

Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee

17 February 2026

Part 1 - Public

Matters for Information



Cabinet Member	Cllr Adem Mehmet, Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Tonbridge Regeneration
Responsible Officer	Eleanor Hoyle, Director of Planning, Housing and Regulatory Services and Adrian Stanfield, Director of Central Services
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Cabinet Member Report – Infrastructure and Tonbridge Regeneration

1 Summary and Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of the infrastructure and Tonbridge regeneration related activities that the Council has undertaken over the past 12 months and sets out the plan for delivery in the coming year.

2 Corporate Strategy Priority Area

- 2.1 Sustaining a borough which cares for the environment
- 2.2 Improving housing options for local people whilst protecting our outdoor areas of importance
- 2.3 Investing in our local economic to help support residents and businesses and foster sustainable growth.
- 2.4 A specific aim under this priority area is to 'identify ways we could use our land and other assets better, especially in Tonbridge town centre'. This has been a particular focus for a wide range of work involving a number of different Council services.

3 Introduction and Background

- 3.1 The delivery of infrastructure is absolutely essential to ensure that development is delivered sustainably and in a way that delivers the services that residents need whilst also maintaining and enhancing the huge range of outdoor amenity in the borough. The focus on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan as a key element of the proposed Local Plan demonstrates the Council's commitment to putting this issue at the heart of our approach.
- 3.2 The potential redevelopment of Tonbridge town centre is an exciting opportunity for the Council, residents of the town and wide borough and visitors to Tonbridge. Following completion of phase 1 (establishing scope, aims and objectives of the review) and phase 2 (governance and option appraisals), Cabinet approved the creation of a Tonbridge Town Centre Programme Board in late 2024, which is made up of cross-party Members and officers, to oversee progress of a wide range of work streams.
- 3.3 Although there is input from a number of different Council services, Members recognised the need for a dedicated resource if meaningful progress was to be made. In September 2024 a Tonbridge Town Centre Programme Manager was successfully appointed on a 3-year fixed term and has been instrumental in supporting both the Programme Board and internal services.

4 Infrastructure Activities

- 4.1 Letters were sent to all infrastructure providers during the Local Plan consultation period, strongly encouraging them to respond to enable the Council to fully assess deliverability. The information provided to the Local Plan consultation has already proved important in holding infrastructure providers accountable, as it has informed a further letter to the Chief Executive of south East Water, highlighting that their response suggests that they may not be able to sufficiently mitigate the current fragilities in the system to meet the demands of new development, which is obviously a significant delivery risk for development. Work to hold infrastructure providers to account will continue with a collaborative effort from Members and officers.
- 4.2 Members will be aware of longstanding concerns about the differences between the national policy position on Highways infrastructure, which forms the basis for the position of the County Council as statutory highways consultee, and the experience of communities that will be impacted by development. An additional recommendation was agreed by Cabinet as part of their approval of the Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation to delegate authority to the Director of Planning, Housing and Regulatory Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Planning and Infrastructure & Tonbridge Regeneration, to review the specification for highways work and any additional work so it adequately responded to community concerns about highway impacts in order to inform the ongoing assessment of site allocations in the Draft Local Plan. This review has

commenced with officer level meetings with KCC Highways and the development of proposals for review.

- 4.3 Members will be aware from previous reports to the Housing & Planning Scrutiny Select Committee that the Council's role in the delivery of infrastructure is limited, with the Planning function collecting contributions and liaising with the relevant providers to identify relevant schemes to deliver to mitigate the impacts of development. Beyond this, the Council utilises its placemaking role to bring key stakeholders, including developers, together with statutory providers and seeks to hold statutory providers to account. A good example of this partnership working is the ongoing discussions with the Integrated Care Board to seek to secure faster delivery of health facilities across the borough. Specifically, the site at Leybourne Chase, where the potential for medical facilities to be provided on site was secured only through a planning use class and has not been able to be delivered to date, has been the focus of stakeholder meetings in recent months, which have resulted in local groups working collaboratively to make proposals for use of the space for medical facilities. Although these discussions have some way to go, it is encouraging to see how the Council's placemaking role can facilitate honest and productive progress on the delivery of infrastructure projects that have the potential to make a significant difference in our communities.
- 4.4 The Council's approach to s106 contributions continues to develop further to Members' agreeing a revised approach that included the removal of other statutory bodies as signatories so that the Council as Local Planning Authority retains the funding. In addition, the Council has recently adopted evidence documents and guidance to ensure that our approach to seeking contributions towards Indoor and Outdoor Leisure, Playing Pitches and Open Space is robust and meets the needs of the borough's residents. A report will be coming to the April meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee to review the monitoring arrangements for s106, to provide information on use of s106 funding currently and to consider proposals for further improvements to our processes.
- 4.5 Work has commenced in the Planning service to consider how the Building Safety Levy will be implemented and monitored. This will be a key piece of work in 2026/27 and is identified in the draft Annual Service Delivery Plan.

