promote the local economy.

Over recent years, the partnership has successfully delivered initiatives including:

- the West Kent Enterprise Adviser Network, which had a focus on business-relevant careers advice for schools;
- the West Kent Kick Start Programme, giving young people 6-month work placement opportunities;
- the West Kent Jobs Fairs and West Kent SkillsFest.

There are plenty of exciting new initiatives starting, including the West Kent Business Support Programme, West Kent Rural England Prosperity Fund (grants for rural businesses and communities), and the Invest West Kent initiative to promote the area as a great place to do business.

In addition, there are a number of key partners that the Borough Council works with directly to deliver initiatives or to support work in a specific area of the local economy. A list of these partners, along with some of the key funding streams, is provided in Appendix 1.

## 06 Action Plan

Theme	Action	Measure	Partners
Promoting the Borough	Rebranding of the West Kent Partnership.  Launch of Invest West Kent website and associated campaigns.	Delivery of brand and launch of website by Autumn 2023.  Ongoing campaigns.	West Kent Partnership (Sevenoaks District Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council)
Promoting the Borough	Delivery of Service Level Agreement with Visit Kent to promote the area as a tourism destination.	100% of targets in the SLA met.	Visit Kent
Supporting Local Business	Delivery of the West Kent Business Support Programme (UKSPF)	20 Tonbridge and Malling based businesses per annum given mentoring support and access to micro-grant support.  Delivery of minimum 6 workshops across West Kent per annum	West Kent Partnership (Sevenoaks District Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council), Smarter Society Ltd
Supporting Local Business	Promote the Kent and Medway Growth Hub and other business support organisations.	To promote the support available and appropriately refer businesses.	Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce, other business representative organisations.
Supporting Local Business	Local Business Networking	Minimum of 3 events per annum.	Federation of Small Business (FSB); Tonbridge Town Team; Town and Parish Councils
Supporting Local Business	Creation and Distribution of the monthly Business Bulletin.	Minimum 12 bulletins per annum  Minimum 900 recipients on the business database.	Input from all partner organisations and businesses.
Supporting Local Business	Annual West Kent Business Conference	Delivery of one summit per annum with minimum 40 businesses attending.	West Kent Partnership (Sevenoaks District Council and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council)
Land and Premises	Delivery of the Tonbridge and Malling Local Plan by the Local Planning Authority	Work towards the adoption of the Local Plan and the allocation of strategic sites and new employment allocations by 2026.	Statutory Consultees, local residents and businesses.
Land and Premises	Work with Panattoni to help complete the Panattoni Park Aylesford development.	Full occupation of the site by 2024.	Panattoni, Kent County Council

Theme	Action	Measure	Partners
Land and Premises	Work with NIAB EMR to bring forward further phases of the Green Tech Hub for Advanced Horticulture.	Implementation of Phase 2 during the course of this strategy.	NIAB EMR, East Malling Trust.
Land and Premises	Support the Royal British Legion Industries in bringing forward the next phase of the Centenary Village and other on-site developments	Implementation of works during the course of this strategy.	RBLI
Land and Premises	Support the delivery of the Leigh Expansion and Hildenborough Embankment Scheme (LEHES)	Works fully completed by 2025.	Environment Agency, Kent County Council, SE Local Enterprise Partnership
Land and Premises	Promote Locate in Kent to businesses looking for land or premises to grow.	To promote the support available and appropriately refer businesses.	Locate in Kent
A Greener More Productive Economy	Green Business Grant Scheme (UKSPF)	Deliver 2 more rounds of the GBGS (in 2023 and 2024) supporting a minimum 20 businesses.	Sevenoaks District Council, Kent County Council (LoCASE); Local Businesses.
A Greener More Productive Economy	Delivery of Green Retrofit Skills Pilot (UKSPF)	Support up to 50 people into gaining green retrofit skills in 2024/25.	Sevenoaks District Council, Local Colleges
A Greener More Productive Economy	Carbon Literacy Training (UKSPF)	Delivery of Carbon Literacy Training to up to 100 people in 2024/25	Town and Parish Councils, Charitable and Community Groups
A Greener More Productive Economy	Promote existing advice on energy efficiency and emissions reduction to local businesses	To promote the support available and appropriately refer businesses.	Low Carbon Kent, LoCASE, GSE Net Zero Hub.
A Greener More Productive Economy	Support provision of Electric Charging Points	50 Electric Charging Points delivered in Phase 2 of the Programme (by April 2025)	Kent County Council, Connected Kerb
A Thriving Rural Economy	West Kent Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF) Programme	A minimum of 25 grants provided to support rural businesses and communities during 2023-2025	West Kent Partnership
A Thriving Rural Economy	Promote and refer local businesses to the Growing Kent and Medway initiative	To promote the support available and appropriately refer businesses.	NIAB EMR (at East Malling), Growing Kent and Medway partners.
An Inclusive Economy	Delivery of jobs fairs that support people into work or training.	2 per annum (Tonbridge and Aylesford (RBLI Village))	Department for Work and Pensions; Housing Associations, RBLI

