

## ANNEX 1

<b>To:</b>	Robin Betts Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Regeneration and Property
<b>From:</b>	Linda Hibbs Head of Housing & Health
<b>Director:</b>	Eleanor Hoyle Planning, Housing and Environmental Health

### **BRIEFING NOTE: EXECUTIVE - NON-KEY DECISION**

#### **EXTENSION OF PEST CONTROL CONTRACT**

##### **Summary of Issue:**

**The Council's current contract for pest control is due to end on 31 October 2023. The current contractor (who all parties are happy with in terms of customer service) did not want to renew the contract without a significant increase in treatment costs. Given the time available, our partner LA intentions and cost implications an extension of one year is the recommended way forward with revised recommendations on charges for treatments provided below to limit the impact on the Council of increased treatment costs. A full review of the service will be carried out by the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee in early 2024.**

#### **1.1 Background**

- 1.1.1 The current Pest Control Contract, procured in 2020, is due to end on 31 October 2023, with an option to extend by two 2-year periods.
- 1.1.2 The contract was let in partnership with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, and was originally procured by their procurement team. The contract operates on a referral basis, with all customers being put through to the contractor who will then deal with the report, take payments, and book & carry out any treatments, including follow up visits as required. Residents in receipt of Council Tax Reduction have been entitled to a free treatment (for a limited range of health-related pest issues). In these cases, TMBC staff check their entitlement before passing the customer through to Monitor. Monitor then invoice TMBC monthly for these subsidised cases. The contract also allows for optional services to be provided for TMBC's own estates such as the car parks, council offices and country parks.

- 1.1.3 The contract with Monitor is working extremely well and both Tunbridge Wells BC and Tonbridge and Malling BC had agreed they would want to take up an extension. Initially the contractor had indicated they would not be interested due to financial loss at the current rates. A discussion with them has led to a commitment to continue the current contract but on revised market rate costs. At this stage and with a need to extend at revised rates all parties agree that this should only be a 12-month extension in order to consider a review and potential re-procurement of the service.

## **1.2 Financial implications**

- 1.2.1 With the increase in rate costs proposed by the contractor it is estimated that the additional cost to Tonbridge & Malling BC with no changes will be in the region of £13,320 assuming a similar level of work. This includes the loss of a referral fee due to relatively low numbers of paying customers using the service.

- 1.2.2 There are a number of options to introduce subsidised/full charges for some/all of the existing pest control treatments that would reduce the impact of the increased cost to the Council. In order to balance affordability for customers, the number and type of treatments being requested and the cost impact the option of introducing a notional charge of £50 per treatment for rats and mice for residents on the Council Tax Reduction scheme and full charges for bedbugs and cockroaches is recommended. This would mean the estimated total additional cost to the Council is then reduced to from £13,320 to £6,660 over the 12 month period assuming a similar level of work.

- 1.2.3 It is important to note that if the cost of a treatment is prohibitive for a household this could lead to a pest problem not being addressed and causing wider issues in neighbouring properties which could lead to an increase in cases for the Environmental Protection team and the potential for increased works in default where the Council carry out required treatments. If notice is served under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 (as an example) expenses incurred by the local authority may be recovered however this may prove difficult if the recipient of the enforcement action is in financial hardship. The Environmental Protection team also seek to ensure that Registered Social Landlords are fulfilling their requirements in terms of pest control measures.

## **1.3 Recommendations**

- 1.3.1 To **APPROVE** a 12-month extension/variation to the pest control contract at agreed revised rates from 1/11/23;
- 1.3.2 To **APPROVE** a charge of £50 per treatment of rats and mice be introduced for residents in receipt of Council Tax Reduction from 1/11/23;

- 1.3.3 To **APPROVE** the cessation of subsidised treatments for bedbugs and cockroaches from 1/11/23; and
- 1.3.4 To **AGREE** a full review of the service by the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee in early 2024.