

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 5 October 2021
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Bartlett, Joy, McKenna, Mortimer, Newton, Purle (Chairman),
M Rose, S Webb (Vice-Chairman) and Young

The Chairman will assume that all Members will read the reports before attending the meeting. Officers are asked to assume the same when introducing reports.

<u>AGENDA</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
1. Apologies for Absence	
2. Notification of Substitute Members	
3. Urgent Items	
4. Notification of Visiting Members	
5. Disclosures by Members and Officers	
6. Disclosures of Lobbying	
7. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.	
8. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 31 August 2021	1 - 7
9. Presentation of Petitions (if any)	
10. Questions and answer session for members of the public (if any)	
11. Questions from Members to the Chairman (if any)	
12. Committee Work Programme	8 - 9
13. Reports of Outside Bodies	
14. Resettlement from Temporary Accommodation with pets - Update	10 - 19
15. Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy	20 - 26

Issued on Monday 27 September 2021

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

16. Draft Housing Strategy for Consultation	27 - 74
17. 1st Quarter Financial Update & Performance Monitoring Report	75 - 93
18. Proposed Refurbishment of the Council owned Stilebridge Lane & Water Lane G&T Sites	94 - 102

PART II

To move that the public be excluded for the items set out in Part II of the agenda because of the likely disclosure of exempt information for the reason specified having applied the Public Interest Test.

Head of Schedule 12A and Brief Description

19. Exempt Appendix 1 - Cost Comparison Table	Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)	103
-----------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

In order to ask a question at this meeting in person or by remote means, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Friday 1 October 2021). You will need to provide the full text in writing.

If your question is accepted, you will be provided with instructions as to how you can access the meeting.

In order to make a statement in relation to an item on the agenda, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Friday 1 October 2021). You will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on.

If you require this information in an alternative format please contact us, call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk. To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit www.maidstone.gov.uk.

Should you wish to refer any decisions contained in these minutes to the **Policy and Resources Committee**, please submit a Decision Referral Form, signed by **three** Councillors, to the **Head of Policy, Communications and Governance** by: 22 September 2021

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 31 AUGUST 2021

Present: Councillors Cox, McKenna, Newton, Perry, Purle (Chairman), Mrs Robertson, M Rose, S Webb and Young

Also Present: Councillors English, Hinder and Naghi

45. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bartlett, Joy and Mortimer.

46. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

The following Substitute Members were present:

Councillor Perry for Councillor Bartlett;
Councillor Robertson for Councillor Joy; and
Councillor Cox for Councillor Mortimer.

47. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED: that Councillor Purle be elected as Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2021/22.

48. **URGENT ITEMS**

The Chairman informed the Committee that he would take the Election of the Vice Chairman as an urgent item.

RESOLVED: that Councillor S Webb be elected as Vice Chairman for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2021/22.

49. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

Councillor Hinder was present as a Visiting Member for Item 12 - Questions from Members to the Chairman.

Councillors English and Naghi were present as Visiting Members for Item 20 - Brenchley Gardens.

50. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

51. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

52. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: that all items be taken in public as proposed.

53. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 JUNE 2021

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed.

54. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

55. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There was one question from a member of the public.

Question from Sue Gullett, on behalf of Maidstone Climate Emergency Network, to the Chairman of the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee:

'We would like to thank MBC for participating in the No Mow May scheme. I personally have particularly appreciated Church Green in Staplehurst, an area of which has been left uncut this year, and I've heard some positive comments about it from other residents.

We have also been heartened to see that this year many verges have been left largely uncut, with a resulting increase in wildflowers & insects. I gather that there have been some negative responses to No Mow May, and no doubt to the uncut verges, and that your committee will be asked to review lessons learnt.

In line with your Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan section 8.4 do you agree that, in order to engage and inspire the wider public, information about schemes such as No Mow May needs to be eye catching & ideally on site? This would mean that anyone who, on first glance, sees untidiness and neglect is immediately made aware of the reasons and the wider benefits, thus helping to build stronger support for sustainable practices.'

The Chairman responded to the question.

Sue Gullett asked the following supplementary question:

'Is the Committee aware of the Road Verges campaign organised by the charity Plantlife? Plantlife provides information and resources for Councillors, including a PDF for producing posters.'

The Chairman responded to the supplementary question.

The full response was recorded on the webcast and made available to view on the Maidstone Borough Council website.

To access the webcast, please use the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dh0LLFFI9M&t=4679s>

56. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There was one question from a Member to the Chairman.

Councillor Hinder asked the following question:

'I have received lobbying from a number of my ward residents regarding the "perceived outdated practice" of giving away live pets-namely Goldfish - as prizes.

Has this Council considered the effect of giving away animals as prizes and would it support a move to ban the giving of live animals as prizes in any form?

This outdated practice occurs on land owned by the Council and also on private land. Does this not therefore give clear indication that this Council condones this outdated practice?

Would this Council support National moves for an outright ban on the giving of live animals as prizes?'

The Chairman responded to the question.

The full response was recorded on the webcast and made available to view on the Maidstone Borough Council website.

To access the webcast recording, please use the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dh0LLFFI9M&t=4679s>

57. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: that the Committee Work Programme be noted.

58. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports of Outside Bodies.

59. SOCIAL HOUSING PROVIDER PRESENTATION - GOLDING HOMES

Sue Chalkley, Interim Chief Executive, and Annmarie Roberts, Director of Operations, from Golding Homes presented their report to the Committee.

An overview was given of the changes to the service throughout the last 18 months, which included the launch of a new campaign whereby all employees of Golding Homes went through customer service training. Repairs and maintenance had been carried out inhouse since February 2021 rather than by contractors, and complaints had since reduced by 50%. An increase in customer satisfaction had also occurred. The current business plan included an investment of £5.1 million in building and fire safety, and asset data was being collected as a step towards becoming net carbon zero by 2050.

In response to questions, it was explained that the majority of complaints related to repairs and maintenance. The impact of the pandemic on tenants in relation to the ongoing suitability of their allocated accommodation could be incorporated in the review of provision for older and vulnerable people.

The Head of Housing and Community Services commented that applications to transfer accommodation are administered by the Council through the Housing Register and data could be extracted as to the number of transfer requests received.

In response to further questions, it was explained that external consultants would be brought in to assist with preparation for the in-depth assessment relating to regulatory measures, which would take place in quarter four. The drop in customer satisfaction could be a result of the new system which better enabled residents to make complaints, and the key drivers for lower satisfaction were within estates and cleaning and caretaking services. An update to the Committee was requested to take place before the regulatory measures assessment.

Golding Homes had seven buildings within the Borough which would be applicable to the EWS1 process, and it was confirmed that works needed to be completed on all buildings in order for them to gain the EWS1 fire safety certificate.

RESOLVED: that the presentation be noted.

60. REFERENCE FROM THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - LESSONS LEARNED FROM 'NO MOW MAY'

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the reference, which recommended that the Committee review the lessons learned from the 'No Mow May' Campaign.

RESOLVED: that lessons learned from the 'No Mow May' Campaign be reviewed within the Parks Delivery Plan for Biodiversity.

61. APPOINTMENT TO THE HOWARD DE WALDEN CENTRE

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report, which outlined the steps taken to fill the Trustee vacancies to the Howard de Walden Centre.

A nomination form had been received from Councillor Cox and was appended to the report. Councillor English requested to be appointed to the outside body and outlined previous experience relevant to the role.

RESOLVED: that Councillors Cox and English be appointed as Trustees to the Howard de Walden Centre for a term of four years.

62. RECOVERY AND RENEWAL ACTIONS

The Head of Policy, Communications and Governance introduced the report which outlined the Council's action plan for recovery and renewal from the Covid-19 Pandemic following the allocation of £860,000 in unringfenced grants to the Council. The Committee was asked to consider the actions proposed and raise any new actions for consideration by the Policy and Resources Committee. A community resilience fund had been proposed whereby one-off payments could be accessed by voluntary and community sector organisations via the drafted application form, to fund projects that would benefit Maidstone residents.

In response to questions, the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance confirmed that more detail could be sought regarding the suggested resources assigned to each proposed action, and explained that there would be regular progress and spending reports brought to the Committee. If a change was recommended to the allocated resource for any of the actions, this would need to be taken to the Policy and Resources Committee.

Concern was raised that smaller organisations may not meet the eligibility criteria set out in order to apply for funding through the Community Resilience fund, and more flexibility in paying successful bids was suggested. It was also raised that bids should be considered by way of a self-selected panel taken from the Committee Members.

RESOLVED: that feedback on the action plan be reported back to the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration at their meeting on 20 October 2021.

63. ENGLAND TREES ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Biodiversity and Climate Change Officer introduced the report which was requested by the Committee at its meeting on 1 June 2021 and provided an update on initiatives including the action plan for tree planting activities across the Borough. The Woodland Trust would be working in Partnership with the Council to sustainably increase tree cover, and discussions would be initiated with local large landowners due to the limited areas for wide scale tree planting on the Council's estate. The Forestry Commission would also be creating a 127-hectare woodland within the Borough.

In response to questions, the Biodiversity and Climate Change Officer explained that planting would begin in the new year which would coincide with the planting season and welcomed suggestions for new planting

initiatives. There would be close collaboration with the Planning Teams to avoid disruption to infrastructure and properties, and with strategic planning to ensure tree planting was included in new developments. A maintenance plan would mitigate the risks around trees being vandalised, with more developed trees being planted in public parks.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

64. BRENCHLEY GARDENS

The Community Protection Manager introduced the report which outlined steps taken to reduce the negative activity within the park.