Theme	Action	Measure	Partners
An Inclusive Economy	Support apprenticeship and internship opportunities for people with SEN.	Work with specialist college to support up to 8 young people into workplace opportunities.	Oaks Specialist College, Education People (KCC)
An Inclusive Economy	Support local schools with careers advice and work experience.	Attend up to 2 school careers fairs per annum.	T&M Schools, The Education People, Kent Education Business Partnership.
An Inclusive Economy	Help to reduce digital exclusion in our most deprived communities.	Establish an initiative to help tackle Digital Exclusion	Kent County Council
Vibrant Town Centres	Shopfront and Vacant Unit Improvement Scheme (BRRP/UKSPF)	Support up to 35 shopkeepers with grant support and advice during 2023-2025	Let's Do Business Group, local businesses.
Vibrant Town Centres	Programme of Town Centre Events and Markets	Deliver and support a minimum of 30 events per annum to support our town centres.	Events Companies and organisers, local businesses.
Vibrant Town Centres	Tonbridge Town Centre Review	Production and implementation of sustainable plans for the regeneration of Tonbridge Town Centre.	Key Landowners, MACE Consultants
Vibrant Town Centres	Improve wayfinding and signage in Tonbridge Town Centre (UKSPF)	Delivery of first phase to improve links between Tonbridge Station and the rest of the town centre.	Community Rail Partnership, Network Rail, Southeastern, local residents and businesses
Vibrant Town Centres	Explore potential of a BID in Tonbridge.	Carry out initial research to examine the viability of a BID in Tonbridge.	Tonbridge Town Team, local businesses

## 07 Economic Dashboard

This economic dashboard provides a very high-level illustration of the performance of the local economy. Whilst there is some delay in the data, it does display that many aspects of the economy have plateaued, with ‘business failures’, youth unemployment and skills attainment on a negative trajectory.

The aspiration for 2027 is set out in the end column. Obviously, this can be impacted by a number of factors that are outside the control of this authority, however through the initiatives set out in the action plan the strategy does have the potential to help move all of these indicators in a positive direction.

Along with the action plan, updates on this dashboard will be provided on an annual basis, with comparison data also being provided in order to benchmark the performance of the local economy.

