



TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE SERVICES

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

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

18 June 2025

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

Dear Sir/Madam

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be held in the Council Chamber, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill on Thursday, 26th June, 2025 commencing at 7.30 pm.

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

Information on how to observe the meeting will be published on the Council's website.

Yours faithfully

DAMIAN ROBERTS

Chief Executive

A G E N D A

1. Guidance on the Conduct of Meetings

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PART 1 - PUBLIC

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4. Declarations of interest 11 - 12

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.

5. Minutes 13 - 18

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 3 April 2025

6. Any Executive Decisions which have been 'called in' 19 - 20

Matters for Information

7. Empty Homes 21 - 28

This report updates Members on empty homes work including current figures on empty homes across the borough, trends, comparison with other Kent local authorities, recent activities and the new Empty Homes Officer post.

8. Consultant Use 2024-25 29 - 60

To provide information on the spend and use of consultants by the council during 2024/25. This report fulfils the recommendation agreed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11th September 2024 that the Council continue to closely manage future use of external expertise, and an ongoing review of consultant use at the Council be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.

9. Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman - Annual Review Letter 61 - 68

The annual report of the Ombudsman regarding complaints received and dealt with over the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 is presented for information.

10. Record of Decisions taken by the Executive 69 - 72

A record of decision taken by the Cabinet and/or Cabinet Member during April, May and June 2025 is attached for information.

11. Notice of Forthcoming Key Decisions 73 - 76

The Notice of Key Decisions anticipated to be taken during the period June to August 2020⁵ is attached. This may be subject to change due to adjustments to the reporting timetable.

12. Work Programme 77 - 80

The Work Programme setting out matters to be scrutinised during 2025/26 is attached for information. Members can suggest future items by liaising with the Chair of the Committee.

13. Urgent Items 81 - 82

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

14. Exclusion of Press and Public 83 - 84

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

Matters for Information

15. Built Environment and Public Protection Software System 85 - 118

(Reasons: Part 2 – Private: LGA 1972 – Sch 12A Paragraph 3 – Financial or business affairs of any particular person)

The report presents findings of the independent review of the implementation of a new software system for the built environment and public protection services, identifying key learning and actions alongside the progress already made at addressing these.

16. Urgent Items 119 - 120

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

MEMBERSHIP

Cllr Mrs A S Oakley (Chair)

Cllr L Athwal (Vice-Chair) and Cllr K B Tanner (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Mrs S Bell

Cllr T Bishop

Cllr C Brown

Cllr R I B Cannon

Cllr L Chapman

Cllr A Cope

Cllr P M Hickmott

Cllr M A J Hood

Cllr F A Hoskins

Cllr S A Hudson

Cllr D W King

Cllr A McDermott

Cllr W E Palmer

Cllr D Thornewell

GUIDANCE ON HOW MEETINGS WILL BE CONDUCTED

- (1) Most of the Borough Council meetings are livestreamed, unless there is exempt or confidential business being discussed, giving residents the opportunity to see decision making in action. These can be watched via our YouTube channel. When it is not possible to livestream meetings they are recorded and uploaded as soon as possible:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPp-IJISNgoF-ugSzxiAPfw/featured>

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

Attendance:

- Members of the Committee 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 Chair, 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 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 should attend in person. However, arrangements to participate online can be considered in certain circumstances. Please contact committee.services@tmhc.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.

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee					
	Conservative	Liberal Democratic	Green	Ind. Kent Alliance	Labour
1	Dave Davis	Bill Banks	Kath Barton		Angus Bennison
2	James Lark	Paul Boxall	Steve Crisp		
3	Mark Rhodes	Garry Bridge	Robert Oliver		
4	Keith Tunstall	Trudy Dean	Bethan Parry		
5	Colin Williams	Roger Roud	Stacey Pilgrim		
Members of Cabinet cannot be appointed as a substitute to this Committee					

May 2025

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Declarations of interest

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TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Thursday, 3rd April, 2025

Present: Cllr Mrs A S Oakley (Chair), Cllr L Athwal (Vice-Chair), Cllr Mrs S Bell (Vice-Chair), Cllr T Bishop, Cllr C Brown, Cllr R I B Cannon, Cllr A Cope, Cllr D A S Davis, Cllr P M Hickmott, Cllr M A J Hood, Cllr F A Hoskins, Cllr S A Hudson, Cllr D W King, Cllr A Mehmet, Cllr W E Palmer, Cllr D Thornewell and Cllr C J Williams

Cllrs A G Bennison, Mrs T Dean, B Banks, R P Betts*, M D Boughton*, M A Coffin*, D Keers*, M R Rhodes*, K B Tanner* and M Taylor* were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

(*participated via MS Teams)

PART 1 - PUBLIC

OS 25/13 NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute members required.

OS 25/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

OS 25/15 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 23 January 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

OS 25/16 OUTSIDE BODIES UPDATE - CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU

Representatives from the Citizens Advice In North and West Kent (CANWK) provided an update on activities undertaken during January – December 2024 and advised that extremely high demand continued to be experienced as people struggled with the ongoing pressures of high costs of living.

The complexity of cases, time in supporting clients and Adviceline appointments had also increased. During 2025/26, the CANWK would focus on maximising the efficiency of the service to meet high demand,

aimed to increase specialist advice services and committed to explore how to be more accessible to the community.

Reference was made to Kent Advice Hub which was a video advice kiosk and was a way of ensuring that the Service connected with some of the most vulnerable residents. Options around extending the Kiosk provision in rural communities would be explored although the difficulties with funding and staffing were recognised.

The organisation recorded appreciation for the continued support of the Borough Council in enabling them to support residents within Tonbridge and Malling with the issues they faced.

Members were pleased to note that approximately 3,000 clients had been assisted in Tonbridge and Malling and welcomed the support and advice offered to some of the most vulnerable people in the Borough.

OS 25/17 REVIEW OF WATER INCIDENTS IN TONBRIDGE AND MALLING

Consideration was given to the events leading up to and during the recent loss of water supply in Tonbridge on 26 January and in West Kent on 23 March 2025.

The timelines of both incidents were set out by representatives of South East Water who were in attendance at the meeting. The Borough Council's response was also outlined.

Particular reference was made to the lack of communication and notification of any disruption to the water supply with the Borough Council and Kent County Council in respect of the earlier incident. The first awareness of an issue was via the office of Tom Tugendhat MP for Tonbridge.

Following this incident a full debrief was held on 12 February 2025 to build a shared understanding of areas of good practice and lessons learnt with a view to improving plans and resilience moving forward. The areas of good practice were set out in Annex 2 and included improved communication with multiagency partners, targeted and effective communication and better coordination.

Members were pleased to note that these areas of good practice had been implemented for the later incident. However, concern was also expressed around the operation and management of alternative water provision, the lack of co-ordination with county, borough and parish councils who had local geographical knowledge in respect of water stations, the lack of communication with those not on the internet or with mobile phones and the lack of water supply delivery for some residents on the priority service register and to livestock.

Representatives of South East Water responded to these concerns, noted potential areas of further improvement and indicated that in order to improve resilience of the water supply there needed to be investment.

Finally, it had been announced that South East Water had asked Ofwat to refer its PR24 Final Determination to the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) for review as it was argued that the regulator's decision did not adequately support necessary investments and improvements. A public consultation would open mid-April in which feedback would be sought from customers and key stakeholders.

MATTERS FOR CORPORATE MONITORING

OS 25/18 CORPORATE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2024/25

The report provided data on Key Performance Indicators for the period October to December 2024 (quarter 3) that were aligned to the Corporate Strategy 2023-2027 and monitored on a quarterly or annual basis.

This data was a key tool in assessing performance management, helped to deliver positive change and provided Members with an insight into areas where the Borough Council were performing well and areas that needed greater focus.

Members welcomed the reduction in reported anti-social behaviour, the reduction in reported fly tipping incidents and the good performance in respect of waste collection rates. Negative trends included a slight increase in reported victim based crime, reduced social media engagement and reduced recycling and composting.

The Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested more meaningful data related to planning applications (KPI 100) and how many were outstanding, length of time they were outstanding and the numbers of case/applications rather than percentages.

It was also noted that, whilst progress was currently slow in addressing the housing register backlog, to maintain improvement additional staffing was being considered and it was hoped this would assist in accelerating the progress being made.

RESOLVED: That the positive and negative trends identified in the report be noted.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

OS 25/19 REVIEW OF PARISH PARTNERSHIP PANEL

The report of the Chief Executive considered options for future meetings of the Parish Partnership Panel.

All members of the Panel had been invited to share their views on the current venue, style and format of meetings. The responses were set out in Annex 1. No significant issues had been raised other than the preference for in person meetings. However, it was also recognised that online meetings possibly achieved higher attendance and it was proposed that the option to join remotely be retained.

RECOMMENDED*: That meetings of the Parish Partnership Panel be held in the Council Chamber with the option for members to join remotely retained.

***Recommended to Cabinet**

MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

OS 25/20 AFFORDABLE HOUSING DELIVERY

Members were provided with an update on the current national issues with securing affordable housing in new developments. Local issues and the measures in place to mitigate these issues were also highlighted.

It was reported that there was a growing national issue with delivery of affordable housing via the standard route of a s106 agreement. The Local Government Association (LGA) had been convening roundtable discussions to look at issues and solutions in which Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council were actively involved.

In addition, the Borough Council continued to work closely with developers and Registered Providers and an action plan (detailed in 6.1) had been produced to ensure that this important issue was being closely managed.

The Committee recognised the challenges around the provision of affordable housing, welcomed the provision of more detail at future meetings of the Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee and recognised the importance of benchmarking against neighbouring authorities.

OS 25/21 PRIMARY CARE CAPACITY IN TONBRIDGE AND MALLING

The report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health provided an overview of current capacity and future requirements in respect of primary care in Tonbridge and Malling and had been prepared in collaboration with the Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board.

The role of the NHS Kent and Medway Integrated Care Boards (ICB) in planning and commissioning healthcare services to meet the needs of

residents in the county was outlined. In relation to the delivery of health and community facilities, the Borough Council's primary role was that of planning authority. Developer contributions were sought by the ICB to support the expansion of premises in response to individual planning locations. In some locations, new sites might be required to mitigate the impact on health services, including general practice. If the option of expanding provision to a proposed development site was not a viable option, then developer contributions towards the cost of new or enhanced premises at an alternative site could be sought in order to mitigate the demand created.