In response to questions, the Head of Housing and Community Services explained that bringing a report to the Committee in November would allow time for discussion with park users. Brenchley Gardens was a standing item on the agenda at the relevant ward cluster meetings, which enabled a discussion with the relevant ward Members.

The Community Protection Manager commented that closing the park at night would not improve antisocial behaviour that mainly happened in the daytime. Consideration should be given to where displaced groups would go if the park was not accessible and how that would affect the ability to safeguard the young people involved.

RESOLVED: that

1. The approach set out in the report to address community safety concerns and create a more positive environment at Brenchley Gardens be endorsed;
2. An update report be provided by the Head of Housing and Community Services to the Committee at their meeting on 30 November 2021;
3. Officers be asked to pursue further and bring forward firm proposals and costings in the next Committee report as to:
 - a. Securing and locking the grounds at night;
 - b. Additional CCTV coverage;
 - c. Additional lighting at night; and
 - d. Securing the bandstand; and
4. Officers be asked to meet with interested Members to discuss landscaping and biodiversity matters and to include any resulting actions and proposals when reporting to the Committee on the Parks Delivery Plan for Biodiversity.

65. COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN TIMETABLE

The Head of Housing and Community Services introduced the report, which proposed the timetable for the new three-year plan to go to Council

for adoption. A public consultation was proposed and the importance of Member engagement was highlighted.

RESOLVED: that the timetable at 2.4 of the report and process to enable to the Council to adopt a new Community Safety Plan 2022-25 be approved, subject to the rescheduling of the Member engagement event on 9 September 2021, and that direction on Member engagement be provided.

66. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30pm to 8.43pm.

2021/22 WORK PROGRAMME

	Committee	Month	Origin	CLT to clear	Lead	Report Author
Fit & Proper Person Test of Mobile (Park) Home Site Owners	CHE	02-Nov-21	Officer Update	Yes	William Cornall	Martyn Jeynes
Phase 5 Purchase and Repair Temporary Accommodation Acquisition	CHE	02-Nov-21	Officer Update		William Cornall	Andrew Connors
Refresh of the Council's Air Quality Management Area and Air Quality Action Plan	CHE	30-Nov-21	Officer Update		John Littlemore	Tracey Beattie
Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23-2026/27	CHE	30-Nov-21	Governance	No	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Fees and Charges 2022/23	CHE	30-Nov-21	Governance	No	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Q2 Budget and Performance Monitoring 2021/22	CHE	30-Nov-21	Officer Update	No	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Parks Delivery Plan for Biodiversity	CHE	30-Nov-21	Officer Update	No	Jennifer Shepherd	Andrew Williams
Community Safety Plan - Consultation Response	CHE	30-Nov-21	Officer Update	Yes	John Littlemore	Martyn Jeynes
Brenchley Gardens - Costings for Safety Measures	CHE	30-Nov-21	Cllr Request		John Littlemore	Martyn Jeynes
Review of the use and enforcement of ASB powers with a view to procuring a pronounced tightening	CHE	04-Jan-22	Cllr Request		John Littlemore	Martyn Jeynes
Review of the efficiency and effectiveness of the community safety unit	CHE	04-Jan-22	Cllr Request		John Littlemore	John Littlemore
Housing Strategy Consultation Review	CHE	04-Jan-22	Officer Update		John Littlemore	John Littlemore
Medium Term Financial Strategy & Budget Proposals 2022/23	CHE	04-Jan-22	Governance	No	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet
Q3 Budget and Performance Monitoring 2021/22	CHE	01-Feb-22	Officer Update	No	Mark Green	Ellie Dunnet

2021/22 WORK PROGRAMME

	Committee	Month	Origin	CLT to clear	Lead	Report Author
Community Safety Plan and Strategic Assessment - Crime and Disorder Committee	CHE	01-Mar-22	Officer Update		John Littlemore	Martyn Jeynes
Possible Provision of further Council owned G&T Sites	CHE	TBC	CLlr Request		William Cornall	William Cornall
Options on Tightening the Approach to Littering, Graffiti and Waste Crime (to incorporate Street Cleansing Monitoring)	CHE	TBC	CLlr Request		John Edwards	John Edwards
Provision of GP Services and Community Hub Update from the CCG (briefing 1 November)	CHE	TBC	CLlr Request	No	Alison Broom	Alison Broom

Agenda Item 14

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

5 October 2021

Resettlement from Temporary Accommodation with pets – Update

Final Decision-Maker	CHE
Lead Head of Service	John Littlemore, Head of Housing, Communities and Environment
Lead Officer and Report Author	Hannah Gaston, Housing Inclusion Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

To review the impact of the pilot “pets policy” scheme for those living in Temporary Accommodation (both statutory and discretionary), which has taken place over the preceding twelve months.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Committee approves the policy, as set out in appendix 1 to the report, to adopt as a permanent policy; and
2. That the Committee gives consideration to naming the policy the “John Chadwick Pet Policy”.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Committee CHE	5 October 2021

Resettlement from Temporary Accommodation with pets – Update

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities. However, they will support the Council's overall achievement of its aims as set out in section 3 [preferred alternative].	Head of Housing and Community Services
Cross Cutting Objectives	Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved The report recommendation(s) supports the achievement(s) of the deprivation and social mobility cross cutting objectives by ensuring those who are homeless have access to appropriate accommodation.	Head of Housing and Community Services
Risk Management	The risk of undertaking these recommendations are fairly limited and should not have a significant impact on our move on from temporary accommodation.	Head of Housing and Community Services
Financial	The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing compliment.	Head of Housing and Community Services
Legal	Acting on the recommendations is within the Council's powers as set out in Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and associated code of guidance.	Team Leader (Contentious)
Privacy and Data Protection	Accepting the recommendations will increase the volume of data held by the Council. We will hold that data in line with our retention schedules.	Policy and Information Team

Equalities	An Equalities Impact Assessment was undertaken as part of the development of the Pets in Accommodation policy in 2018.	Equalities and Communities Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will likely have a positive impact on the mental wellbeing of individuals with pets.	Healthy Lifestyles Officer
Crime and Disorder	The recommendation will have a neutral impact on Crime and Disorder. The Community Protection Team have been consulted and mitigation has been proposed	Head of Housing and Community Services
Procurement	No procurement process required	Housing and Inclusion Manager
Biodiversity and Climate Change	Biodiversity and Climate Change There are no implications on biodiversity and climate change.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Officer

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 MBC has taken an innovative and flexible approach to individuals who find themselves homeless, in need of accommodation and have a household pet. We developed a policy a few years ago which enables the homeless household to be placed into our own temporary accommodation (TA) with their pet whilst waiting for an appropriate move on option to become available.
- 2.2 This policy has been a success and we have accommodated many individuals in our own stock, and more recently in private nightly paid accommodation, who are owed a statutory or a discretionary duty including many rough sleepers. Currently we are accommodating approximately five to six dogs, across a number of households and we have one former rough sleeper living in self-contained accommodation with a dog.
- 2.3 Even though we have developed our own pet policy this does still bring challenges in terms of moving households on from TA and finding appropriate accommodation. Many landlords including registered social housing providers and private landlords refuse to take tenants with animals. This can often lead to a household being offered a property which is not suitable for pets or with a landlord who will not accept them.
- 2.3.1 We recently had a case with a former rough sleeping female who was offered a flat by a Registered Provider, who then retracted the offer, even after being supplied with evidence from the psychiatric consultant we work closely with that the pet was a benefit to their well being.

- 2.4 This approach is often applied to flat and apartment accommodation and as the majority of the accommodation available to single person households is this type of housing, this affects this client group disproportionately. Some housing providers, such as West Kent Housing are adopting a more flexible approach and it is our aim to encourage more housing providers to review their tenancy conditions to make them more pet friendly.
- 2.5 Whilst we pursue this overarching aim, we proposed to operate the pilot programme in order to address the concerns that pet owning households may have to separate from existing pets. Under this pilot we enabled households who we owe a duty to secure accommodation under the Homelessness legislation to refuse the first offer if that offer was not suitable for a pet, and/or the landlord refused to accept the pet – as with the case study above. If a household refused a property this would not alter their priority date on the Housing Register as would happen in normal circumstance, and we would not look to discharge them for refusing a suitable offer.
- 2.6 Over the past 12 months our staff have been sensitive to the needs of applicants with pets. As a result, we have had very few cases of individuals refusing an offer of accommodation due to them owning pets and it is more likely to be the receiving landlord who will refuse a household based on pet ownership, as per the case study above. Due to a better awareness at the time of letting, the impact of this pilot has been negligible.
- 2.7 To date we have seven households who have been refused accommodation by a landlord due to pet ownership, this in turn has meant a longer stay in TA for their household.
- 2.8 Even noting 2.7, above, our nightly paid TA costs over the preceding years have continued to fall from £687, 942 in 2019-20 to £510,755 in 2020-21 and to date this financial year we are £46,000 under budget for nightly paid temporary accommodation with that extrapolated up for the year – we would reduce the costs again to approx. £495,000.
- 2.9 The length of stay within TA has also stabilised over the preceding years, even noting 2.7 along with the changes to the Allocations Policy, the average number of days for a household to spend in TA has only risen from 85 to 90.
- 2.10 The development of the 'pet policy' arose out of the untimely death of one of our applicants in temporary accommodation – John Chadwick. His friend, Dee Bonett has campaigned tirelessly both locally and nationally for a more sensitive approach to permitting homeless households to keep their pets whilst they move through the homelessness process.
- 2.11 Most recently Dee Bonett requested that the CHE Committee gives consideration to naming the pet policy in John Chadwick's memory. Whilst this is an unusual request, there does not appear to be a stipulation in the Constitution to prevent this. Therefore the Committee is invited to consider Ms Bonett's request in the recommendation section of the report.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 After the success of the pilot scheme, it is recommended that the pilot policy is adopted and embedded within everyday work.
 - 3.2 Alternatively, we revert to the former approach, which is compliant with the legislation and only offer one suitable option (regardless of suitability for pets) for move on from temporary accommodation, thereby, people with pets are not able to decline an offer as unsuitable. However, this is not proposed as this approach is not in the spirit of working with individuals who have pets as a support or for therapeutic reasons.
-

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The preferred option is 3.1. as this approach would enable a successful continuation of the work to date. It would ensure those with pets can retain them and we offer a supportive and holistic approach to resettlement for those facing a very stressful and uncertain time whilst being homeless.
- 4.2 This recommendation ensures the Council is supportive of an individual's right to have a pet, which can be very emotionally valuable to an individual (especially to rough sleepers). It also enables there to be a continued flow through our TA stock and shouldn't become a burden on our budget given the financial pressures we all face now.