5 Tonbridge Town Centre Activities

- 5.1 Over the last 12 months a wide range of activities have been completed, as listed below.

5.1.1 East of High Street Masterplan

- Procurement and appointment of masterplan consultant
- Completion of a masterplan framework including several, well attended Member workshops along with key stakeholder and public engagement. The public engagement was particularly successful with around 1,450 responses received. Overall, there was 79% agreement from the respondents with the proposals.
- The masterplan framework included high-level illustrative masterplan and spatial development proposals, supported by viability and delivery analysis, to support meeting the housing and employment growth requirements for the area
- Adoption of the masterplan framework and delivery strategy in October 2025
- Commenced work on Linear Riverside Park in January 2026

5.1.2 Angel Centre Replacement

- Continuation of the regular cross-party Programme Board meetings throughout 2025 following the first meeting in September 2024.
- In April 2025 Cabinet approved the site location for the replacement Angel Centre as Sovereign Way Mid Car Park and, subject to approval of the project by full Council, approved the appointment of Alliance Leisure Services Ltd as the Borough Council's leisure development partner to progress the project through the RIBA Stages
- Council approved the Capital Plan Evaluation (List C to List A) for the replacement Angel Centre in April 2025.
- In May 2025 work started on RIBA 2 (concept design) for the replacement Angel Centre
- In June 2025 the Town Centre Programme Board recommended to Cabinet the progression of RIBA Stage 2 work, including the proposed facility mix and public engagement arrangements.
- The All-Member briefing took place in July 2025.
- The public engagement survey on the proposed facility mix that was carried out in August 2025
- A report was presented to Overview and Scrutiny committee in September 2025

- Cabinet agreed the completion of RIBA 2 and progression to RIBA 3 in October 2025
- In November 2025 the Town Centre Programme Board recommended the appointment of RPT Consulting Limited to validate both business plans for the replacement Angel Centre.
- Pre-App meetings with TMBC Planners took place on 9th January & 28th January 2026

5.2 **Next 12 Months**

- Public Engagement for the replacement Angel Centre to take place ahead of the planning submission in February 2026
- Planning Submission for the replacement Angel Centre proposed for March 2026.
- Decision on progressing to RIBA 4 proposed for March 2026
- Planning Determination at Council planned for 14th July 2026
- Council Decision on progressing to RIBA 5 proposed for meeting on 20th October 2026
- Start on Site for the build of the replacement Angel Centre proposed for October/November 2026
- Linear Riverside Park – Procurement of a designer to produce the feasibility/design framework by September 2026

6 **Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

6.1 All the services are delivered within the Council's budgetary framework.

7 **Risk Assessment**

7.1 None associated with this report.

8 **Legal Implications**

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

9 **Consultation and Communications**

9.1 This report is aimed at ensuring that Members are aware of the work progressed under the banner of Infrastructure and Tonbridge Regeneration and contribution to the Council's Corporate Strategy and the Annual Service Delivery Plan 2025/26.

10 Cross Cutting Issues

10.1 Climate Change and Biodiversity

10.1.1 Some impact on reducing emissions in support of carbon neutral by 2030 or enhancing the natural environment.

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

10.1.3 A key part of the replacement Angel Centre project is to deliver a low carbon, energy efficient building.

10.2 Equalities and Diversity

10.2.1 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.

10.3 Other If Relevant

- None

Background Papers	None
Annexes	None