Members expressed concern regarding the pressures being placed upon GP practices especially in the North of the Borough arising from ongoing growth and development. Concern was also expressed in respect of the lack of access to GPs, the lack of consultation with GPs via the ICB, the risk of local doctor surgeries being overwhelmed by demand and whether the ICB provided meaningful engagement in respect of planning applications. In addition, disappointment was expressed at the lack of information around the number of residents registered with GP surgeries, those not registered locally and those not registered at all as this detail could inform the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

It was recognised that whilst the Borough Council had no responsibility in respect of the provision of health services it would be challenging to address demand during the lifetime of this Local Plan especially if the ICB did not undertake effective engagement. With this in mind, the Leader of the Borough Council offered to write to the Kent and Medway Integrated Care Board expressing disappointment at their lack of engagement and invite them to address a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee so that Cllrs concerns could be voiced.

OS 25/22 USE OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCEDURE RULE 15 (I) IN RESPECT OF CALL-IN AND URGENCY FOR DECISIONS

In accordance with the Council's Constitution the report advised of the recent use of Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 15 (i) to 'suspend' the call-in procedure for decisions related to the Local Development Scheme, the Local Housing Authority Fund and the interim draft submission to MHCLG related to local government reorganisation.

The decision notices were attached at Annexes 1, 2 and 3 of the report.

Members noted that the need for the 'suspension' of the call-in procedures had arisen from a recent pattern of very short response timeframes being set by Government that were not easily accommodated within the normal pattern of meetings and arrangements.

OS 25/23 RECORD OF DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE EXECUTIVE

The decisions taken by Cabinet and Cabinet Members during March 2025 were presented for information and noted by the Committee.

OS 25/24 NOTICE OF FORTHCOMING KEY DECISIONS

The Notice setting Key Decisions anticipated to taken during May to June 2025 was presented for information. It was also noted that the Notice was subject to change if adjustments were necessary to the reporting timetable.

If there were any issues that the Committee wished to scrutinise, they were invited to raise these with the Chair.

OS 25/25 WORK PROGRAMME

The Work Programme setting out potential matters to be scrutinised during 2025/26 was noted. Members were invited to suggest future items by liaising with the Chair of the Committee.

Reference was made to the ongoing Independent Audit review of the Agile implementation project and it was expected that outcomes and lessons learnt would be presented to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, subject to confirmation.

OS 25/26 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items considered in private.

The meeting ended at 10.30 pm

Any Executive Decisions which have been “called in”

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee

26 June 2025

Part 1 - Public

Matters for Information



Cabinet Member	Robin Betts, Cabinet Member for Housing, Environment and Economy
Responsible Officer	Eleanor Hoyle, Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health
Report Author	Linda Hibbs, Head of Housing and Health Will Waight, Benefits and Welfare Manager

Empty Homes

1 Summary and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report updates Members on empty homes work including current figures on empty homes across the borough, trends, comparison with other Kent local authorities, recent activities and the new Empty Homes Officer post.

2 Corporate Strategy Priority Area

- 2.1 Improving housing options for local people whilst protecting our outdoor areas of importance.
- 2.1.1 Empty homes can be a wasted resource and bringing them back into use adds to the housing availability within Tonbridge & Malling, potentially providing options for some of the customers we work with in the housing service.

3 Introduction and Background

- 3.1 Members have requested an update on our work on empty homes.

Current data and empty property premiums

- 3.2 The Council does not have a dedicated empty homes system, so data is simply extracted from the council tax system at a snapshot in time. The council tax system records the number of days the dwellings are empty, and this can range from 1 day to more than 1,000 days.
- 3.3 Properties that are empty do generally have to pay council tax. Housing associations with charitable objectives can be granted a "Class B" exemption for a

maximum of six months provided that the property will be occupied again in accordance with those charitable objectives within that time.

- 3.4 Properties that are empty for longer than 12 months (other than in certain exceptional circumstances) attract a premium charge:
- more than one year (more than two years before 1 April 2024) but less than five years –charged the full council tax plus an extra 100 per cent
 - over five years –charged the full council tax plus an extra 200 per cent
 - over ten years –charged the full council tax plus an extra 300 per cent
- 3.5 At **Annex 1** Members will note a listing which shows the number of properties in each parished or unparished area of the council broken down by duration category. This snapshot was taken on 15 May 2025. The duration categories are:
- a. 0 to 6 months
 - b. 6 to 12 months
 - c. 1 to 2 years
 - d. 2 to 3 years
 - e. Over 3 years
- 3.6 As stated above, any property in duration categories c) through to e) will be paying a premium, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- 3.7 Properties in duration category a) are generally those properties that are in the process of “changing hands” due to house sales or tenancy changes. Often a property can be empty for a short period whilst ownership or tenancies change over.
- 3.8 Members will note from the Annex that in total, covering all durations, at 15 May 2025 there were 867 empty properties across the borough. 263 (30.3%) of these properties were in duration categories for which premiums are payable.
- 3.9 Similar snapshots were taken on 7 February 2024 and 18 July 2024. On 7 February 2024, there were 950 empty properties across the borough of which 299 (31.5 %) were in duration categories for which premiums are payable. This did include properties at St George’s Court, Wrotham which have since been demolished and removed from the council tax system. On 18 July 2024, there were 870 empty properties across the borough of which 303 (34.8%) were in duration categories for which premiums are payable.

- 3.10 Members will note that there is a positive direction of travel in respect of the total number of empty properties, and the number of long-term empty properties has also reduced.
- 3.11 In terms of the banding of empty properties, the below table shows the distribution of bands for the 867 empty properties as at 15 May 2025. Members will note that over 70% are in Bands A-D.

Council Tax Band	Number empty at 15/5/25	% of total empty
A	61	7.0%
B	112	12.9%
C	282	32.5%
D	160	18.5%
E	119	13.7%
F	70	8.1%
G	57	6.6%
H	6	0.7%
TOTAL	867	100%

Comparison Data

- 3.12 The table below provides data on the number of long-term (over 6 months) vacant dwellings as at October 2024 across Kent and the change from the previous year. This is based on Council Tax information and collated by MHCLG.

Local Authority	Number of long-term vacant dwellings as at October 2024	Change from October 2023
Ashford	697	+369*
Canterbury	953	-14
Dartford	253	-14
Dover	762	-44
Folkestone & Hythe	943	+116
Gravesham	285	+61
Maidstone	624	+10

Sevenoaks	363	-8
Swale	501	+17
Thanet	1,185	+42
Tonbridge & Malling	413	-76
Tunbridge Wells	521	+9

*It is understood that a removal of a discount class accounted for some of this increase in Ashford.

- 3.13 Members will note that Tonbridge & Malling had the fourth lowest number of long-term empty properties in Kent. Tonbridge & Malling also had the largest decrease in number when compared to 2023. It is important to note that the decrease is not just empty homes being brought back into use, it also includes any removal of properties from the Council Tax system e.g. demolition.

Clarion Housing Group voids

- 3.14 In May 2025 Clarion Housing Group reported that they had 113 void properties within Tonbridge & Malling. This included 97 general needs properties and 16 within their LiveSmart schemes. This figure has remained consistent at this level now for approximately two years and although it will consist of some different properties at each reporting date the continuing level of voids has been a concern. This issue has been raised at Regional Director level, and they have fed back that there have been considerable new resources put into Clarion void works teams and the Tonbridge & Malling area has specifically been targeted for some of this new resource. There was also a further update in May 2025 of a new “unlocking voids” plan which is due to be rolled out across the Tonbridge & Malling area after success elsewhere. Further details on this plan have been sought. In addition, Clarion are due to provide a breakdown of the length of time the properties have been void to aid further understanding of the issue.

Recent work

- 3.15 Officers from the Housing Improvement and the Revenue and Benefits teams have undertaken visits to empty properties that were recorded on the Council Tax system as empty to check status and this has enabled the data held to be updated. As part of this work and where an empty property was identified any opportunity to offer advice and support to owners on bringing the property back into use was taken.
- 3.16 Officers from the Housing Improvement Team have continued to respond to any complaints about issues at empty homes and sought to resolve where feasible and appropriate.

- 3.17 Officers from the Housing Improvement Team have continued to liaise with other Kent local authorities via the empty homes forum and have been progressing a potential grant through the KCC “No Use Empty” scheme.

Empty Homes Officer

- 3.18 Members approved a two-year fixed term Empty Homes Officer post in 2024. Unfortunately, several rounds of recruitment have proved unsuccessful. A more recent recruitment process has however led to an internal secondment opportunity being requested. This has been agreed, and the successful candidate should take up the position shortly.
- 3.19 The establishment of a fixed term Empty Homes Officer post will allow a real focus on this work. The post will work within the Housing Improvement Team, reporting to the Housing Improvement Manager and sit alongside the Housing EHO resource who will support with enforcement. The role will work closely with Council Tax colleagues on data and approach to empty homes. A key part of their role will be to liaise with our Registered Provider partners over any empty properties they may have and seek to bring them back into use as quickly as possible. Additional expert support will be available from the “No Use Empty” scheme Officers at KCC and the post will promote the scheme where appropriate.

4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 4.1 The Empty Homes Officer post is being funded from the Housing Assistance reserve. A budget of £30,000 to sit alongside this post to fund any work that enables the facilitation of empty homes being brought back into use, for example, legal expertise, mediation, survey work, promotional work has also been agreed.
- 4.2 There may be occasions when bringing an empty property back into use will negatively impact on Council Tax income as there may be a loss in a premium payment.

5 Risk Assessment

- 5.1 None

6 Legal Implications

- 6.1 There is no statutory duty to have an empty homes resource however some of the issues that arise from empty homes fall within our housing related statutory duties e.g. housing conditions, nuisance, pest control.

7 Consultation and Communications

- 7.1 The Empty Homes Officer will work with the media team to promote the work on reducing the number of empty homes including the various campaigns that take place.

8 Implementation

- 8.1 Work on tackling empty homes is already undertaken within the Housing Improvement Team and monitoring of empty homes data is undertaken within the Revenue and Benefits team. The new Empty Homes Officer post will add capacity and impetus to this and allow a more focussed approach.
- 8.2 An update report to Members will be provided in early 2026.

9 Cross Cutting Issues

9.1 Climate Change and Biodiversity

- 9.1.1 Climate change advice has not been sought in the preparation of the options and recommendations in this report.

9.2 Equalities and Diversity

- 9.2.1 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.