5. RISK

- 5.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework and contained within the body of the report. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 The issues of pets within our TA has been on-going for some time and we have developed a "Pets in Accommodation" policy in 2018 – which has been in operation since that time.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 If the recommendations are approved, then we will ensure these new practises will be implemented within our policies and across the housing team.
 - 7.2 It will also be important for those who have pets to understand this option and will form part of an up-dated pet policy and contract.
-

8. REPORT APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – MBC Pet Policy

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

MBC Pet Policy

Maidstone Borough Council recognises that our homeless applicants may need to keep pets whilst being housed in accommodation under the Homelessness statute. Where possible Maidstone Council will endeavour to accommodate your household where it is suitable and permitted for pets. For the purpose of the homelessness legislation pets are not considered to be part of your household. If no properties are available where a pet is allowed to reside then the pet will not be taken into consideration when making a suitable offer of temporary accommodation. By way of explanation the Homelessness Code of Guidance states:

“Housing authorities will need to be sensitive to importance of pets to some applicant, particularly elderly people, rough sleepers who may rely on pets for companionship. Although it will not always be possible to make provisions for pets, the secretary of state recommends that housing authorities give careful consideration to this aspect when making provision for applicants who wish to retain their pet”

Whilst under this policy you have been permitted to have your pet(s) with you in your temporary accommodation. You may be offered accommodation to end the Council's housing duty to you where the landlord is a housing association or private landlord. The housing provider is likely to have their own policy as to whether pets are permitted in their accommodation and the Council does not have the authority to overrule their decision. In normal circumstances if you were to be offered accommodation where pets are not permitted, the offer of accommodation would not be considered as an unsuitable offer on the basis that your pet could not join you.

This policy aims to clarify:

- What pets you can or cannot keep at your property
- How we expect them and your home to be looked after; ensuring the well-being of the pet and the community you live in.

Pets that (may be) permitted to stay:

- 1) Dogs
- 2) Cats
- 3) Fish
- 4) Caged Birds
- 5) Small caged animals (e.g hamsters/ rabbits).

Allowing your pet to stay in the temporary accommodation

The following rules apply to allow you to keep your pet in the property with you;

- You must not allow animals kept at a property to cause a nuisance to other people.
 - *Nuisance can be caused, although not exclusively, by noise, odour, fouling or lack of proper supervision and control. The latter may also result in injury to persons as well as damage to property. This can affect neighbours, council employees or contractors and other people in the locality.*

- Sign the MBC pet's contract
- Pay a service charge which will assist Council in ensuring the protection of the condition of the property
 - *Those whose pet is for medical purposes and with confirmation of this will not be charged for this.*
- Any fouling caused by your pet must be cleaned up straight away.
- Pets will not be allowed in accommodation that is classed as shared accommodation. If permission is not given we will offer advice and support on possible rehousing.
- No farm animals (such as Pigs, Chickens) will be allowed to be kept in the accommodation.
- You must take all reasonable measures to ensure that their dog does not escape from your control.
- MBC expects applicants to take responsibility, not only for ensuring that the needs of any pets that are kept at the property are met, but also for making sure that their pets do not cause a hazard, nuisance or annoyance to other people, damage to property or injury to persons.
- Breeding of animals is not permitted.
- We would require cats are neutered and micro-chipped.
- **Dogs**
 - The dog wears a collar and tag with the owner's name and address and ideally a telephone number when in a public place and is micro chipped; (Micro chipping is a legal requirement from 6 April 2016 under The Micro chipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015). MBC will provide a new dog tag for your dog under its temporary accommodation address.
 - Vaccinations and treatment for fleas and worms are kept up-to-date.
 - The dog is not left alone for long periods, it is regularly exercised according to its needs and it does not bark continuously or at un-social hours.
 - The property and garden are kept clean and free of the dog's faeces by the frequent and hygienic removal of all animal waste.
 - The dog is kept under proper control in your home, a private place such as a neighbour's house or garden and a public place, so that it does not: stray onto other

people's property and/or more widely in the neighbourhood/locality; and/or cause damage to property or injury to a person, animal or pet.

Number of animals permitted:

We will allow you to have the maximum of:

- 1) One dog** and one cat, or two cats and no dog.
- 2) Two caged animals
- 3) Reasonable amount of caged birds

**No dog must be kept at the property which is of a breed that is banned under the 1991 Dangerous Dogs Act. This includes the Pit Bull Terrier, Japanese Tosa, Dogo Argentino and Fila Brasileiro

Animals we do not allowed to be kept under the policy.

We do not allow applicants to keep wild animals, livestock or farm animals, endangered species or any dogs identified in the Dangerous Dogs Act 1991, or any subsequent legislation. In addition, animals registered under the Dangerous Wild Animals Act 1976, which includes venomous snakes, certain types of spider and various breeds of monkey, are not permitted in Maidstone Council Properties.

Keeping Pets without Permission

If you keep a pet(s) in the emergency accommodation without first requesting permission from the Council it will be a breach of your licence. You will be issued with a warning and you must rehome your pet(s) within 14 days and failure to do so may mean that the Council will ask you to leave the accommodation.

If someone complains about your pet

If we receive complaints of nuisance behaviour about a pet or other animal living at any property, we will treat this as an anti-social behaviour complaint. We will first ask you to resolve any problems yourself. If you don't, we will consider withdrawing permission to keep the pet and take enforcement action to resolve the issue as a breach of licence conditions.

This includes any:

- Fouling staircases, walkways, courtyards, any communal areas or dwellings including your own property.
- Injuring or frightening anyone into thinking they might be injured (by the pet).
- Being out of control or a danger to other residents.
- Making a noise that causes or is likely to cause alarm, distress or harassment to others.
- Failing to comply with the terms of any dog control notice or similar notice issued by the relevant authority.

- Not keeping your home and surrounding areas in good condition.

If MBC withdraw permission for your pet to remain at the property and you do not remove it, your temporary accommodation will be cancelled and no further temporary accommodation will be offered to you.

Leaving your Accommodation

When leaving the temporary accommodation you must leave the accommodation in the condition that it was provided to you. All equipment relating to your animal (cages, kennels, and Litter trays) will need to be removed from the property. All carpets will need to be thoroughly cleaned. Ensure any litter trays, cages, or dog's faeces are disposed of hygienically.

If you are granted permission to keep a cat or dog at the Council emergency accommodation you will be responsible at the end of your stay for ensuring that all the carpets are professionally cleaned. You must give a receipt for this work to the Temporary Accommodation Officer when the keys are returned to the Council. Should this not be done, the Council will arrange a professional carpet clean and charge you for the full cost

Responsible Pet Ownership

A pet owner is responsible for the welfare of their animal by law and must take such steps as are reasonable in all circumstances to ensure that the needs of the animal for which he or she is responsible are met to the extent required by good practice (Section 9, Animal Welfare Act 2006). This includes the provision of a suitable environment for the animal, which maybe with or apart from other animals and ensuring that the animal has the ability to express normal behaviour which may include the provision of regular exercise e.g. dog walking. An appropriate diet must also be provided as well as protection from pain, suffering, injury and disease.

If we believe that a pet at the property has been neglected or abandoned, we will report the case to an appropriate animal welfare organisation.

Agenda Item 15

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

5 October 2021

Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy

Final Decision-Maker	COMMUNITIES, HOUSING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
Lead Head of Service	William Cornall Director of Regeneration & Place
Lead Officer and Report Author	John Littlemore Head of Housing & Community Services
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report sets out the context in which the UK government has asked local authorities to assist them with evacuating persons from Afghanistan who were formally employed by the British Armed Forces stationed in Afghanistan; and to consider how Maidstone Borough Council can assist the government in this task.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Committee adopts the approach outlined in Paragraphs 3.2 and 3.3 to assist in the acquisition of private rented accommodation to support Afghan Locally Employed Staff under the government's Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy.
2. That the Committee approves the total number of units to be acquired by Maidstone Borough Council to assist with the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Communities, Housing & Environment Committee	05-10-2021

Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place • We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities and is a response to the humanitarian crisis and request for assistance by the UK government. 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already covered in the risk section of the report. 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation. 	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing. 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting on the recommendations is 	Legal Team

	within the Council's general powers of well-being as set out Localism Act.	
Privacy and Data Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepting the recommendations will increase the volume of data held by the Council. We will hold that data in line with our retention schedules. 	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment 	Policy & Information Manager
Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals. 	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendation will have a neutral impact on Crime and Disorder. The Community Protection Team have been consulted and mitigation has been proposed 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not applicable 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and no direct implications have been sighted.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Maidstone Borough Council has previously assisted the UK government when they have intervened in relieving humanitarian crisis. In late 2015 the Council agreed to assist with the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Scheme (VPS); and since 2016 to the present day has aided families under that initiative.
- 2.2 In a similar way, following the rapid collapse of the Afghanistan government in the face of the Taliban insurgency, the UK government initiated a response to assist those families who had close ties with the British Armed Forces during the previous 20 years. Under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) the UK government has invited Afghan Locally Employed Staff (LES) to the UK in order to provide a safe haven for those now at risk. The government estimates this is around 3,000 people or 600 households.