	Economic Indicator	Latest Data	Date	Current Trend	Aspiration for 2027
Dynamic	VAT Registrations (Start-Ups)	750	2021		800 per annum
Dynamic	Job Density	0.98	2021		1
Resilient	VAT De-registrations	775	2021		650 per annum
Resilient	3 Year Business Survival Rates (%)	62.5	2021		65%
Resilient	Median Gross Weekly Full-time Earnings (£) by Residence	£703.60	2022		£750
Resilient	Median Gross Weekly Full-time Earnings (£) by Workplace	£608.80	2022		£650
Inclusive	Unemployment Rate (%)	2.2%	Apr 2023		Less than 2%
Inclusive	16–64-year-olds claiming out of work benefits (%)	3.6%	Apr 2023		Less than 3%
Inclusive	National Vocational Qualification Level 3+ (%)	48.3%	2021		60%
Inclusive	Happiness Score (out of 10)	7.6	2022		8 out of 10
Sustainable	Greenhouse Gas emissions from industry and commercial sectors in T&M (tCO2e)	188	2020		150
Sustainable	Percentage of T&M Greenhouse Gas emissions from industry and commercial sectors (%)	25	2020		20%
Sustainable	No. of renewable electricity installations	1,848	2021		2,750
Sustainable	% of all dwellings with EPC band C and above (%)	48.95	2022		55%
Sustainable	Proportion of employment in energy intensive sectors (%).	36	2022		30%

# Appendix 1:

Partners
Community Rail Partnerships
Clarion Housing
Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
Department for International Trade (DIT)
Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC)
Deskrenters (Castle Lodge)
East Malling Trust
Education Business Partnership Kent
Environment Agency
Federation of Small Businesses
Golding Homes
Highways England
Homes England
JobCentre Plus
Kent Apprenticeships
Kent County Council
Kent Farmers Market Association
Kent International Business
Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce
Locate in Kent
Mid Kent College
Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce
Network Rail/Great British Railways
NIAB East Malling Research
North Kent College
Orbit Group
Produced in Kent
Royal British Legion Industries
Southeastern Railways
The Education People
The National Trust (Ightham Mote)
Tonbridge and Malling Businesses
Tonbridge and Malling Schools
Tonbridge Community Forum
Tonbridge Town Team
Town & Parish Councils
Visit Kent
West Kent Partnership – including Sevenoaks DC & Tunbridge Wells BC
Key Funding Streams:
Business Rates Pool
Business Rates Retention Pilot (BRRP)
Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)
UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

# TMBC.GOV.UK

## Serving our community

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Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council  
Gibson Building  
Gibson Drive  
Kings Hill  
West Malling  
Kent  
ME19 4LZ.

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# Agenda Item 9

The minutes of meetings of Advisory Panels and Other Groups are attached, any recommendations being identified by an arrow.

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# Public Document Pack

## TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### TONBRIDGE COMMUNITY FORUM

#### MINUTES

Monday, 12th June, 2023

**Present:** Cllr G B Hines (Chair), Cllr D W King (Vice-Chair), Cllr L Athwal, Cllr K Barton, Cllr G C Bridge, Cllr J Clokey, Cllr A Cope, Cllr F A Hoskins, Cllr A Mehmet, Cllr R W G Oliver, Cllr B A Parry, Cllr M R Rhodes, Cllr K S Tunstall, County Cllr P Stepto and County Cllr M Hood.

Together with representatives from:

- Angel Indoor Bowls Club
- EMBER Community Interest Company
- Feast
- Friends of Mill Stream
- Rotary Club of Tonbridge
- TBUG
- Tonbridge Civic Society
- Tonbridge Historical Society
- Tonbridge Line Commuters
- Tonbridge Parish Church
- Tonbridge Sports Association
- Tonbridge Town Team

Apologies for absence were received from Tonbridge and Malling Seniors, Tonbridge Dementia Friendly Community and Tonbridge Lions Club.

#### **TCF 23/8 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIRS**

The appointments of Borough Councillors were confirmed. The Chair advised that nominations for a vice-chairman from the community groups would be sought prior to the next meeting.

#### **TCF 23/9 NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

There were no substitute Members nominated for this meeting.

#### **TCF 23/10 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 February 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**TCF 23/11 UPDATE ON ANY ACTION IDENTIFIED IN THE LAST MINUTES**

The Leader provided an update on charging for Borough Council open spaces during which he advised that the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee would consider a report on Events on Public Open Spaces on 14 June 2023 and make recommendations to Cabinet on 4 July 2023.

Furthermore, the Leader reported that since the last meeting, following a successful UK Shared Prosperity Fund bid, the digital information boards would be rolled out.