9.3 Other If Relevant

- None

Background Papers	None
Annex 1	Empty Homes data as at 15 May 2025

Annex 1

EMPTY HOMES AS AT 15 MAY 2025							
Parish/Area	0 to 6 months	6 to 12 months	1 to 2 years	2 to 3 years	Over 3 Years	Total	Movement
Addington	2	1	0	0	10	13	-1
Aylesford	35	13	8	10	1	67	13
Birling	2	0	0	0	0	2	2
Borough Green	18	7	2	1	1	29	-5
Burham	2	0	1	0	1	4	-4
Ditton	10	3	0	1	2	16	6
E. Malling & Larkfield	34	6	4	1	3	48	-15
East Peckham	6	2	3	2	1	14	-1
Hadlow	13	7	6	0	3	29	5
Hildenborough	27	15	5	3	3	53	23
Ightham	7	1	2	2	3	15	-1
Kings Hill	15	7	4	45	0	71	-29
Leybourne	11	3	1	0	0	15	-1
Mereworth	10	1	2	1	4	18	-2
Offham	1	1	0	0	1	3	-6
Platt	5	4	0	0	0	9	-1
Plaxtol	6	2	0	1	0	9	2
Ryarsh	1	0	1	1	0	3	-3
Shipbourne	5	1	3	0	0	9	4
Snodland	34	16	9	3	2	64	-10
Stansted	2	1	0	0	0	3	0
Tonbridge	152	51	32	13	19	267	26
Trottiscliffe	0	2	0	0	1	3	-3
Wateringbury	10	5	2	1	18	36	-5
West Malling	13	5	4	0	4	26	-5
West Peckham	2	3	1	1	0	7	4
Wouldham	5	7	5	0	2	19	-3
Wrotham	9	3	0	1	2	15	7
Total	437	167	95	87	81	867	-3
Snapshot Data from Council Tax System 15 May 2025							Movement in numbers compared to snapshot 18 July 2024

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee

26 June 2025

Part 1 - Public

Matters for Information



Cabinet Member	Martin Coffin, Cabinet Member for Finance, Waste and Technical Services
Responsible Officer	Damian Roberts, Chief Executive
Report Author	Gill Fox, Policy, Scrutiny & Communities Manager

Consultant Use 2024/25

1 Summary and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To provide information on the spend and use of consultants by the council during 2024/25. This report fulfils the recommendation agreed at Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11th September 2024 that the Council continue to closely manage future use of external expertise, and an ongoing review of consultant use at the Council be reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.

2 Corporate Strategy Priority Area

- 2.1 Efficient services for all our residents, maintaining an effective council.
- 2.2 Taking steps to monitor the use and spend on consultants, along with consideration of specialised skills, retaining talent and building in-house capacity contributes to ensuring value for public money and delivering excellent, efficient services for the borough.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 That the information provided in the summary of consultancy spend in 2024/25 at Annex 1 be noted;
- 3.2 That information on consultancy spend continues to be provided to this Committee annually.

4 Introduction and Background

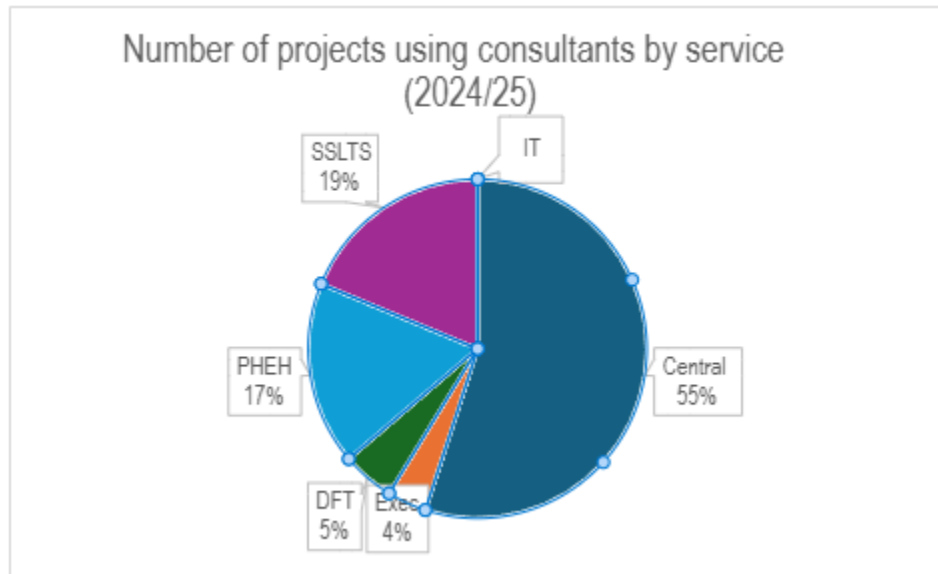
- 4.1 Last year the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested a review of the Council's use of consultants. A report on consultant use and spend was

considered at the 11 September 2024 meeting of that Committee. The following was agreed to define consultants: *“consultancy work which is providing knowledge, techniques and assets to improve performance that is outside of the Council’s “business as usual”. This would include the use of external third parties, providing expertise that is typically not available internally. Focusing on this aspect, would rule out the use of contractors who fill vacancies and are used for the day-to-day operational resources to maintain departmental function.”*

- 4.2 Recommendations from the review were agreed and are currently being implemented. For example, Human Resource Service and Communications, in collaboration with Management Team, have developed and launched a new Workforce Development Strategy, Behaviours and Appraisal process for staff. The associated process, policies and procedures are appropriate for following up on the Overview and Scrutiny recommendation that “the Council maintain its effectiveness at retaining specialist talent, to reduce the need for external experts going forward”. Similarly, services to continue to look for opportunities to collaborate with other councils as appropriate to service needs.
- 4.3 That report discussed at Overview and Scrutiny on 11 September focussed on the use of external expertise and not persons employed to provide day to day operational resource. As the first report into the use of and spending on consultants by the council, that report provided summary information for the period since 2020 to the report date. This report and summary information provided in the Annex 1 of this report covers the consultant use during the latest financial year, 2024/25.

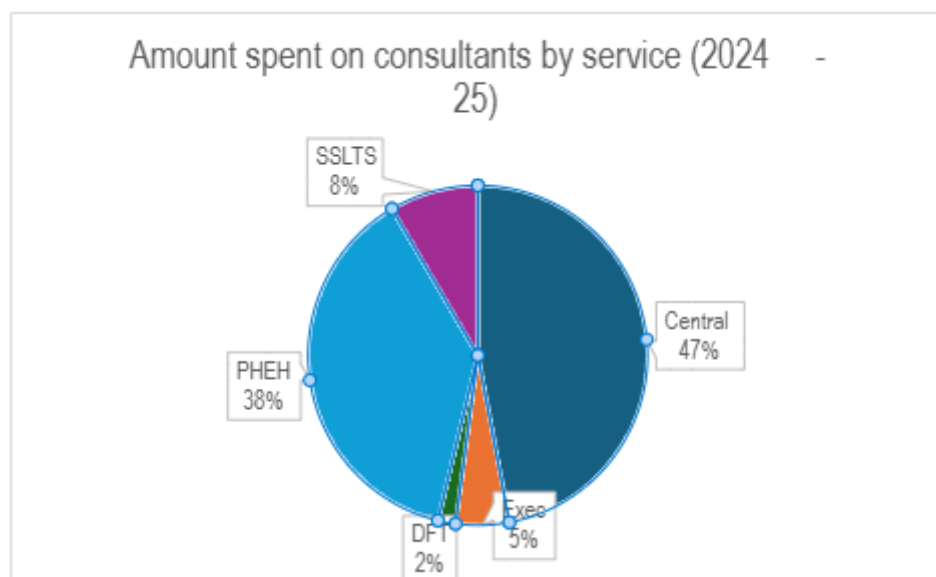
5 Overview of 2024/25 consultant spend

- 5.1 Much of the consultant use is utilising external funding for time limited projects, without which, the projects would not be feasible, and the external funding would potentially be lost.
- 5.2 Where consultants have been necessary, they provide expertise that is not available in house. In these cases, recruitment of specialist staff with the relevant knowledge, is not feasible as they would be under occupied for most of the time, due to the specialist nature of the work.
- 5.3 In 2024/25 the council spent £986,732 on the use of consultants for 80 separate projects. Of these, 15 projects (or 19%) were ongoing multi-year projects, including providing evidence for the Local Plan. A breakdown of the use of consultants by number of projects for each service is shown in the following pie chart:

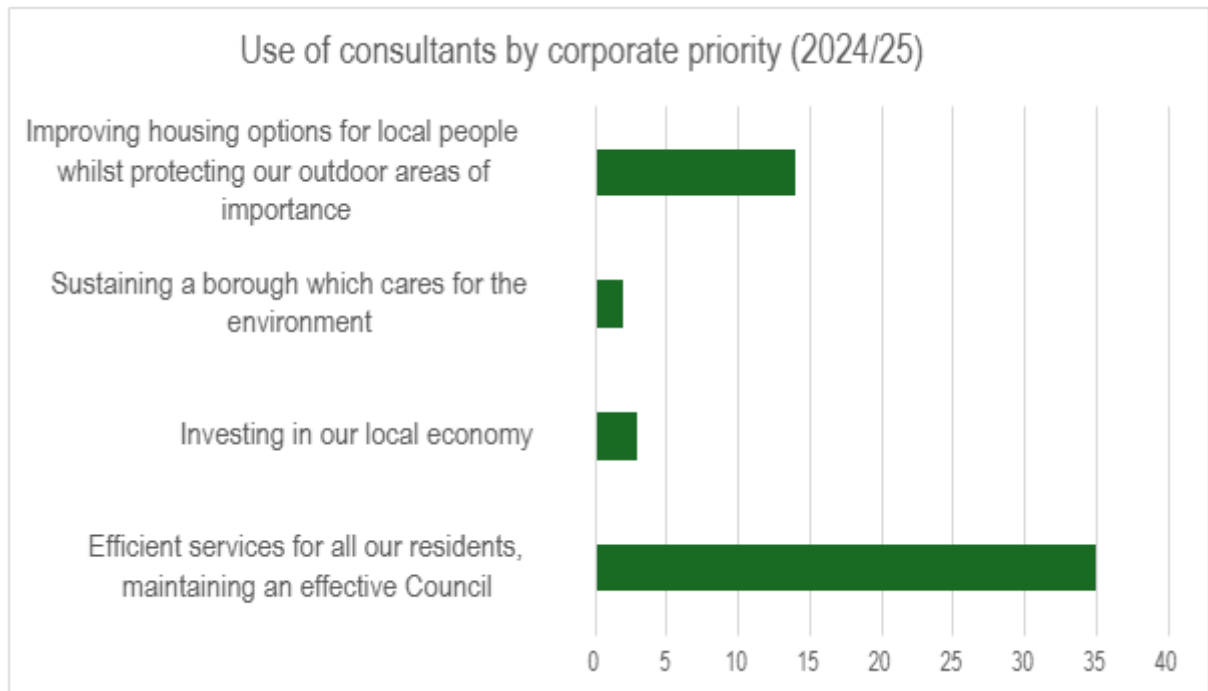


5.4 Services that made the greatest use of consultants were Planning, Housing and Environmental Health, in support of the emerging Local Plan, Central for the Tonbridge Castle Gatehouse works and Gibson East projects, and Street Scene Leisure and Technical Services for asset management and waste services consulting. However, when looking at total spending on consultants by each service, Street Scene Leisure and Technical Service spend is relatively low, accounting for only 8%. Together, work for the Local Plan and by Central services accounted for 85% of spend on consultants in 2024/25.