- 2.3 The Home Office provides a funding package to resource local authorities to assist with the resettlement of Afghan LES and their families. This funding also helps with the delivery of support for families to enable integration; including support to obtain employment, welfare benefits, access to health, education and other local services. In two tier areas such as Kent, this financial support is administered and paid directly to Kent County Council. KCC in turn works with the district councils to identify suitable housing and commissions the support service from third party organisations.
- 2.4 The current initiative differs from the Syrian VPS in a number of ways. The Afghan LES are not coming to the UK having been processed through a United Nations Refugee Camp and therefore their status is not technically that of a refugee. This means that whilst they have been invited into the UK by the UK government, their immigration status is not as straight forward. The government has confirmed that Afghan LES will be given a visa that entitles the holder to 5 years leave to enter the UK and after that period to be able to apply for indefinite leave to remain.
- 2.5 Applicants under the Afghan LES scheme will have access to public services and will be eligible for benefits after they satisfy the Habitual Residency Test (set by the Department of Work and Pensions). As this can take up to 3 months or longer, the applicants will be supported by the local authority in the intervening period. This inability to satisfy the Habitual Residence Test also affects a person's ability to access the Council's Housing Register and to make an application under the homelessness legislation.
- 2.6 As a result, we are seeking to assist the Afghan LES by securing accommodation in the private rented sector (PRS), utilising the support that is available through the ARAP.
- 2.7 Two issues make the provision of accommodation challenging. Firstly, the period that the support payments will operate for is limited and for a shorter period than the Syrian VPS. The support element lasts for up to 12 months, or until the applicant is in suitable employment or receipt of benefits. This means that we have to acquire accommodation within the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) ceiling, as at the point when the Afghan LES becomes eligible for benefits their rental element will be capped at the LHA maximum.
- 2.8 This aspect may not be immediately attractive to private landlords and draw them to participating in the scheme, as the gap between market rents and the LHA is significant and is a barrier to a proportion of our existing residents from obtaining private rented accommodation.
- 2.9 With the imminent arrival of large numbers of Afghan LES, the UK government has moved to secure hotels as an interim step and has provided additional grant for the first 4 months of each tenancy to help with meeting the difference between the market rent and the LHA allowance. This may help in securing private rented accommodation for the first 6 months but it remains to be seen how sustainable this approach will be as the families integrate into society and move off the support funding.

2.10 The situation is dynamic, with the Chief Executive receiving regular updates and amendments from the Home Office to the ARAP scheme on a weekly basis. The Housing Service remains in close liaison with the Resettlement Team Manager at KCC and their support provider Clarion Homes.

2.11 The expertise gained from our Syrian VPS involvement has enabled us to rapidly identify the most suitable officers to be engaged in the acquisition and then on-going support to the families. Maidstone is in a good position to assist with an initial provision of 5 units of accommodation within the PRS. However, how quickly Afghan LES are assisted is largely dependent on the Home Office and the situation in terms of demand can change at a moment's notice.

2.12 The financial support is currently set at £10,500 per person within the household, per annum. This provides for the support services to be delivered and excludes their housing payments. An additional grant has recently been made available by government to act as a top up to rent shortfall but at this point in time the detail of the new scheme has not been released.

2.13 The current rental and LHA rates for Maidstone are set out in the table below.

Size	LHA Rate PCM (rounded)	Market Rent PCM (Mean)	6 Months Difference	12 Months Difference
Room	£385	£472	£522	£1,044
One Bed	£650	£693	£258	£516
Two Bed	£815	£858	£258	£516
Three Bed	£975	£1085	£660	£1,320
Four + Bed	£1250	£1444	£1,164	£2,328

2.14 Acquiring a small number of studio flats for couples would result in KCC receiving £21,000 per household to cover their support and set up needs. In terms of housing, it is proposed that the tenancy agreements would be between the landlord and the Afghan LES household directly, to be let at the LHA rate. An incentive payment would be made that equates to the same amount as the shortfall.

2.15 Maidstone Council could cover the initial set up payment by way of an incentive sum paid to the landlord. An indicative amount for a 6 month and

12 month tenancy are shown in the table above. This would cover the difference between the amount received under a full housing benefit claim and the market rent. We will endeavour to claim this amount back under the new government grant. There is a risk that this sum may not be recoverable in its entirety from government and that would constitute a direct cost to the Council.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Council could choose not to participate in the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy, as there is not a statutory duty to cooperate and some local authorities have already excluded themselves from the scheme. However, this is not recommended as there is a moral and humanitarian reason to help the Afghan people who served with the British Armed Forces over the past 20 years and who are now under a threat of mistreatment and death. Maidstone Council has a proud tradition of supporting our Armed Services and this can be extended to those who helped our Forces in Afghanistan.
 - 3.2 The Council can opt to secure through negotiation a number of private rented properties through our Accommodation Team, in a similar way we provide PRS accommodation for those assisted through the homelessness legislation. This may involve negotiating an inducement that takes account of the difference between the LHA rate and market rent that would normally be attainable.
 - 3.3 The Council could decide to acquire either 5 or up to 10 units of accommodation of PRS to provide housing for up to 5 or 10 Afghan LES households. This accommodation will provide a range of housing for different sizes of households, including couples and families with children. The Accommodation Team will explore a range of housing providers including the PRS and faith groups, which have proved to be beneficial in the past.
 - 3.4 The Council could also explore the option of purchasing housing from the open market akin to the initiative that has enabled the Council to grow its portfolio of temporary accommodation. However, this is unlikely to provide a solution within the short to medium term. Experience gained from the Syrian VPS is that demand for accommodation spiked and then rapidly declined and the time taken to identify, acquire and refurbish accommodation is unlikely to coincide with the needs of the ARAP.
-

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The preferred option is set out in Paragraph 3.3 above. This will enable the Council to provide relatively swift support to the ARAP initiative and assist those evacuating Afghanistan. This route also reduces the risk and exposure for the Council, whilst bringing to bear our own expertise in the area to support KCC and the UK government.

5. RISK

5.1 The risk to the Council at this stage is a financial one in terms of how far the Council wants to go in underwriting the leases and providing incentives to landlords. The potential exposure of this is linked to the figures set out in the paragraph 2.14 above. For example, if the Council were to acquire 5x four bedroom houses the incentive payment for 12 months would be in the region of £11,640. This assumes the ARAP scheme will operate for 12 months only rather than the 5 years that the Syrian VPS was intended to run.

6. REPORT APPENDICES

- None
-

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

"Maidstone's approach to the Syrian refugee crisis" report to CHE Committee 8th December 2015

**COMMUNITIES, HOUSING &
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

5 October 2021

Draft Housing Strategy 2021-26 for Consultation

Final Decision-Maker	COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE
Lead Head of Service	William Cornall Director of Regeneration & Place
Lead Officer and Report Author	John Littlemore Head of Housing & Community Services
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

Best practice encourages local housing authorities to publish a Housing Strategy to set out its key housing objectives and how they will be achieved. This report provides the draft Housing Strategy 2021-26 for review by the Committee and to approve for consultation with key stakeholders.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Committee approves the draft Housing Strategy 2021-26 attached at Appendix A to the report for consultation, and that the results are reported back to the Committee later this year.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
CHE Committee	05-10-2021

Draft Housing Strategy 2021-26 for Consultation

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place • Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve its 'Homes and Communities' and 'Thriving Place' priorities. 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report recommendation supports the achievements of the above cross cutting objectives.</p>	Head of Housing & Community Services
Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Covered in the risk section of the report' 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing the Housing Strategy accounts for a significant element of the Council's overall revenue and capital resources. The revenue budget for housing, net of grants and rental income, amounts to £1.6 million, and there is provision in the capital programme for £79 million of new investment in housing development and regeneration, along with the acquisition 	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

	of properties for temporary accommodation.	
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing. 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acting on the recommendations is within the Council's powers as set out in the Council's Constitution at part 1.10, 2.2 and 2.3 	Team Leader (Contentious)
Privacy and Data Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepting the recommendations will have no direct impact on the volume of data held by the Council. We will hold that data in line with our retention schedules. 	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recognise the recommendations may have varying impacts on different communities within Maidstone. Therefore, an equalities impact assessment will be completed following the consultation process. 	Policy & Information Manager
Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals. 	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendation will have a positive impact on Crime and Disorder. The Community Protection Team have been consulted and mitigation has been proposed 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not applicable 	Head of Service & Section 151 Officer
Biodiversity and Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and align with Action 5.2 to '<i>Ensure Local Plan review considers level of current and future flood risk and developments are planned accordingly</i>' of the Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan. 	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional Implications for consideration include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Sourcing sustainable building materials and audit and management to reduce building materials waste and carbon reduction for sustainable housing. ii. Sustainable housing for future expected impacts of climate change eg. Heatwaves, heavier rains, flooding. iii. Increase tree coverage, biodiversity and environmental protection where possible. iv. Align with Climate Adaption needs, as well as energy and water efficiency goals. 	
--	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Good practice dictates that the Council produce and maintains a Housing Strategy that sets out the local housing authority’s vision for housing in its area. The Strategy describes the objectives, policies and targets for how the authority intends to manage and deliver its strategic housing role and provides an overarching framework against which the authority considers and formulates other policies on more specific housing issues.
- 2.2 The Housing Strategy will reflect both national and local policy, as well as the on local market conditions. In developing our Housing Strategy close liaison has taken place with our Policy Team and Spatial Planning Team to ensure synergy between it and both the Council’s overarching Strategic Plan (2018-2045) and other key Council policies.
- 2.3 Following best practice guidelines, the Housing Strategy should:
Analyse the housing needs locally that illustrate the challenges that the Strategy is seeking to solve. This analysis could include, for example, data on:
 - Mismatches between the supply and demand for housing
 - Address affordability across different sub-groups
 - Comparison of recent growth in rents and incomes
 - Vacancy rates, housing standards including physical conditions
 - Impact on health and wellbeing of residents linked to housing
- 2.4 **Define the policy objectives the local authority hopes to achieve through the strategy.** The Strategy will identify overarching priorities that will form the basis for developing an action plan in the next iteration of the Strategy.
- 2.5 **Develop a comprehensive approach to meeting these objectives using the full array of resources available to the local authority and key partners.** This approach should draw on the broad set of resources and policy tools available to the local authority, including:

- Central government and local authority grants
- Direct intervention by delivering new housing either through MBC or Maidstone Property Holdings Ltd
- Supporting housing association partners to deliver new affordable housing
- Ensuring that existing housing meets with the statutory and local policy housing standards and enforcement processes
- Providing supported accommodation and services to assist the vulnerable members of our community
- Delivering initiatives linked to addressing fuel poverty and climate change & energy efficient homes

2.6 **Identify funding sources and contingencies.** Funding sources might include one-time grants, such as through Homes England, the use of the Council's capital receipts, or long-term borrowing through the Public Loans Board or other reputable source. Opportunities to accrue external grants for both capital and revenue will be explored and fully exploited.

2.7 **Develop a plan for implementing the recommended approaches.** Following the consultation period with our key stakeholders, an action plan will be developed and presented to a future meeting of the Committee that will set out how the Council will achieve the objectives set out in the Strategy, to be delivered over a 5-year plan period. The action plan will identify key stakeholders that will assist the Council to deliver those objectives and where necessary identify funding sources.

2.8 The action plan will be developed with the Council's Policy and Information Team and be complemented by a dashboard of metrics that will allow the Committee to track progress of key policy objectives on a regular basis. This will highlight bottlenecks that can be addressed in a timely manner including with more resources or policy modifications.

2.9 Included in the report appendix is a summary of the excellent progress that was made against the previous Housing Strategy's Action Plan. Many of the objectives have been achieved or are making good progress towards their delivery. An up to date commentary is provided against each action to enable the Committee to see how these actions have progressed.

2.10 The draft Housing Strategy sets out three key areas:

- Priority 1: Enable the delivery of high-quality new homes that meet local housing need
- Priority 2: Ensure existing homes are safe, sustainable, of good quality, and support residents' health and wellbeing
- Priority 3: Prevent homelessness and enable vulnerable people to access appropriate housing and support

2.11 These priority areas not only reflect the continuation of the existing Housing Strategy but also flow from the evidence gathered from a number of sources, including the developing Strategic Housing Market Assessment and statutory homelessness activity returns (HCLIC).

2.12 The consultation will focus on whether internal and external stakeholders agree that these are the correct priority areas; whether any other key

priority needs to be included and how the action plan will reflect delivering against these key areas of activity.

- 2.13 The final document will include the Housing Strategy presented to ensure that it is appealing and easy to digest and the action plan developed from the consultation.
-

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Committee is requested to note the progress against the Housing Strategy 2016-20 and approve the draft Housing Strategy 2021-26 for consultation. The outcome of the consultation to be presented to the CHE Committee together with an updated Strategy that includes an action plan for consideration.
- 3.2 The Committee could choose not to begin the process of adopting a new Housing Strategy but this is not recommended, as the Council is under a requirement to maintain an up to date Housing Strategy and this will support the Council's key priority to deliver its aims expressed in the Strategic Plan.
-

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The preferred option is Paragraph 3.1 for the reasons set out within the report.
-

5. RISK

- 5.1 The council's risk associated with the draft document are in line with the Council's risk appetite and any mitigating actions proposed if needed.
-

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 A communication strategy is being developed to support the consultation process and will also adapt to promote the launch of the final document once this has been approved by the CHE Committee and adopted by Council.
-

7. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Draft Housing Strategy 2021-26
-

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Housing Strategy 2016-20

MAIDSTONE HOUSING STRATEGY 2021-2026

INTRODUCTION

The Housing Strategy sets out the Council's strategic approach to tackling the major housing challenges facing the Borough for the next five years. It supports the Council's strategic ambition for the Borough to be ***a vibrant, prosperous, urban and rural community at the heart of Kent where everyone can realise their potential***. The Strategy will form the basis for all our work with Maidstone residents and partner organisations. It will inform the development of other important strategies and policies that link to housing, including the Local Plan.

This is an important document for the Council, recognising that housing plays a major role in the health, social, environmental and economic well-being of everyone who lives in the Borough. This Housing Strategy has been written at a time of unprecedented challenge. The full impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic are not yet fully understood but further pressure on housing services is expected in the short to medium-term.

Our vision for housing is:

All Maidstone residents have the opportunity to live in a high-quality home that is affordable and meets their needs and aspirations

Supporting this vision are the following strategic priorities:

Priority 1: Enable the delivery of high-quality new homes that meet local housing need

Priority 2: Ensure existing homes are safe, sustainable, of good quality and support residents' health and wellbeing

Priority 3: Prevent homelessness and enable vulnerable people to access appropriate housing and support

A supporting Action Plan will be developed, updated to take into account progress against our priorities and emerging local issues, and where appropriate revised on an annual basis and in accordance with Government guidance and legislation. During the Strategy period, where evidence demonstrates a need for a review of the Strategy, in part or whole, this will be carried out in a proportionate and timely way.

ABOUT MAIDSTONE

The borough of Maidstone is situated in the heart of Kent. It covers an area of approximately 40,000 hectares and has an approximate population of 172K, the largest population of any local authority area in Kent. At 13.3% (between 2009 and 2019), Maidstone's population growth exceeded the county, regional and national average over this time – 9.7% in Kent, 8.1% in the South East and 7.3% in the UK.

Maidstone is the County Town of Kent and approximately 75% of its population live in the urban area. A substantial rural hinterland surrounds the urban area, part of which enjoys designation as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty due to its high landscape and environmental quality. The Borough encompasses a small section of the metropolitan green belt (1.3%), and 27% of the Borough forms part of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Borough is strategically located between the Channel Tunnel and London with direct connections to both via the M20 and M2 motorways. Maidstone town enjoys good railway connections with London, Ashford, Tonbridge and the Medway Towns.

Whilst Maidstone is relatively self-contained from a labour, housing and commercial market point of view, its location at the heart of Kent means that it shares strong economic relationships with its neighbouring areas, in particular the 'Malling' part of Tonbridge and Malling and parts of Medway and Swale. Economically active residents of Maidstone are likely commute to jobs outside of the Borough and vice versa.

The majority (71%) of housing in Maidstone is in private ownership, with 16% in the private rented sector and 13% available at affordable or social level rents.

ACHIEVEMENTS 2016-2020

Over the lifetime of the previous Housing Strategy, we have:

- Enabled the delivery of 1,148 new affordable homes, both for rent and sale
- Delivered and managed 89 long-term good quality private rented homes through Maidstone Property Holdings Ltd
- Delivered 141 affordable homes through rural exception sites
- Delivered and managed 85 properties for use as temporary accommodation to support homeless households
- Successfully moved ten entrenched rough sleepers into Housing First accommodation in partnership with Golding Homes and Porchlight; and resettled a further 255 into longer term and more settled accommodation
- Brought forward three sites on brownfield land within the Town Centre at Brunswick Street, Union Street and Springfield. These sites will deliver 49 homes
- Housed 3,069 households from the Housing Register
- Developed our own supported accommodation and support service for vulnerable homeless people, who would not normally be accommodated through Part 7 of the Housing Act
- Launched the Maidstone Homelessness Prevention Forum in October 2019 as a multi-agency forum, bringing together partners to shared information and strengthen partnership working to prevent and relieve homelessness
- Provided pre-tenancy training in partnership with Golding Homes to help support private sector tenants to maintain their tenancies

- Launched a Landlord and Tenant Insurance Scheme, working in partnership with Help2Rent, to help secure private rented accommodation for households at risk of homelessness
- Reduced use of nightly paid temporary accommodation for homeless families and reduced associated costs for the Council

More detail around the progress against our action plan for the previous Housing Strategy can be found at **Annex A**.

STRATEGIC CONTEXT

National context

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development are produced, including for the delivery of affordable homes. The NPPF definition of affordable homes includes affordable housing for rent, First Homes, discounted market sales housing and other affordable routes to home ownership.

Housing growth

The Government has ambitious targets for new housing growth, aiming for 300,000 new homes per year by the mid-2020s. The Government's White Paper, *Fixing the Broken Housing Market*, set out their plans to reform the housing market and boost the supply of new homes in England. This included supporting local authorities in their housebuilding ambitions, improving capacity and capability to develop more good quality homes, as well as the provision of low-cost capital funding.

Homes England

Homes England was established by the Government in 2018 as their 'housing accelerator'. It funds new affordable homes in England through the Affordable Homes Programme. It is responsible for increasing the number of new homes that are built in England, improving existing affordable homes and bringing empty homes back into use as affordable housing and increasing the supply of public land and speeding up the rate that it can be built on.

Homelessness

The Government has committed to halving rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminating it completely by 2027. In the 2020 Spending Review, the Chancellor confirmed an additional £254m funding to tackle rough sleeping and homelessness. The Government has also committed £87m of capital funding in 2021/22 to support the delivery of long-term accommodation for rough sleepers and further £310m Homelessness Prevention Grant was announced.

The introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) in April 2018 placed additional duties on local authorities, including a requirement to provide advice and support to people threatened with homelessness; a duty to prevent and a duty to relieve homelessness before the main housing duty is applied.

Environmental Impact

The environmental case for more energy efficient homes is clear with the demand for energy increasing and the cost to households set to increase significantly. Homes account for 30 per cent of the UK's total energy use, 27 per cent of UK carbon dioxide emissions and around 24 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, we each consume about 150 litres of water every day with the effect of there being the increasing likelihood of a shortage of water in many parts of the UK.

Welfare Reform

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 introduced a wide range of benefit reforms, a number of which have impacted on homelessness and the availability, and sustainability, of affordable housing. Key reforms include:

- Local Housing Allowance (LHA) reductions, including total LHA caps and the limiting of LHA to the 30th percentile of market rents
- Benefit Cap - limiting the maximum benefits that a family can receive
- Spare Room Subsidy ('Bedroom Tax') reduces housing benefit entitlement to social housing tenants considered to be under-occupying their homes
- Shared Accommodation Rate limit applied to single young people up to the age of 35
- Introduction of Universal Credit to provide a single streamlined benefit paid to residents directly rather than to their landlords
- The removal of enhanced payments of Universal Credit, first paid during the Covid19 pandemic

Covid-19

This Strategy was developed whilst we are still experiencing the global Covid-19 pandemic. At the time of writing, the impacts of the pandemic on the economy and housing markets are yet to be fully understood, however it is widely expected that the economy will experience a downturn, which will likely result in an increase in housing need, particularly of an affordable tenure and higher levels of homelessness.

However, with the changing patterns of work characterised by greater home working sometimes termed the 'new normal' or 'new different', it is likely that we will see new patterns of demand and potential additional inward migration from London.

Local context

The Council's vision is for Maidstone Borough to be a vibrant, prosperous, urban and rural community at the heart of Kent where everyone can realise their potential. The

Strategic Plan, published in 2019 and updated in 2021, sets out our aspiration for Maidstone through to 2045, and how we're going to achieve it.



MBC Strategic Plan 2019-2045 – Vision and Priorities

One of our 4 key priorities is 'Homes and Communities', with a particular focus on meeting all housing need by 2045; reducing rough sleeping; reducing the use of temporary accommodation and expanding the Council's role in the delivery of affordable and market rent housing.

This Housing Strategy will enable us to deliver these priorities.

LOCAL HOUSING NEED AND DEMAND

In 2021 we commissioned a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to inform the review of the Local Plan, which is due for submission in early 2022. The 2021 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) introduced a new standard method for assessing local housing need and identifying a minimum annual housing need figure. This takes projected household growth and applies an upward adjustment based on affordability (average house price-to-earnings ratio).

Population

Population growth in Maidstone has been relatively strong. In 2018, it was estimated that the population had grown by 24% from 1991 levels, in contrast with a 17% increase nationally. This is largely driven by net in-migration – particularly internal migration – i.e people moving to the Borough from other parts of the UK, although there is also an appreciable level of international migration.

Projected population growth to 2037 is anticipated to be around 28%, an increase of around 48,000 people. In terms of household types, the strongest growth is projected in couple and single person households aged over 65. However, growth in families with dependent children is also expected.

	2019	2037	Change	% Change
One-person household (aged 65 and over)	8,288	10,930	2,643	31.9%
One-person household (aged under 65)	9,989	13,390	3,401	34.0%
Couple (aged 65 and over)	10,183	16,480	6,298	61.8%
Couple (aged under 65)	10,470	9,842	-628	-6.0%
A couple and one or more other adults: No dependent children	5,617	7,048	1,430	25.5%
Household with one dependent child	10,341	15,020	4,678	45.2%
Household with two dependent children	8,625	10,672	2,047	23.7%
Household with three dependent children	2,938	3,402	464	15.8%
Other households	4,355	6,538	2,184	50.1%
TOTAL	70,805	93,322	22,517	31.8%

Change in Household Types 2019-37, Strategic Housing Market Assessment

Housing costs

Entry level housing costs to both buy and privately rent properties across the Borough are set out below. This shows higher housing cost in the rural areas of the Borough compared to the urban.

	Urban	Rural Central and North	Rural South	Borough
Lower quartile house prices	£212,000	£272,000	£265,000	£232,000
Lower quartile market rents	£655	£790	£775	£700

Entry level house purchase and private rental costs, Strategic Housing Market Assessment

This is also a disparity between the median market rents and the amount of Local Housing Allowance payable, ranging from around £22 a week for a 1-bedroom property to £93 a week for a 4-bedroom property.

Bedroom size	LHA rate (weekly)	Median rent (weekly)
Shared room rate	£88.85	—
1-bedroom	£149.59	£172
2-bedroom	£187.56	£219
3-bedroom	£224.38	£288
4-bedroom	£287.67	£381

LHA vs Median Market Rent, Valuation Office Agency and home.co.uk

The average income level in Maidstone is £39,100 with a mean income level of £51,600. Around a quarter of households have an income of £22,600 or less. Based on their income, around 49% of households are estimated to have difficulty accessing market rent housing.

Housing need

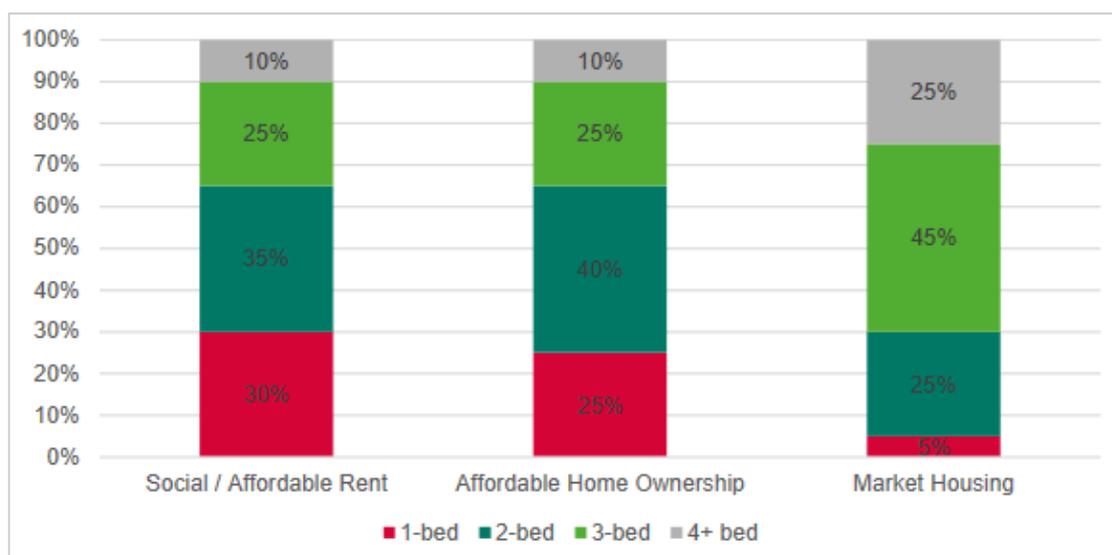
The SHMA identifies a need for an additional 1,157 homes per year, which is around 30% higher than previous calculations of housing need and reflects the Government's ambitions to deliver 300,000 new homes a year by the mid-2020s. A proposed breakdown of this delivery by tenure is shown below.

Housing tenure	No. per annum
Rented affordable	422
Affordable home ownership	137
Market housing	598
Total dwellings	1,157

Housing Need by Tenure, Strategic Housing Market Assessment

Of those new homes, 36% of the total has been identified as being needed for rented affordable homes (that includes housing provided by the social rented providers at both 'affordable' and 'social' rents) and 12% for affordable home ownership. Due to the proportion of households unlikely to be able to afford a rental that can be the equivalent of up to 80% of the market, we are exploring whether it can be viable to deliver 70% of affordable rented housing at a social rent (typically around 60% of market rent) and the remainder 30% at an affordable rent (typically around 80% of market rent).

As well as the total number and tenure of new homes, the mix of properties needed is important, to ensure that different household types and sizes are catered for. The table below demonstrates homes needed by bedroom size, across the three categories of affordable/social rent, affordable home ownership and market housing.



Mix of Homes of Different Sizes Needed, Strategic Housing Market Assessment

The data identifies a much greater need for smaller 1 and 2-bedroom properties amongst affordable homes for rent and sale, compared to a high level of need for larger properties of 3-bedrooms or more for market housing.

The Council’s Housing Register uses ‘Bands’ to group applicants with similar characteristics. The table below is an analysis of these Bands as at August 2021, also identifies a high level of need for 1-bedroom rental properties; however, it also shows that there is a significant need for 3-bedroom homes as well.

HOUSING NEED	C - Community Contribution	H - Homeless	M - Medical	R - Reasonable Preference	Total	%
1-bed	79	88	57	114	338	44%
2-bed	54	10	21	40	125	16%
3-bed	91	25	15	104	235	30%
4-bed	27	8	5	19	59	8%
5+ bed	3	1	0	9	13	2%
Total	254	132	98	286	770	

MBC Housing Register by Bedroom Need, August 2021

The Borough’s predicted growth in the number of older people highlights a need for the provision of more specialised accommodation, including housing with care and housing with support. This is shown below. Increasing levels of housing with care is also one of the strategic priorities of the Kent Adult Social Care and Health Accommodation Strategy.

Type of housing	Rented (2019-2039)	Market sale (2019-2039)	Total
Housing with care	371	432	803
Housing with support	105	1234	1339

Need for Specialist Housing for Older Persons, Strategic Housing Market Assessment

Linked to the growth in the older population, there is predicted to be a greater requirement for wheelchair accessible homes.