With regards to the recent Borough elections, details were sought on the number of voters who were denied a ballot paper due to not having valid identification. The Leader explained that the figures had been reported to the Electoral Commission.

**MATTERS RAISED IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING**

Details of the matter to be raised should be provided in writing or by email to [committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk](mailto:committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk) at least 10 working days before the meeting. This is so that a response can be provided on the evening of the meeting. Only one question may be submitted by an organisation due to the time limitations.

**TCF 23/12 LOCAL ELECTION RESULTS**

Members received the Returning Officers certificate which certified those persons who were duly elected as councillors at the ordinary election of borough councillors held on 4 May 2023, for information.

**TCF 23/13 KENT POLICE UPDATE**

Members received a verbal update from Inspector Newman on recent initiatives and an explanation of the role of the Community Safety Unit.

Inspector Newman reported that each ward in Tonbridge would have a named Officer and that following a recruitment drive, there would be a full complement of staff by October 2024.

It was explained that the Community Safety Unit worked with partners to provide prevention advice to residents in areas where crimes were particularly prevalent and co-ordinated action plans to prevent further crimes in these areas.

Members were informed that the Borough Council had been successful in receiving funding to purchase four mobile CCTV cameras for use in tackling anti-social behaviour and were asked to contact the Borough Council if it was felt that any specific area should be targeted.

During discussion, Members were advised that a number of schools' officers had moved to the control centre to deal with 101 call demand and consideration needed to be given to how feedback could be provided; and that there was a task force in Kent specifically focused on county lines.

The key priorities for the summer months were policing parks and community areas and targeting main offenders. Inspector Newman took the opportunity to promote Named Intensification Week (week commencing 19 June 2023) and Anti-Social Behaviour Week (week commencing 3 July 2023). Members were encouraged to register with My Community Voice and report any incidences immediately.

### **TCF 23/14 TONBRIDGE POST OFFICE**

Members received a statement from Laura Tarling, Public Affairs Manager, Post Office as set out below:

'Tonbridge Post Office was previously operated as a Franchise by WH Smith from their Tonbridge store. There were plans to redevelop the premises and WH Smith took the decision close their store at the lease expiry on 30th July 2022.

With thanks to Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, Tonbridge Castle was put forward as a suitable location for a temporary Post Office. The branch opened on 26 August and continues to operate from Tonbridge Castle.

Post Office began the search for a new postmaster with premises for a replacement permanent branch in January 2022. There was a lot of interest from potential applicants but finding suitable premises that were viable for a Post Office and retail business has been challenging.

Premises at 64 High Street were eventually identified, with Heads of Terms agreed between the applicant and landlord. It was known that significant refurbishment works were needed to transform the premises to a retail business and Post Office. The successful applicant was appointed at the end of March, subject to signing the Post Office contract and lease on the premises. Plans to finalise the lease and contract were planned for early in May, due to the applicant being abroad in April.

Unfortunately, following further discussion with the landlord in May, the applicant was not able to agree the lease terms set by the landlord, and decided to withdraw from the premises. The applicant is aware of the urgency to open a permanent Post Office in Tonbridge and there were several factors involved in making this difficult decision. However, the final lease agreement was no longer viable for the applicant.

The applicant is now reviewing alternative premises – there was a site visit on 6 June at a proposed location. The design and location of the Post Office counter at these premises requires further work to make it fit, and discussions regarding the lease are taking place.

Following the temporary branch opening in August, there were customer service issues relating to IT connectivity, and difficulties with staff recruitment resulting in the branch closing for short periods. The applicant for the permanent Post Office is now operating the temporary branch to provide a more consistent service, supported by the Post Office Area Manager.

Post Office apologises to customers who have been affected by the disruption to services in Tonbridge over the past year. Post Office are working closely with the applicant to confirm permanent premises as soon as possible. We will share a further update when new premises are confirmed.

Post Office thank Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council and all stakeholders for their continued support over recent months to help find suitable premises, and for hosting the temporary Post Office at Tonbridge Castle.'