5.5 This information is shown in the following pie-chart:



- 5.6 The use of consultants by Planning, Housing and Environmental Health and Central Services is reflected in the breakdown of use by corporate priority. As shown in the following chart, most consultant use was in support of the priorities of 'Efficient services for all our residents' and 'Improving housing options for local people'.



Note: local government reorganisation work is included in the 'Efficient services' priority.

6 Other Options

- 6.1 There are no other options as Members requested the annual report on consultants use.

7 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

- 7.1 In terms of spending, over half of all projects which made use of consultants (60%) spent £5,000 or less in 2024/25. Only two services, Planning, Housing and Environmental Health and Executive Services, have engaged consultants for multi-year projects for which spend in 2024/25 is a proportion of the overall project total. Again, these are mostly in relation to the emerging Local Plan and other significant projects that require specialist skills.

8 Risk Assessment

- 8.1 The risks associated with not using external expertise have been highlighted against each project in Annex 1.

9 Legal Implications

- 9.1 Procurement is undertaken in accordance with financial regulations and council procurement frameworks. The use of a Waiver is undertaken in certain circumstances.

10 Consultation and Communications

- 10.1 There are no further communications plans for this report.

11 Implementation

- 11.1 Consultancy use will continue to be monitored, with 2025/26 consultancy spend collated and reported to this Committee during the next financial year.

12 Cross Cutting Issues

12.1 Climate Change and Biodiversity

- 12.1.1 Limited or low impact on emissions and environment.

- 12.1.2 Climate change advice has been sought in the preparation of the options and recommendations in this report.

12.2 Equalities and Diversity

- 12.2.1 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.

12.3 Other If Relevant

- Procurement
- Business Continuity / Resilience

Background Papers	None
Annex 1	Consultancy spend by Service 2024/25

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Annex 1: Consultancy spend by service 2024/25

Central Services

Timing	Consultant	Cost of item in 2024/25	Reason for use of consultants, include details of in-house expertise	Monitoring process	Procurement process	Outcome what did the consultants provide/achieve	Risk Any risk associated with not appointing consultants for this project?
April 2024	Thomson Snell & Passmore	£544	s106 - External Firm Planning	In service	N/A	Legal Advice	Yes - Requirement for specialist legal advice
April 2024	Richard Lingard	£1,211	Independent investigation - complaint	In service	N/A	Investigation Report	Yes - Requirement for Independent Investigator
June 2024	EW Legal Costing Ltd	£1,200	Costs Specialist - Planning	In service	N/A	Legal Advice	Yes - Requirement for specialist legal advice
July 2024	Thomson Snell & Passmore	£567	s106 - External Firm Planning	In service	N/A	Legal Advice	Yes - Requirement for specialist legal advice
December 2024	Thomson Snell & Passmore	£10,039	s106 - External Firm Planning	In service	N/A	Legal Advice	Yes - Requirement for specialist legal advice
December 2024	Thomson Snell & Passmore	£616	s106 - External Firm Planning	In service	N/A	Legal Advice	Yes - Requirement for specialist legal advice
December 2024	Thomson Snell & Passmore	£535	s106 - External Firm Planning	In service	N/A	Legal Advice	Yes - Requirement for specialist legal advice

Timing	Consultant	Cost of item in 2024/25	Reason for use of consultants, include details of in-house expertise	Monitoring process	Procurement process	Outcome what did the consultants provide/achieve	Risk Any risk associated with not appointing consultants for this project?
December 2024	Trowers & Hamlins LLP	£850	Housing Allocations Scheme Housing	In service	N/A	Legal Advice	Yes - Requirement for specialist legal advice
December 2024	Brachers Solicitors	£422	Deed of Easement - Property	In service	N/A	Legal Advice	Yes - Requirement for specialist legal advice
January 2025	Bevan Brittan LLP	£453	Contracts Extension - Street Scene	In service	N/A	Legal Advice	Yes - Requirement for specialist legal advice
April 2025	Trowers & Hamlins LLP	£4,373	LAHC Advice 27/03 Housing	In service	N/A	Legal Advice	Yes - Requirement for specialist legal advice
April 2025	Bevan Brittan LLP	£3,290	Contracts Advice - Street Scene	In service	N/A	Legal Advice	Yes - Requirement for specialist legal advice
April 2025	Bevan Brittan LLP	£132	Contract Advice - Street Scene	In service	N/A	Legal Advice	Yes - Requirement for specialist legal advice
July 2024	Francis Taylor Building	£3,500	Data Protection - Planning	In service	N/A	Legal Advice	Yes - Requirement for specialist legal advice
July 2024	Littleton Chambers	£500	Injunction Advice - Corporate	In service	N/A	Legal Advice	Yes - Requirement for specialist legal advice
July 2024	Cornerstones	£1,500	Complaint - Housing	In service	N/A	Legal Advice	Yes - Requirement for specialist legal advice

Timing	Consultant	Cost of item in 2024/25	Reason for use of consultants, include details of in-house expertise	Monitoring process	Procurement process	Outcome what did the consultants provide/achieve	Risk Any risk associated with not appointing consultants for this project?
August 2024	Cornerstones	£1,375	Complaint - Housing Pre- action protocol JR - Planning	In service	N/A	Legal Advice	Yes - Requirement for specialist legal advice
December 2024	Francis Taylor Building	£3,000		In service	N/A	Legal Advice	Yes - Requirement for specialist legal advice
December 2024	Francis Taylor Building	£1,750		In service	N/A	Legal Advice	Yes - Requirement for specialist legal advice
January 2025	Cornerstones	£1,500	Planning Inquiry	In service	N/A	Legal Advice	Yes - Requirement for specialist legal advice
February 2025	Cornerstones	£45,750		In service	N/A	Legal Advice	Yes - Requirement for specialist legal advice
February 2025	Cornerstones	£1,250	Costs Report - Planning	In service	N/A	Legal Advice	Yes - Requirement for specialist legal advice
February 2025	Cornerstones	£1,500		In service	N/A	Legal Advice	Yes - Requirement for specialist legal advice
April 2025	Cornerstones	£750	Costs report - Planning	In service	N/A	Legal Advice	Yes - Requirement for specialist legal advice
April 2025	Cornerstones	£36,883	Planning Inquiry	In service	N/A	Legal Advice	Yes - Requirement for specialist legal advice

Timing	Consultant	Cost of item in 2024/25	Reason for use of consultants, include details of in-house expertise	Monitoring process	Procurement process	Outcome what did the consultants provide/achieve	Risk Any risk associated with not appointing consultants for this project?
March 2025	Cornerstones	£22,675	Planning Inquiry	In service	N/A	Legal Advice	Yes - Requirement for specialist legal advice
Nov – Dec 2024	bracketts, Tonbridge	£750	To evaluate commercial appetite for commercial use of Gateway footprint when Gateway closes in March 2025 for a Food and Beverage operator.	OSG Steering Group for Tonbridge Castle	Service led	bracketts identified that the area of 1,100 Sq FT and gave details of business models for a Food and Beverage operation	Not understanding the commercial appetite from existing commercial professionals, not understanding their needs and potentially wasting money to provide facilities not required by the market
Dec 2024 – Feb 2025	bracketts, Tonbridge	£695	To evaluate in discussion with clients what interest they was to run a Food and Beverage operation, or other commercial activity.	OSG Steering Group for Tonbridge Castle	Service led	bracketts identified that the area of 1,100 Sq FT was not large enough for Food and Beverage and did not have a strong footfall	Not understanding the commercial appetite from existing commercial professionals, not understanding their needs and potentially wasting money to provide facilities not required by the market
Annual	Wilks Head & Eve	£15,225	Annual asset valuations required to comply with	Communication / meetings	Service led, quotation sought	Production of annual asset valuations and associated report	Failure to comply with financial reporting standards would mean the Council would not

Timing	Consultant	Cost of item in 2024/25	Reason for use of consultants, include details of in-house expertise	Monitoring process	Procurement process	Outcome what did the consultants provide/achieve	Risk Any risk associated with not appointing consultants for this project?
			financial reporting standards				get its accounts signed off by external auditors. The Council does not have a RICS Registered Valuer to undertake the valuations. Several attempts have been made to recruit.
April 2024 – ongoing	Kaner Olette Architects	£25,626	To provide architectural services in respect of Tonbridge Castle Gatehouse Roof project	Communication / meetings	Service led, quotations sought	Leading the design team, undertaking architectural services, producing designs/drawings, including the role of Principal Designer under Construction and Design Management Regulations	No in-house expertise for heritage architectural services. Risk of not engaging architects would be poor designs being produced leading to increased uncertainty, increased costs and likelihood of plans not complying with Heritage England requirements or building regulations
May 2024 - ongoing	Huntley Cartwright	£6,355	To provide quantity surveyor services in respect of Tonbridge Castle	Communication / meetings	Service led, quotations sought	Undertaking quantity surveyor services including producing cost plans, contract	No in-house expertise for these services. Risk of not engaging QS would lead to a lack of financial control and