Current need	Projected need (2019-2037)	Total
248	676	923

Estimated need for wheelchair user homes (2019-2037)

There is also an identified need for an additional 1,421 care home bedspaces to 2037.

Homelessness

The number of people seeking housing advice from the Council during 2020/21 has grown compared to the previous year, which is a reflection on the financial hardship that has been endured during the various lockdowns. However, the number of people needing to go on to make a homelessness application has reduced from the previous year.

Description	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021
Number homeless advice cases	1049	922	1107
Number of homeless applications	1200	1354	1169

Homeless approaches, Maidstone Borough Council

Housing Register need

The Council's Housing Register shows a steady increase in the number of people approaching the Council because they have a housing need, with the volume accepted onto the Register increasing by 38% over the last 5 years.

Year	On the Housing Register	Housed
2016 to 2017	610	644
2017 to 2018	618	619
2018 to 2019	776	578
2019 to 2020	853	577
2020 to 2021	840	651

Housing Needs and Lets, Maidstone Borough Council

Average waiting times for larger properties (3-bedroom or more) are long and the time for people accepted onto the Housing Register to get housed for these larger properties can be around 2 years.

Bedroom need	April 2018 - March 2019	April 2019 - March 2020	April 2020 - March 2021
1-bedroom	13 months	9 months	12 months
2-bedroom	12 months	11 months	9 months
3-bedroom	28 months	22 months	24 months
4-bedroom	17 months	24 months	23 months

Housing Register time to be housed, Maidstone Borough Council

KEY CHALLENGES

- Overall population growth in the borough is expected to be around 28% by 2037. Younger households are expected to grow by 20% in this period and those aged 65 and over by around 54%, with substantial increases in those aged 75 and over
- Entry level house prices are around 11.4 times earnings, presenting a barrier to home ownership
- High house prices have led to increased demand on the private rented sector, with the number of households living in privately rented homes growing by 23% between 2001 and 2018
- High demand for private rented sector homes has seen rents increase by around 20% between 2001 and 2017
- Around 49% of households are estimated to have difficulty accessing market rent housing due to the gap between income and rents
- Maidstone experiences higher levels of under-occupancy than the national average (81% vs 69%), particularly within the private sector
- 27% of the borough is situated within the Kent Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, impacting opportunities to provide new homes for rural communities
- Continued high levels of homeless or potentially homeless households seeking housing assistance from the Council
- A 38% increase in the number of households accepted onto the Housing Register since 2016
- Average waiting times for households on the Housing Register who require larger-sized homes (3-bedrooms or more) are long, at around 2 years.

VISION AND PRIORITIES

The Council's housing vision for Maidstone is:

All Maidstone residents have the opportunity to live in a high-quality home that is affordable and meets their needs and aspirations

Supporting this vision are the following strategic priorities:

- Priority 1: Enable the delivery of high-quality new homes that meet local housing need
- Priority 2: Ensure existing homes are safe, sustainable, of good quality and support residents' health and wellbeing
- Priority 3: Prevent homelessness and enable vulnerable people to access appropriate housing and support

DELIVERING THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

This strategy cannot be delivered by Maidstone Borough Council alone. To achieve our housing priorities, we need to work in collaboration with our key private and public sector partners, including Golding Homes, our stock transfer Housing Association; other local Registered Providers; Kent Housing and Development Group; Homes England; Kent County Council; Medway Council, Kent Housing Group; Kent Fire and Rescue Service; Action for Rural Communities Kent, South East Local Enterprise Partnership and MHCLG.

We will explore opportunities to work creatively with our partners to secure the best housing outcomes for the people who live the borough of Maidstone.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Priority 1: Enable the delivery of high-quality new homes that meet local housing need

In our Strategic Plan, we have set an ambitious target of meeting all housing need, including affordable housing need, within the borough by 2045. We are in the process of updating our Local Plan which will translate our housing priorities into a statutory planning policy framework and to maintain a five-year land supply, enabling the continued delivery of housing to meet our objectively assessed need annual requirement.

New housing delivery not only provides opportunities for Maidstone residents to access high quality homes to rent or to buy, but also supports our local economy through job creation and the use of small businesses as part of the supply chain. Over the next five years, the need for housing developers get to grips with reducing carbon emissions and ensuring that new homes meet net zero by 2025, will support our economic ambitions around a green recovery agenda and developing local expertise in low carbon technology.

The SHMA identifies a need for 1,157 new homes per year, of which 48% should be affordable housing. This is higher than in previous years, but the Council recognises this increase as necessary to enable us to achieve our ambition of meeting all housing need by 2045. We need a continuous high level of delivery of new homes within the borough over the next five years (and beyond), with a good variety in the type, size and tenure of homes offered, including both market sale and affordable homes for rent and sale.

We welcome delivery of new housing growth through less traditional models, such as self-build and custom-build housing. We maintain a register of people interested in pursuing this and will continue to seek to identify opportunities on both small and larger-scale sites.

1.1 Affordable homes

The Government is committed to expanding opportunities for people to own their own home. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires at least 10% of homes on major development sites to be for affordable home ownership. The Government recently announced that its future preferred affordable home ownership product is *First Homes*. These are homes for first time buyers, which are discounted by a minimum 30% against the market value, with the discount availability in perpetuity for future buyers.

A pilot for First Homes, funded from the Affordable Homes Programme, is due to complete in 2021. This will deliver First Homes as an alternative product to existing affordable housing requirement. An invitation to tender to be part of this pilot has been extended to developers. The Council will support bids for the delivery of First Homes in the Borough that meet our defined eligibility criteria.

Where there is an affordable housing requirement on a new site, the NPPF will from January 2022 require 25% of this to be First Homes, with the rest for either social or affordable rent.

Whilst the Council supports the need to provide affordable home ownership options, we recognise that some local residents will never be in a position to buy a home. An estimated 49% of Maidstone residents are also unable to easily access market rented housing, due to the disparity between income and rental prices. There is a strong need for new homes at both affordable and social rent levels, which cater for both the current housing demand and the projected future needs in terms of size and property type.

The Council's affordable housing requirements are set out in our *Affordable and Local Needs Housing Supplementary Planning Document*. This will be revised as part of the process to update the Local Plan and will reflect the recent national policy changes around First Homes.

The Council’s ambition for delivering housing between 2021-26 is set out in the table below:

Type	Investment	Homes delivered
Private rented sector	£37.2 million	165 homes
Affordable housing	£31.1 million	177 homes
Total	£68.3 million	339 homes

1.2 Private rented homes

The Council recognises that not all Maidstone residents will want or be able to buy a home. Homes to rent are a valuable component of a balanced housing market.

Maidstone, along with the rest of the UK, has seen a marked increase in the number of households living in the private rented sector. The short-term nature of private sector tenancies and in some cases poor housing standards, can make private rented accommodation seem an unattractive option. However, it fulfils a vital role for households unable to buy but who do not meet the criteria for affordable rented housing. In recent years, there has been an increase in the number of private landlords exiting the sector, reducing supply and pushing up rental prices.

Through Maidstone Property Holdings, the Council are seeking to fill this gap and become a significant residential landlord in the private rented sector operating within the Borough, offering high quality, affordable private rental homes.

We will look at maximising opportunities to directly bring forward private rented properties on brownfield and/or smaller sites that may not be attractive to volume house builders.

Case Study – Maidstone Property Holdings

The Council set up Maidstone Property Holdings (MPH) to become a significant residential landlord in the private rented sector. Maidstone Property Holdings seeks to set new standards in terms of the quality of private rented stock offered and service delivered to residents.

The purpose of MPH will be to demonstrate that market rented accommodation can provide high quality, long-term homes and service that is affordable to its target audience. This will provide an alternative solution to solving housing need and enabling a balanced housing market within the Maidstone Borough. In doing so, MPH will develop innovative models that champion quality, regenerate brownfield and smaller sites that may not be attractive to volume house builders and stimulate local economic growth through the construction and management of its assets.

As of August 2021, 89 of the planned 179 homes have been delivered and occupied, with a further 86 at the feasibility stage.

1.3 Rural communities

Maidstone's rural areas contain a higher proportion of large (four bedrooms or more) and detached homes than other parts of the borough, with around 30% of rural homes being 4 or more bedrooms and 50% of rural homes being detached. With median house prices in the borough at around £310K, properties such as these, which are at the top end of market, are unaffordable to many local residents. The impact is particularly high on young people who have grown up in rural communities, who find themselves priced out and forced to move away to be able to access a home they can afford. Through the provision of affordable housing in rural locations we can help local people to remain in the community where they have strong family or employment ties.

Nearly a third of the borough is situated within the Kent Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and subject to planning constraints. However, new "local needs housing", affordable housing that meets the needs of the local community, can be delivered within AONB areas through the use of rural exception sites. The Council has delivered 141 local needs homes within rural exception sites over the period of the previous Strategy, but we recognise that there is potential for a greater level of rural exception sites development together with entry-level exception sites to come forward to help support smaller communities in the Borough.

Kent Housing Group (KHG) have reviewed and updated their *Guide to Developing Affordable Homes in Rural Communities Protocol*, which has been produced to address rural housing needs through the development of new affordable homes.

KHG has a long-standing commitment and success in supporting the delivery of affordable housing for the rural communities of Kent and Medway, this has been in partnership with a number of organisations, each of whom are passionate about protecting and invigorating our rural communities.

As well as small scale new affordable housing within existing rural communities, the development of garden communities, such as Heathlands, provide opportunities to create new rural villages or towns and deliver new rural affordable housing at scale.