A number of members expressed disappointment that a representative from the Post Office was unable to attend the meeting and noted that the Post Office had indicated that a representative would be in attendance at the next meeting.

The Leader gave his assurance that the provision of a temporary Post Office at the Castle would continue until a permanent location had been identified.

## **TCF 23/15 PROMOTION OF UPCOMING EVENTS**

Members noted the forthcoming events to be held in Tonbridge and the surrounding area:

(1) Tonbridge Calling

Volunteer stewards were sought for the Tonbridge Calling music event in the park on 1 July 2023. Anyone interested in the role was asked to email [tonbridgecalling@gmail.com](mailto:tonbridgecalling@gmail.com).

(2) Tonbridge Pride

Members were informed that Tonbridge Pride would be held on 5 August 2023 and were invited to join the town's vibrant LGBTQ+ community for a fun filled day of celebration and acceptance.

In addition to forthcoming events, Members were informed that over 200 cyclists took part in the mass ride for cycleways event held on the 9 June 2023. The event promoted the future of safer, healthier, cheaper and more planet-friendlier travel in Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge.

#### **TCF 23/16 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Leader provided an update on the future of Beales and advised that no detailed plans had been submitted. Members raised concern that the premises was vacant and suggested that a presentation be received at the next meeting.

The meeting ended at 8.19 pm

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Executive Decisions Record - August 2023

Decision Number	Title	Cabinet Member	Date of Decision	Date Published	Call-in period ends	Called in	Scrutiny Committee Consideration	Referred back to Cabinet	Referred back to Council	Council referred to Cabinet	Date Decision Effective
D230070MEM	Shopfront and Vacant Unit Improvement Grant Scheme	Climate Change, Regeneration and Property	08.08.23	08.08.23	15.08.23						18.07.23
D230071MEM	Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules - Amendment	Leader	21.08.23	22.08.23	30.08.23*						31.08.23

Decision pending	Call in period	Key Decision	Private	Urgent
	Subject to call in			

URG - outside of budget and policy framework

\*reflects Bank Holiday

Executive Decisions Record - July 2023

Decision Number	Title	Cabinet Member	Date of Decision	Date Published	Call-in period ends	Called in	Scrutiny Committee Consideration	Referred back to Cabinet	Referred back to Council	Council referred to Cabinet	Date Decision Effective			
D230056CAB	Household Support Fund	Cabinet	04.07.23	06.07.23	13.07.23						14.07.23			
D230057CAB	New Local Development Scheme													
D230058CAB	Financial Planning and Control													
D230059CAB	TM UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)													
D230060CAB	Community Development Grant Scheme													
D230061CAB	TMBC Owned Sites - Local Plan													
D230062CAB	Tree Safety Policy								10.7.23	1.08.23*		N/A	N/A	N/A
D230063CAB	Events on Public Open Spaces													
D230064CAB	Litter and Fly Tipping Enforcement Pilot - 6 month review													
D230065MEM	Approval of the Food and Safety Team Service Plan 2023-2024	Climate Change, Regeneration and Property	10.07.23	10.07.23	17.07.23						18.07.23			
D230066MEM	Kent Minerals and Waste - Local Plan	Cabinet Member for Planning	11.07.23	12.07.23	19.07.23						20.07.23			
D230067MEM	Housing Strategy Update and Draft Year 2 Action Plan	Cabinet Member for Planning	18.07.23	20.07.23	27.07.23						28.07.23			
D230068MEM	Fixed Penalty Notices for Waste Duty of Care Offences	Cabinet Member for Transformation and Infrastructure	19.07.23	24.07.23	31.07.23						01.08.23			
D230069MEM	Leisure Trust	Cabinet Member for Communities Services												
D230070MEM	Climate Change Action Plan Year 4 and Carbon Audit 2022-23	Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Regeneration and Property												

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Decision pending	Call in period	Key Decision	Private	Urgent
	Subject to call in			

URG - outside of budget and policy framework

\*effective from 1 August 2023

# 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 14

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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