Timing	Consultant	Cost of item in 2024/25	Reason for use of consultants, include details of in-house expertise	Monitoring process	Procurement process	Outcome what did the consultants provide/achieve	Risk Any risk associated with not appointing consultants for this project?
			Gatehouse Roof project			documentation and valuations	oversight, resulting in higher costs
April 2024 - ongoing	The Morton Partnership	£1,686	Structural Engineer advice on Tonbridge Castle Gatehouse Roof project	Communication / meetings	Service led, quotation sought	Undertaking structural engineer services including advising on structural issues throughout the project	Risk of the repairs not being structurally sound, leading to a failure of the roof structure and closure of the attraction leading to loss of income
June – September 2024	Tubular Techniques	£8,160	To produce scaffold design in respect of Tonbridge Castle Gatehouse Roof project	Communication / meetings	Service led, quotations sought	A detailed scaffold design was produced which was included in the tender pack for contractors to price	No in-house expertise for scaffold design. Risk of not producing a scaffold design would lead to potential for the scaffold to be dangerous/unstable and therefore increased costs and programme delays
July – September 2024	Heritage Lighting Matters	£2,585	To produce a lighting design for the Great Hall at Tonbridge Castle	Communication / meetings	Service led, quotation sought	A lighting design was produced which was included in the tender pack for contractors to price	No in-house expertise for heritage lighting design. Risk of not producing a design would lead to unsuitable installation of a system which did

Timing	Consultant	Cost of item in 2024/25	Reason for use of consultants, include details of in-house expertise	Monitoring process	Procurement process	Outcome what did the consultants provide/achieve	Risk Any risk associated with not appointing consultants for this project?
							not meet our requirements
Nov 2022 - ongoing	HMY Architects	£35,507	To provide architectural services in respect of Gibson East refurbishment	Communication / meetings	Service led, quotations sought	Leading the design team, undertaking architectural services, producing designs/drawings, including the role of Principal Designer under Construction and Design Management Regulations	No in-house expertise for architectural services. Risk of not engaging architects would be poor designs being produced leading to increased uncertainty, increased costs and likelihood of plans not complying with planning or building regulations
January 2023 - ongoing	CTP Consulting Engineers	£6,400	To provide structural and civil engineering services in respect of Gibson East refurbishment	Communication / meetings	Service led, quotations sought	Undertaking structural and civil design services, including producing designs/drawings	No in-house expertise for these services. Risk of not engaging engineers would be works which were not compliant with building regulations and could potentially be unsafe for building users

Timing	Consultant	Cost of item in 2024/25	Reason for use of consultants, include details of in-house expertise	Monitoring process	Procurement process	Outcome what did the consultants provide/achieve	Risk Any risk associated with not appointing consultants for this project?
January 2023 - ongoing	Hawden	£21,162	To provide mechanical, electrical and public health design services in respect of Gibson East refurbishment	Communication / meetings	Service led, quotations sought	Undertaking mechanical, electrical and public health design services, including producing designs/drawings	No in-house expertise for these services. Risk of not engaging engineers would be works which were not compliant with building regulations and could potentially lead to delivery of non-compliant building services, which could be unsafe for building users
December 2022 - ongoing	Betteridge & Milsom	£7,940	To provide quantity surveyor services in respect of Gibson East refurbishment	Communication / meetings	Service led, quotations sought	Undertaking quantity surveyor services including producing cost plans, contract documentation and valuations	No in-house expertise for these services. Risk of not engaging QS would lead to a lack of financial control and oversight, resulting in higher costs
May 2024 - ongoing	PJC Consultancy	£1,275	To provide arboricultural services in respect of Gibson East refurbishment	Communication / meetings	Service led, quotations sought	Undertaking arboricultural services including vegetation surveys and reports	No in-house expertise for these services. Risk of not engaging an arboriculturist would be having insufficient information required for planning application

Timing	Consultant	Cost of item in 2024/25	Reason for use of consultants, include details of in-house expertise	Monitoring process	Procurement process	Outcome what did the consultants provide/achieve	Risk Any risk associated with not appointing consultants for this project?
May 2024 - ongoing	KB Ecology	£1,429	To provide ecology services in respect of Gibson East refurbishment	Communication / meetings	Service led, quotations sought	Undertaking ecology services including vegetation surveys and reports	No in-house expertise for these services. Risk of not engaging an ecologist would be having insufficient information required for planning application
June 2024 - ongoing	MRL Acoustics	£700	To provide acoustic advice in respect of Gibson East refurbishment	Communication / meetings	Service led, quotations sought	Providing acoustic advice	No in-house expertise for these services. Risk of not engaging an acoustic designer would be having echoing spaces in reception for example
December 2024 - ongoing	Mace	£43,300	To undertake masterplan works in respect of Tonbridge town centre asset review	Communication / meetings	Service led, quotations sought	Managing other consultants as part of commission including architects and quantity surveyors, facilitating workshops, producing and presenting final reports	A Programme Manager has been brought in to help manage the programme however one individual would not have the expertise or time to complete all of this work, leading to a very prolonged timescale and the potential for Members not to receive comprehensive information on which to base decisions

Timing	Consultant	Cost of item in 2024/25	Reason for use of consultants, include details of in-house expertise	Monitoring process	Procurement process	Outcome what did the consultants provide/achieve	Risk Any risk associated with not appointing consultants for this project?
June 2024 - ongoing	Arthian	£85,031	To provide technical mechanical and technical advice in respect of installation of air source heat pumps at Larkfield Leisure Centre. Grant funded	Communication / meetings	Service led, Cabinet approved the procurement route, use of framework	Providing technical advice and project management services	No in-house expertise for these services. Risk of not engaging specialists would be works which were not feasible and could potentially lead to closures of the facilities
June 2024 – March 2025	Laser	£54,000	To provide design and project management services in respect of installation of solar PV at Larkfield Leisure Centre. Grant funded	Communication / meetings	Service led, quotation sought, use of a framework	Producing design for solar PV, running procurement exercise and project managing the works on site	No in-house expertise for solar PV design services. Risk of not engaging specialists would be design would not be compliant with grant funding requirements and may not be electrically or structurally safe

Executive Services

Timing	Consultant	Cost of item in 2024/25	Reason for use of consultants, include details of in-house expertise	Monitoring process	Procurement process	Outcome what did the consultants provide/achieve	Risk Any risk associated with not appointing consultants for this project?
March 2023 – March 2025	Smarter Society Ltd	£25,000	Part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Programme - we do not have the skills, expertise or experience to provide direct advice and support to our local businesses on how to run their business or provide expert insights into issues that they need to be aware of, but had the funding to deliver the initiative.	Fortnightly catch-up meetings covering contract KPIs setting out number of businesses supported, number of workshops delivered, number of businesses accessing mentoring support, and number of events (including West Kent Expo) delivered/	A West Kent Partnership initiative (to provide economies of scale) - procurement led by Sevenoaks District Council in partnership with TWBC and TMBC. Full tender process undertaken in January/February 2023.	In total, the consultants supported over 1,000 West Kent Businesses through advice, support and signposting (around 350 in T&M), provided 100 West Kent Businesses with 8-hours+ of 1-2-1 mentoring (33 in T&M), delivered 15 workshops and 2 West Kent Expo events (in Tonbridge), and administered a micro-grants scheme supporting 60 businesses with small-scale financial support (20 in T&M).	This scheme was funded in its entirety through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (external funding) and was a time-limited opportunity to deliver support to our local businesses - not appointing consultants would have meant this project wasn't delivered as we wouldn't have the resources in-house to deliver it.
May 2023 – March 2025	Mid Kent College	£20,000	Part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Programme - we do not have the	Monthly catch up meeting to discuss course development,	In partnership with Sevenoaks District Council - a waiver was provided on the	A suite of retrofit courses have now been developed which can be used going forward. In total, 20	This scheme was funded in its entirety through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (external

Timing	Consultant	Cost of item in 2024/25	Reason for use of consultants, include details of in-house expertise	Monitoring process	Procurement process	Outcome what did the consultants provide/achieve	Risk Any risk associated with not appointing consultants for this project?
			skills, expertise or experience to develop and run Green Retrofit Courses. Also links to Climate Change Strategy	promotion and take up	basis that MKC held the county-wide licence to deliver Retrofit Training Academy accredited courses - this was approved in April 2024.	individuals/businesses attended the pilot courses. This was slightly lower than hoped for but gave useful insight into the challenges faced in getting businesses to prepare for the national need for retrofit.	funding) and was a time-limited opportunity to deliver support to our local businesses - not appointing consultants would have meant this project wasn't delivered as we wouldn't have the resources in-house to deliver it.
Feb – March 2025	PWC	£5,000	Joint Commission with other Councils in Kent for specialist advice	Kent County Council were the commissioner and managed the contract	Established	Information necessary to meet Government submission deadline	Yes, failure to submit necessary information to Government

Finance and Transformation

Timing	Consultant	Cost of item in 2024/25	Reason for use of consultants, include details of in-house expertise	Monitoring process	Procurement process	Outcome what did the consultants provide/achieve	Risk Any risk associated with not appointing consultants for this project?
November 2024	ACS Ltd	£2,085	Housing Benefits Subsidy. In connection with implementation of a new temporary accommodations charging policy. To assess the legality of our TA licence agreements, to assess the different schemes we operate and how to best maximise HB subsidy income for each of these schemes.	Communications / Meetings / Review draft reports	Service led	Expert advice	Potential for delay in implementation of policy
January 2025	Link Group	£2,000	Advice on accounting for corporate leases.	Review reports	Service led	Expert advice	External audit may not agree financial statements
January 2024	Link Group	£9,135	Retainer for advice on treasury activities	Review reports	Service led	Expert advice	Risk of lower returns on investments
January 2024	PS Tax	£3,350	Advice club for tax and treasury	Review reports	Service led	Expert advice	Risk of inaccurate tax reporting

Planning, Housing and Environment Health

Timing	Consultant	Cost of item in 2024/25	Reason for use of consultants, include details of in-house expertise	Monitoring process	Procurement process	Outcome what did the consultants provide/achieve	Risk Any risk associated with not appointing consultants for this project?
February 2022 - ongoing	ARC4	£2,040	To prepare a gypsy and traveller accommodation assessment and undertake related site assessments. Limited in-house capacity/expertise.	Communications / Meetings / Review draft reports	Service led, quotations sought from three providers with wavers agreed for fee extensions.	Draft gypsy and traveller need assessment and site assessment reports prepared.	Failure to address gypsy and traveller accommodation requirements in the Local Plan could result in failure of the Local Plan.
December 2022 - ongoing	BNP Paribas	£28,632	To prepare a Local Plan Viability Assessment. Limited in-house capacity/expertise.	Communications / Meetings / Review draft reports	Service led, quotations sought from three providers.	Work ongoing to prepare a Local Plan Viability Assessment.	Viability assessment required to demonstrate the viability of the policy and infrastructure requirements included in the Local Plan.
December 2019 - ongoing	DHA Planning	£8,574	To prepare an Active Travel Strategy including route audits, to align with the emerging Local Plan. Limited in-	Communications / Meetings / Review draft reports	Service led, quotations sought from three providers with wavers agreed for fee extensions.	Draft Active Travel Strategy, walking and cycling route audits prepared.	This strategy will help to identify and prioritise active travel schemes, which will form part of the transport mitigation required

Timing	Consultant	Cost of item in 2024/25	Reason for use of consultants, include details of in-house expertise	Monitoring process	Procurement process	Outcome what did the consultants provide/achieve	Risk Any risk associated with not appointing consultants for this project?
			house capacity/expertise.				to support the Local Plan.
November 2023 - ongoing	ENPLAN	£24,181	To provide a landscape sensitivity assessment to inform the emerging Local Plan. Limited in-house capacity/expertise.	Communications / Meetings / Review draft reports	Service led, quotations sought from three providers with waivers agreed for fee extensions. Recent work has been procured via full tender managed by the procurement partnership.	Landscape assessment work provided.	Failure to address landscape issues in the Local Plan could result in failure of the Local Plan.
August 2024 - ongoing	HCUK Group	£12,302	To prepare conservation area character appraisals. Limited in-house capacity/expertise.	Communications / Meetings / Review draft reports	Service led, quotations sought from three providers.	Conservation area character appraisals including for New Barns and Hadlow.	A lack of up to date conservation area appraisals for all conservation areas hinders the council's ability to advise on related

Timing	Consultant	Cost of item in 2024/25	Reason for use of consultants, include details of in-house expertise	Monitoring process	Procurement process	Outcome what did the consultants provide/achieve	Risk Any risk associated with not appointing consultants for this project?
							conservation and application matters.
May 2024 - ongoing	Issuu	£454	Software that converts PDFs into customizable digital flipbooks that can be shared via links or embedded into websites including the Commonplace platform.	Not applicable	Direct purchase.	Conversion of key consultation PDF documents into easy to read digital flipbooks.	It is important that the Local Plan consultation is as accessible as possible, easy to read digital documents is an important part of achieving this.
June 2022 - ongoing	JACOBS	£60,843	To prepare transport modelling evidence including transport assessment for the emerging Local Plan. Jacobs operate the Kent VISUM model on behalf of KCC.	Communications / Meetings / Review draft reports	Kent County Council Highway Services Framework.	Work ongoing, transport forecast baseline, LTC and M2 J3 sensitivity tests and 2 scenario test reports provided so far.	Failure to address transport issues and identify appropriate mitigation could result in failure of the Local Plan.

Timing	Consultant	Cost of item in 2024/25	Reason for use of consultants, include details of in-house expertise	Monitoring process	Procurement process	Outcome what did the consultants provide/achieve	Risk Any risk associated with not appointing consultants for this project?
September 2021 - ongoing	JBA Consulting	£6,797	Strategic Flood Risk Assessment for Local Plan. Limited in-house capacity/expertise.	Communications / Meetings / Review draft reports	Service led, quotations sought from three providers with wavers agreed for fee extensions.	Comprehensive SFRA level 1 for whole borough.	Failure to assess the flood risk could result in failure of the Local Plan.
March 2022 - ongoing	Land Use Consultants	£26,573	To provide technical Sustainability Appraisal expertise in the preparation of the Interim Sustainability Appraisal and Environmental Report for the Local Plan. Limited in-house expertise.	Communications / Meetings / Review draft reports	Service led, quotations sought from three providers. Wavier agreed for fee extension	Production of the Interim Sustainability Appraisal at Regulation 18 and Regulation 18B of the Local Plan.	Independent production of the Sustainability Appraisal for the Local Plan ensures impartiality can be demonstrated during the Local Plan Examination process.
September 2021 – ongoing	Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners	£28,656	To prepare Economy and Town Centres Studies to inform the emerging Local Plan. Limited in-house capacity/expertise.	Communications / Meetings / Review draft reports	Service led, quotations sought from three providers with wavers agreed for fee extensions.	Draft Economy and Town Centres reports received.	Failure to address employment and retail matters, including the allocation of sufficient employment floorspace could

Timing	Consultant	Cost of item in 2024/25	Reason for use of consultants, include details of in-house expertise	Monitoring process	Procurement process	Outcome what did the consultants provide/achieve	Risk Any risk associated with not appointing consultants for this project?
							result in failure of the Local Plan.
September 2022 – ongoing	Ove Arup & Partners	£100,248	To prepare Green Belt and Strategic Gap studies, and Housing Constraints Assessment to inform the emerging Local Plan. Limited in-house capacity/expertise.	Communications / Meetings / Review draft reports	Service led, quotations sought from three providers with waivers agreed for fee extensions. Recent work has been procured via direct award managed by the procurement partnership.	Housing Constraints Assessment and Green Belt Stage 2 Assessment provided, strategic gap and further Green Belt work ongoing.	Failure to assess Green Belt sites for potential release for development and to provide Strategic Gap advice could result in failure of the Local Plan.
January – October 2024	Pillory Barn Design Studios	£10,716	Creative design of Regulation 18b draft Local Plan. No skills in-house to deliver this.	Communications / Meetings / Review draft reports	Service led, quotations sought from three providers.	Work completed to prepare the publication draft of the Local Plan Reg 18b.	It is important that the Local Plan document is well presented to ensure that the content is well received and

Timing	Consultant	Cost of item in 2024/25	Reason for use of consultants, include details of in-house expertise	Monitoring process	Procurement process	Outcome what did the consultants provide/achieve	Risk Any risk associated with not appointing consultants for this project?
							understood by all. A poorly produced document would hinder public engagement.
June 2023 - ongoing	Ploszajski Lynch Consulting	£17,304	To prepare Indoor and Outdoor Sport, Recreation and Open Space Strategies. Limited in-house capacity/expertise.	Communications / Meetings / Review draft reports	Service led, quotations sought from three providers.	Draft reports received for indoor and outdoor sport, recreation and open space provision. Subject to review and further updates before publication.	Failure to address sport recreation and open space issues in the Local Plan could result in failure of the Local Plan.
September 2021 - ongoing	Urban Intelligence	£45,600	To provide access to the online Placemaker platform which assists with the preparation of the council's Land Availability Assessment including call for sites events. In addition the preparation of an	Communications / Meetings / Review draft reports	Most recent contract award made via Crown Commercial Service G-Cloud 13 Framework.	The supplier has prepared the Urban Capacity Study and continues to provide access to the Placemaker platform, which is accessed by the policy team and members of the public via the council's planning policy webpages.	It is important to provide a high quality online service for customers for call for sites events. Placemaker assists the council in completing its Land Availability Assessment which is an important

Timing	Consultant	Cost of item in 2024/25	Reason for use of consultants, include details of in-house expertise	Monitoring process	Procurement process	Outcome what did the consultants provide/achieve	Risk Any risk associated with not appointing consultants for this project?
			Urban Capacity Study.				evidence base for the Local Plan.

Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services

Timing	Consultant	Cost of item in 2024/25	Reason for use of consultants, include details of in-house expertise	Monitoring process	Procurement process	Outcome what did the consultants provide/achieve	Risk Any risk associated with not appointing consultants for this project?
January – August 2024	Waste Consulting LLP	£4,760	Update of previous work on commissioning options	Via SWKP Commissioning Group	No procurement as previous work required an update. Cost under £5k so only one quote required under financial rules.	Report on options for members to consider - CESSC 5 February	Not having up to date option report may result in Members not being able to make informed decision
May – September 2024	Bloomfields chartered town planners	£19,869	Tonbridge Farm Masterplan Expertise and capacity to oversee plan and opportunities linked to need for investment in site for renewal of key assets.	Via internal officer group	Quotation evaluation	Masterplan report produced	Disjointed approach to investment in site and future use resulting in higher costs and potential to miss opportunities.
Dec 2024 – March 2025	Alliance Leisure Ltd	£25,000	Angel Centre Replacement Expertise and capacity to develop detailed Business Plan for the proposed replacement Angel Centre and liaison	Town Centre Programme Board and internal officer group	Waiver granted based on previous detailed work undertaken	Business Case to support progression of project.	Creation and management of new facility fails to contribute return on investment as expected resulting in financial loss and loss of opportunities for residents.

Timing	Consultant	Cost of item in 2024/25	Reason for use of consultants, include details of in-house expertise	Monitoring process	Procurement process	Outcome what did the consultants provide/achieve	Risk Any risk associated with not appointing consultants for this project?
			with Town Centre planners (Mace).				
January 2024 – October 2024	Bevan Brittan	£2,915.50	Update legal advice on waste commissioning options	Via SWKP Commissioning Group	No procurement as update required on previous work. Only one quote required under financial rules. Cost split 50/50 with TWBC.	Legal advice provided to the SWKP Commissioning Group	Not having specialist legal advice in this matter would have increased risk of legal challenges.
January – February 2025	Bevan Brittan	£3,142	Update legal advice on waste commissioning options	Via SWKP Commissioning Group	No procurement as update required on previous work. Only one quote required under financial rules. Cost split 50/50 with TWBC.	Legal advice provided to the SWKP Commissioning Group	Not having specialist legal advice in this matter would have increased risk of legal challenges.
January – December 2024	Chris Stannard	£2,275	Review Waste Contract Specification	Via SWKP Commissioning Group	Procured by TWBC - costs split 50/50	Updated Contract Specification document	Not having specialist advice may have led to elements of the specification not being

Timing	Consultant	Cost of item in 2024/25	Reason for use of consultants, include details of in-house expertise	Monitoring process	Procurement process	Outcome what did the consultants provide/achieve	Risk Any risk associated with not appointing consultants for this project?
							updated in light of industry experience.
January – February 2025	Lighting Efficiency Design Services Ltd	£250	Heritage LED lighting design for Bradford Street car park and Castle Grounds car park. Beyond current in-house skill set.	Commissioning officer	Service Led	selection of suitable new LED car park lighting.	Independent assessment to ensure new lighting design is fit for purpose.
April – October 2024	Lighting Efficiency Design Services Ltd	£800	Checking of BID Compliance for new car park lighting. Beyond current in-house skill set.	Commissioning officer	Service Led	selection of suitable new LED car park lighting.	Independent assessment to ensure new lighting design is fit for purpose.
Annual	Roads and Sewers for Planning and Design	£4,170	Wouldham River Wall Monitoring by qualified Structural Engineer. Beyond current in-house skill set.	Commissioning officer	Service Led	Monitoring of TMBC owned river wall coming to the end of its serviceable lifespan	Risk to the public - TMBC asset becoming hazardous to users
June – August 2024	Roads and Sewers for Planning and Design	£4,200	Budgetary estimate and materials option for Aylesford Station Road Car Park Overflow.	Commissioning officer	Service Led	Construction costs and material options explored and	Unable to meet timescale for project development.

Timing	Consultant	Cost of item in 2024/25	Reason for use of consultants, include details of in-house expertise	Monitoring process	Procurement process	Outcome what did the consultants provide/achieve	Risk Any risk associated with not appointing consultants for this project?
						recommendations provided	
December 2024 – February 2025	Roads and Sewers for Planning and Design	£4,920	Detailed design for Aylesford Station Road Car Park Overflow.	Commissioning officer	Service Led	Ground investigation, design, specification and bill of quantities.	Unable to meet timescale for project development.
January – March 2025	Roads and Sewers for Planning and Design	£3,500	Budgetary estimates and options report for two bridges No.1&8	Commissioning officer	Service Led	Options report produced with budgetary estimates to allow review and capital bid application progression	Unable to meet timescale for project development.
November 2024 – March 2025	Roads and Sewers for Planning and Design	£4,950	Two yearly structural assessments of TMBC qualifying bridges	Commissioning officer	Service Led	Structural report for 18 TMBC owned bridges	Risk to the public - TMBC asset becoming hazardous to users
June – August 2024	Roads and Sewers for Planning and Design	£500	Extra structural inspection of crack identified in bridge abutment	Commissioning officer	Service Led	Structural report with recommendations produced	Risk to the public - TMBC asset becoming hazardous to users

Timing	Consultant	Cost of item in 2024/25	Reason for use of consultants, include details of in-house expertise	Monitoring process	Procurement process	Outcome what did the consultants provide/achieve	Risk Any risk associated with not appointing consultants for this project?
September – December 2024	Roads and Sewers for Planning and Design	£2,000	Extra structural inspection of identified bridges via boat or when river drop allows access	Commissioning officer	Service Led	Structural report with recommendations produced	Risk to the public - TMBC asset becoming hazardous to users

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee

26 June 2025

Part 1 - Public

Matters for Information



Cabinet Member N/A

Responsible Officer Damian Roberts, Chief Executive

Report Author Allison Parris, Principal Democratic Services Officer

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman – Annual Review Letter

1 Summary and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 The annual report of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman regarding complaints received and dealt with by them over the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025 is presented for information.

2 Corporate Strategy Priority Area

- 2.1 Efficient services for all our residents, maintaining an effective council.
- 2.2 Complaints provide an important opportunity to receive feedback on the quality of the Council's services and contribute positively to continued service improvements.

3 Introduction and Background

- 3.1 Each year the Ombudsman provides the Borough Council with a report of the formal complaints it has dealt with and the outcomes of those complaints. This report covers the period for 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.
- 3.2 The Ombudsman usually only considers complaints that have already been considered through the Council's complaints process.

4 Outcomes

- 4.1 The Ombudsman received 15 formal complaints over that period. The outcomes were as follows:
- Complaints not for ombudsman = 7
 - Complaints assessed/closed = 7

- Complaints investigated = 1
- Complaints upheld = 1

4.2 A copy of the Ombudsman's letter is attached at Annex 1.

4.3 Details of the complaints are attached at Annex 2.

4.4 The 1 complaint upheld by the Ombudsman relates to planning conditions.

5 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

5.1 None

6 Risk Assessment

6.1 N/A

7 Legal Implications

7.1 None

8 Consultation and Communications

8.1 The outcome of the annual review is communicated via this report.

8.2 Other If Relevant

- None

Background Papers	None
Annex 1	Annual letter
Annex 2	Details of complaints

Local Government & Social Care OMBUDSMAN

21 May 2025

By email

Mr Roberts
Chief Executive
Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council

Dear Mr Roberts

Annual Review letter 2024-25

I write to you with your annual summary of complaint statistics from the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman for the year ending 31 March 2025. The information offers valuable insight about your organisation's approach to complaints, and I know you will consider it as part of your corporate governance processes. We have listened to your feedback, and I am pleased to be able to share your annual statistics earlier in the year to better fit with local reporting cycles. I hope this proves helpful to you.

[Your annual statistics are available here.](#)


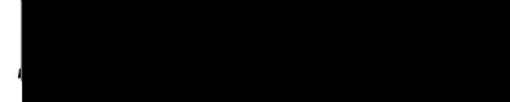

In addition, you can find the detail of the decisions we have made about your Council, read the public reports we have issued, and view the service improvements your Council has agreed to make as a result of our investigations, as well as previous annual review letters.

In a change to our approach, we will write to organisations in July where there is exceptional practice or where we have concerns about an organisation's complaint handling. Not all organisations will get a letter. If you do receive a letter it will be sent in advance of its publication on our website on 16 July 2025, alongside our annual Review of Local Government Complaints.

Supporting complaint and service improvement

In February we published [good practice guides](#) to support councils to adopt our [Complaint Handling Code](#). The guides were developed in consultation with councils that have been piloting the Code and are based on the real-life, front-line experience of people handling complaints day-to-day, including their experience of reporting to senior leaders and elected members. The guides were issued alongside free [training resources](#) organisations can use to make sure front-line staff understand what to do when someone raises a complaint. We will be applying the Code in our casework from April 2026 and we know a large number of councils have already adopted it into their local policies with positive results.

This year we relaunched our popular [complaint handling training](#) programme. The training is now more interactive than ever, providing delegates with an opportunity to consider a complaint from receipt to resolution. Early feedback has been extremely positive with delegates reporting an increase in confidence in handling complaints after completing the training. To find out more contact training@lgo.org.uk.



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Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman
Chair, Commission for Local Administration in England

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Reference	Authority	Category	Subcategory	Received
23021164	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Corporate & Other Services	Standards committees	04/04/24
24000582	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Antisocial behaviour	11/04/24
24000872	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Housing	NULL	25/04/24
24002098	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Housing	Allocations	16/05/24
24006330	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Highways & Transport	Parking penalties	26/07/24
24007658	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Highways & Transport	NULL	14/08/24
24007768	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Planning & Development	Householder planning application	02/08/24
24009047	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Corporate & Other Services	Standards committees	30/08/24
24009322	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Benefits & Tax	Council tax support	03/09/24
24010300	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Dogs	16/09/24
24012443	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Benefits & Tax	Business rates	16/10/24
24013728	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Benefits & Tax	Council tax	04/11/24
24014165	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Housing	Homelessness	15/11/24
24014404	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Corporate & Other Services	Standards committees	14/11/24
24017545	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Benefits & Tax	Council tax support	10/03/25
24017692	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Housing	Homelessness	14/01/25
24018106	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Planning & Development	Enforcement-householder	20/01/25
24021325	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Highways & Transport	Traffic management	07/03/25

Reference	Authority	Category	Subcategory	Decided	Decision	Decision Reason	Remedy
23017528	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Planning & Development	Enforcement - other	06/06/24	Upheld	fault & inj	Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble,Provide information/advice to person affected
23021164	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Corporate & Other Services	Standards committees	14/05/24	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged fault	
24000582	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Antisocial behaviour	11/04/24	Incomplete/Invalid	Insufficient information to proceed and PA advised	
24000872	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Housing	NULL	25/04/24	Incomplete/Invalid	Insufficient information to proceed and PA advised	
24002098	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Housing	Allocations	16/05/24	Referred back for local resolution	Premature Decision - advice given	
24006330	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Highways & Transport	Parking penalties	20/08/24	Closed after initial enquiries	26(6)(a) tribunal TPT/PATAS	
24007658	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Highways & Transport	NULL	14/08/24	Incomplete/Invalid	Insufficient information to proceed and PA advised	
24007768	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Planning & Development	Householder planning application	20/09/24	Incomplete/Invalid	Insufficient information to proceed and PA advised	
24009047	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Corporate & Other Services	Standards committees	10/10/24	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged fault	
24009322	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Benefits & Tax	Council tax support	25/09/24	Closed after initial enquiries	26(6)(a) tribunal Other	
24010300	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Environmental Services & Public Protection & Regulation	Dogs	16/09/24	Referred back for local resolution	Premature Decision - advice given	
24012443	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Benefits & Tax	Business rates	23/12/24	Closed after initial enquiries	Sch 5.1 court proceedings	
24014404	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Corporate & Other Services	Standards committees	25/11/24	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged fault	
24017692	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Housing	Homelessness	14/01/25	Referred back for local resolution	Premature Decision - advice given	
24018106	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Planning & Development	Enforcement-householder	26/02/25	Closed after initial enquiries	Not warranted by alleged fault	

Reference	Authority	Category	Subcategory	Decided	Remedy	Remedy Target Date	Remedy Achieved Date	Satisfaction with Compliance
23017528	Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council	Planning & Development	Enforcement - other	05/06/24	Financial redress: Avoidable distress/time and trouble Provide information/advice to person affected	18/07/24	14/07/24	Remedy complete and satisfied

Executive Decisions Record - April 2025

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
D250029MEM	People and Skills Fund - Round 2	Climate Change, Regeneration and Property	31.03.25	03.04.25	10.04.25						11.04.25
D250030CAB	Petition - Save West Malling Farmers Market	Cabinet	01.04.25	03.04.25	10.04.25						11.04.25
D250031CAB	Corporate Key Performance Indicators - Q3 2024/25				10.04.25						11.04.25
D250032CAB	50th Anniversary Community Grant Scheme				10.04.25						11.04.25
D250033CAB	Corporate Policies Update				10.04.25						11.04.25
D250034CAB	Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing Contract				10.04.25						11.04.25
D250035CAB	Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy				10.04.25						11.04.25
D250036CAB	Replacement Angel Leisure Centre				10.04.25						11.04.25
D250037MEM	Business Rates Write Off	Finance and Housing	01.04.25	04.04.25	11.04.25						12.04.25
D250038MEM	Business Rates Discretionary Relief Awards	Finance and Housing	01.04.25	04.04.25	11.04.25						12.04.25
D250039MEM	Application for Section 13A 1(C) Council Tax Discount	Finance and Housing	01.04.25	04.04.25	11.04.25						12.04.25
D250040MEM	Anti-Social Behaviour Enforcement Team	Community Services	14.04.25	16.04.25	25.04.25						26.04.25
D250041MEM	Active Travel Capability Fund Grant	Transformation and Infrastructure	15.04.25	16.04.25	25.04.25						26.04.25

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

URG - outside of budget and policy framework

Number of monthly call-ins:	0
Number of call-ins for year:	0

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Subject to call in

*Due to Bank Holiday

Number of monthly call-ins:	0
Number of call-ins for year:	0

Executive Decisions Record - June 2025

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
D250045MEM	Cabinet Member Portfolios	The Leader	03.06.25	04.06.25	11.06.25						
D250046MEM	Transfer of Land to Leybourne Parish Council	Housing, Environment and Economy	02.06.25	04.06.25	11.06.25						
D250047CAB	River Lawn - Voluntary Application for Registration as a Village Green	Cabinet	03.06.25	05.06.25	12.06.25						13.06.25
D250048CAB	Housing Services Staffing										13.06.25
D250049CAB	TTCPB - Change of Membership										13.06.25
D250050CAB	Policy on Unreasonable Actions by Complainants										13.06.25
D250051CAB	Review of Parish Partnership Panel										13.06.25
D250052CAB	Risk Management										13.06.25
D250053CAB	Local Lettings Policy										13.06.25
D250054CAB	Riverside Route Lighting Project, Tonbridge										13.06.25
D250055CAB	Proposed Lease Renewal - Residential Apartments in Maidstone - TA										13.06.25
D250056CAB	Gibson East Refurbishment Tender										13.06.25
D250057CAB	Gibson West Building - Future										13.06.25
D250058CAB	Temporary Accommodation Project (north of borough)	Housing, Environment and Economy	10.06.25	12.06.25	19.06.25						
D250059MEM	Licences to Underlet Tonbridge Angels Football Club	Finance, Waste and Transformation	27.05.25	16.06.25	23.06.25						
D250060MEM	Business Rates Discretionary Rate Relief - 3 business	Finance, Waste and Transformation	27.05.25	16.06.25	23.06.25						
D250061MEM	Paws Cat Café - BR DRR	Finance, Waste and Transformation	27.05.25	16.06.25	23.06.25						
D250062MEM	Kent Quality Cars - BR DRR	Finance, Waste and Transformation	27.05.25	16.06.25	23.06.25						
D250063MEM	s13A Council Tax Discount	Finance, Waste and Transformation	27.05.25	16.06.25	23.06.25						
D250064MEM	Council Tax Discount - homeowner deceased	Finance, Waste and Transformation	27.05.25	16.06.25	23.06.25						
D250065MEM	Council Tax Discount - empty property	Finance, Waste and Transformation	27.05.25	16.06.25	23.06.25						
D250066MEM	Council Tax Discount - flood damage	Finance, Waste and Transformation	27.05.25	16.06.25	23.06.25						
D250067MEM	Council Tax Discount - listed building	Finance, Waste and Transformation	27.05.25	16.06.25	23.06.25						
D250068MEM	Council Tax Discount - basement flat	Finance, Waste and Transformation	27.05.25	16.06.25	23.06.25						
D250069MEM	Parking Action Plan - Phase15	Finance, Waste and Transformation	16.06.25								
D250070MEM	Hildenborough Parking Review	Finance, Waste and Transformation	16.06.25								
Decision pending	Call in period	Key Decision	Private	Urgent							
	Subject to call in										

URG - outside of budget and policy framework

*Due to Bank Holiday

Number of monthly call-ins:	0
Number of call-ins for year:	0

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TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL NOTICE OF FORTHCOMING KEY DECISIONS

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, at least 28 days before a key decision is expected to be taken a Notice of Forthcoming Key Decisions will be published. A 'key decision' is an executive decision which is likely either

- (a) to result in the local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the local authority's budget for the service or functions to which the decision relates.

'Significant' when applied to expenditure or savings shall mean a sum in excess of £100,000 or such other sum as may be specified in any enactment or other statutory provision.

or

- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the local authority.

The Notice of Forthcoming Key Decisions sets out:

- (a) the matter in respect of which a key decision is to be made;
- (b) details of the decision taker and the date on which the key decision will be made;
- (c) a list of documents to be submitted to the decision taker for consideration in relation to the matter;
- (d) the address from which, subject to any prohibition or restriction on their disclosure, copies of or extracts from any document listed is available and the procedure for requesting details.

All key decisions will be made by the Cabinet on the dates specified unless otherwise stated*. The agenda and documents to be submitted to the Cabinet (unless they contain exempt information) will be available for inspection at the Council Offices and on the website 5 clear working days before the meeting. Copies or extracts are available from committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk or Democratic Services, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, Gibson Building, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, West Malling ME19 4LZ.

This document also gives notice of the Council's intention to hold a private meeting (or part thereof) of the Cabinet. It indicates any items where it is likely that the public will be excluded because public discussion would disclose confidential or exempt information and the reasons in each case. Any representations against the intention to hold a private meeting may be made to committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk or Committee Services, Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, Gibson Building, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, West Malling ME19 4LZ.

Members of the Cabinet and their areas of responsibility:

Councillor Matt Boughton (Leader)
Councillor Robin Betts (Housing, Environment and Economy)
Councillor Martin Coffin (Deputy Leader; and Finance, Waste and Technical Services)
Councillor Des Keers (Community Services)
Councillor Adem Mehmet (Infrastructure and Tonbridge Regeneration)
Councillor Mike Taylor (Planning)

(*Note: This Notice is subject to change as the reporting/governance timetable may change and it may become necessary to defer decisions until the next meeting of Cabinet)

NOTICE OF FORTHCOMING KEY DECISIONS – June to August 2025

Description of Decision	Date of Cabinet	Who is to be consulted	Contact Officer	Documents to be submitted to Cabinet	Public or Private (reason if Private)
Business Rates Pool (Shared Growth Fund) Programme	30 Jun 2025	Internal consultation via Cabinet as detailed in the reports to be considered by Members.	Strategic Economic Regeneration Manager	Officers report	Public
Decisions relating to the Government Programme of Devolution and Local Government Re-organisation (if required)	30 Jun 2025 2 Sep 2025 7 Oct 2025 11 Nov 2025 9 Dec 2025	Internal consultation via Cabinet as detailed in the reports to be considered by Members.	Chief Executive	Officers report	Public
Lease Renewal at Derwent Road, Tonbridge	30 Jun 2025	Internal consultation via Cabinet as detailed in the reports to be considered by Members.	Head of Administrative and Property Services	Officers report	Fully exempt Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)

Description of Decision	Date of Cabinet	Who is to be consulted	Contact Officer	Documents to be submitted to Cabinet	Public or Private (reason if Private)
Lease Renewal - Martin Square, Larkfield	30 Jun 2025	Internal consultation via Cabinet as detailed in the reports to be considered by Members.	Head of Administrative and Property Services	Officers report	Fully exempt Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)
<p>Contact: committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk</p> <p>Published: 30 May 2025</p> <p>Republished: 4 June 2025 (Planning Advisory Service Review no longer considered to be a Key Decision)</p>					

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE – UPCOMING MATTERS								
2025-26								
C=Council; CAB = Cabinet; DEL = Delegated to Committee; INFO = matters for information. Cabinet are responsible for ALL Key Decisions (KD). Some Non-Key Decisions (NKD) can be taken by Cabinet Members outside of the meeting. Added by DS and date; Added by Scrutiny Officer and date								
DECISION (TITLE)	DESCRIPTION	C/CAB/ DEL/INFO	KD/NKD	CAB MEMBER DN Y/N	PART 1 OR 2	MEETING DATE	OFFICER IN PERSON ATTENDANCE Y/N	
South East Councils (Leaders Forum) OB Presentation	TBC	Info			1	11 September 2025		
Funding and feasibility of the replacement Angel Centre (added at the request of the Chair)	To consider funding and what the replacement facilities will include.							
Annual Service Delivery Plan (AP/30.4.25)	Update re Q1	Info	-	-	1			
Review of Executive Scrutiny Protocol and Associated Governance Arrangements (added via ASDP 13.14)								
Matters Arising from Services in between cycles (if required):								
To be confirmed								
Record of Executive Decisions	Standing item	Info						
Work Programme	Standing item	Info						

DECISION (TITLE)	DESCRIPTION	C/CAB/ DEL/INFO	KD/NKD	CAB MEMBER DN Y/N	PART 1 OR 2	MEETING DATE	OFFICER IN PERSON ATTENDANCE Y/N
TM Leisure Trust – Presentation	TBC	Info				13 November 2025	
West Kent Health Integrated Care Partnership Elected Members Forum	TBC						
Annual Report of OS Committee		Info - Council					
Annual Service Delivery Plan (AP/30.4.25)	Q2	Info	-	-	1		
Matters Arising from Services in between cycles:							
To be confirmed							
Record of Executive Decisions	Standing item	Info					
Work Programme	Standing item	Info					
Revenue Estimates 2026/27		Cab				22 January 2026	
Capital Plan Review 2025/26		Cab					
Matters Arising from Services in between cycles:							
To be confirmed							
Record of Executive Decisions	Standing item	Info					

Work Programme	Standing item	Info					
DECISION (TITLE)	DESCRIPTION	C/CAB/ DEL/INFO	KD/NKD	CAB MEMBER DN Y/N	PART 1 OR 2	MEETING DATE	OFFICER IN PERSON ATTENDANCE Y/N
KCC Health Overview & Scrutiny – Presentation	TBC	Info			1	23 April 2026	
Matters Arising from Services in between cycles:							
To be confirmed							
Annual Service Delivery Plan (AP/30.4.25)	Q3	Info	-	-	1		
Record of Executive Decisions	Standing item	Info					
Work Programme	Standing item	Info					
						25 June 2026	
Annual Service Delivery Plan	Q4	Info	-	-	1		
Record of Executive Decisions	Standing Item	Info	-	-	1		
Work Programme	Standing Item	Info	-	-	1		
Matters Arising from Services between cycles:							
To be confirmed							

- (1) Future items to be scheduled for scrutiny: Integrated Care Board and GP provision as requested by OS of 3.4.25
- (2) Annual updates in respect of the following Outside Bodies to be scheduled during 2025/26: LGA General Assembly; Southeast England Councils (Leaders Forum); (September) Tonbridge and Malling Leisure Trust; (November) West Kent Health Integrated Care Partnership Elected Members Forum (November)

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Agenda Item 13

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

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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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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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Agenda Item 16

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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