Case Study – Heathlands Garden Community

Maidstone Borough Council and Homes England are working in partnership to deliver a unique, attractive, and desirable new rural Kentish town located between Maidstone and Ashford. The new community will be designed sensitively to respond to its natural and distinctive setting, benefitting from a truly landscape led masterplan with design excellence, eco credentials and sustainable transport at its core.

Heathlands will provide around 5,000 new homes, of which 40% will be affordable for local people. Furthermore, Heathlands will also have a vibrant local economy at its heart, with around 16 hectares of land available for an array of businesses, that will provide one new job for each home built.

As a place, Heathlands will comprise 50% green space that will retain, protect, enhance, and connect the various existing natural assets within the site. Heathlands will be designed to meet the nationally recognised quality standard Building for Healthy Living which will demonstrate the quality of the new development.

Building design will be in accordance with Maidstone’s own “Building for Life 12” guidance and so will be of the highest quality. All the new buildings will be sensitive to their location, the existing nearby settlements, and will utilise the highest quality local materials and local design cues to ensure Heathlands has a thoroughly Kentish DNA.

To deliver Heathlands, Maidstone Borough Council and Homes England, are taking the bold and ambitious approach of acting as both land promotor and master developer, taking control of the land, with the benefit of “land value capture” to fund and deliver the extensive infrastructure package.

1.4 Community-led housing

Community led housing can have a positive role to play in generating new homes in rural areas. It can take many different forms, including housing cooperatives, self-build schemes and developer-community partnerships. It can involve new-build development or the refurbishment of empty properties.

Because community led housing is developed by local people for local people, build standards and design tend to be high, providing homes that are of long-term benefit to the local area. Some landowners may also be more prepared to release land for housing when they know it will be developed sensitively and in a way that will provide a legacy for their local community.

The Council is supportive of local ambitions for community-led housing growth. A number of neighbourhood plans have been developed across the borough or are in development. We will make available expertise, advice and grant funding to help local communities draft neighbourhood plans.

1.5 Older people

As a nation we are living longer. Maidstone is predicted to have an 54% increase in the number of residents aged 65 and over by 2037, with a large majority of these in

the 75+ age group. Housing this ageing population presents new challenges, with a requirement for a range of different housing options and support services to meet the differing needs of people as they age.

The majority (73%) of older people in the Borough own their own homes outright and tend to live in single person households. This contributes to the Borough's higher than national levels of under-occupation. Whilst some people will wish to remain in their own homes as they age, many households may wish to downsize to more specialist accommodation. This in turn will free up larger-sized accommodation for younger families.

The Council will work with developers, Registered Providers, care providers and Kent County Council to identify suitable sites for the development of specialised housing for older people, which caters both for those needing support and those in need of care.

1.6 People with disabilities

The number of people in Maidstone expected to be living with a long-term health condition or disability (including mobility issues), is expected to rise by 39% by 2037. The Strategic Housing Market Assessment identified a projected need for 923 homes suitable for wheelchair users.

The Council recommends that new housing provision should ensure that it is flexible and able to be adapted to meet people's changing health and mobility needs. The Local Plan Review will seek to bring forward policy documents to encourage more older people's housing.

Where adaptations are needed, the Council will look to fund this through our Disabled Facilities Grant programme.

1.7 Gypsies and Travellers

The Council is committed to identifying suitable sites to meet the housing need of Gypsy, Traveller and travelling communities. The Council is developing its understanding of need in term of quantum and type through updating its Gypsy & Traveller and Travelling Show People Accommodation Assessment. Once completed and approved this will help inform the need for additional public-owned sites to supplement the two existing sites owned by Maidstone Council and managed by the Kent County Council Gypsy & Traveller Team under a management agreement.

Priority 2: Ensure existing homes are safe, sustainable, of high quality and support residents' health and wellbeing

2.1 Health inequalities

The link between poor housing and health inequalities has been well documented. Living in low quality housing can have a significant negative impact on a person's

health and wellbeing. For example, properties which are poorly maintained may be damp and cold, leading to or exacerbating existing respiratory or cardiovascular illness. Damp and cold homes are also thought to be a significant contributor towards excess winter deaths, particularly amongst people over the age of 75.

The Covid 19 Pandemic and the emerging learning on health inequalities at the time of writing again underscores the link between poor housing and poor health outcomes.

Fuel poverty is also a contributory factor to damp and cold homes, with such households often having to choose between “heat or eat”. In 2019, it was estimated that around 7.7% of households in Maidstone were living in fuel poverty.

The Council will continue to signpost residents to access national funding programmes, such as Warm Homes to improve the heating in their homes. We are currently working towards promoting two Government incentives Local Authority Delivery scheme & Home Upgrade Grant to deliver energy efficiency measures for the worst performing properties according to EPC data.

2.2 Private sector conditions

All landlords have a legal obligation to ensure that the properties they own do not pose a risk to the health and safety of their tenants.

The Housing Health and Safety Rating System (The Rating System) assesses the risk to the health and safety of occupiers posed by certain specified housing related hazards. Hazards are banded Category 1 or Category 2 depending on the seriousness of the risk. Where Category 1 hazards are identified, the Council has a legal duty to take action against the owner. If Category 2 hazards are identified, we have a discretionary power to take action. During 2020/21, the Council undertook over 340 interventions in relation to housing condition.

Housing conditions tend to be worst in the private rental sector. The Council has a key role to play in maintaining and improving housing conditions to ensure that they are safe, free from hazards and are not detrimental to tenants’ health and wellbeing. Tenants have little influence over the condition of their homes and it is right that our resources are targeted at supporting them.

The Council will continue to work with private landlords where hazards have been identified, adopting the appropriate measures from a range of available options including, informal advice, enforcement action and prosecution.

The use of accommodation in Maidstone, particularly in the Town Centre, other local housing authorities and other statutory organisations such as the Probation Service is having a notable impact on the local community, as well as on those being placed. The rapid increase in residential property as a result of offices being converted to accommodation under the Permitted Development Rights has resulted in an over-supply of small units of housing that has found little favour with the open market.

As a result, large numbers of these properties have been acquired by managing agents and provided to local housing authorities (including those in London) and other

agencies to place homeless households. The difficulties arise when the support needed to help these households to maintain their tenancies is either non-existent or is of an inadequate standard. A multiagency task force has been set up to raise awareness of these issues and take what limited steps are available to tackle the problems that arise from unsupported and the cumulative effect this is having.

2.3 Fire safety

The new Fire Safety Act 2021 requires residential building owners and managers to appropriately risk assess all parts of their buildings, including the external structure and doors to common parts, to manage and reduce the risk of fire.

The Council takes fire risk very seriously. We will work with Registered Providers, private landlords, freeholders and Kent Fire and Rescue Service to ensure that residential buildings, including those owned and managed by ourselves, are compliant with all relevant fire safety legislation.

2.4 Energy Efficient Homes

Nationally, controlling carbon emissions from existing homes is recognised as a particular challenge; domestic properties account for 30% of energy use and around 19% of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK, yet less than 7% of homes are owned by local authorities and over 80% are privately owned by either owner occupiers or private landlords.

A recent parliamentary Environmental Audit Committee Report identifies that over 10 million owner occupied homes and over three million private rented homes in England will need upgrading to a minimum Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C rating by 2035 to hit Government targets. Many of these 13 million owners are unaware that their involvement is needed and will need financial support and advice to upgrade and retrofit their homes. This challenge for local authorities, at a time of unprecedented financial and staffing pressures, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic is significant.

Our aspiration will be to support emerging central government assistance programmes that help to tackle those residents living in fuel poverty and reaching the national target of ensuring as many homes as is reasonably practicable achieve a minimum energy efficiency rating of band C by 2035. We will also where possible support schemes that offer residents group buying opportunities for the installation of domestic clean renewable energy systems.

The Council will promote regulation and enforcement of the minimum standards of energy efficiency now required nationally in the domestic private rental market. We will work in partnership with suitable providers and the Greater South Eastern Energy Hub to promote and support the delivery of government funding schemes to homeowners, tenants and landlords that target energy efficiency fabric improvements in dwellings.

2.5 Empty homes

Empty homes are recognised as a wasted resource. Properties that are left unoccupied can fall into disrepair and blight local neighbourhoods. Bringing empty properties back into use can benefit individual owners, potential occupiers, businesses and the wider community.

The Council provides advice and guidance for owners of homes that have been empty for 6 months or more, to help find the best ways to bring that property back into use.

As of July 2021, there were 497 empty properties across the borough. We will continue to work with private owners and KCC's No Use Empty Initiative to help bring long-term empty properties back into use.

2.6 Housing Adaptations

Enabling people to be able to live out their lives in their homes is a national and local policy objective. This can only be achieved if the home is adapted to enable a good quality of life to be enjoyed. The Council has made innovative use of the Better Care Fund to provide for a range of services to be delivered.

Working closely with Kent County Council, our ability to deliver Disabled Facility Grants (DFGs) in a more efficient and effective way has improved the experience for clients. However, we know that the current regulatory framework could be improved, and we will continue to engage with Government departments to lobby for and add to the process of reform.

In the meantime, we will continue to fund the additional Occupational Therapist post that is situated within the Council's Housing & Health Team and enabled over 440 DFGs to be delivered over the lifetime of the previous Housing Strategy.

The Helping You Home scheme provides a valuable link between those in hospital who are ready to be discharged and their homeward journey. During 2020/21 496 referrals were successfully dealt with, despite the challenge that the pandemic brought. Assistance ranged from helping homeless individuals, over 50 properties assisted with clearance, 28 Lifelines installed and providing 135 key-safes to enable care to be delivered to vulnerable households.

Priority 3: Prevent homelessness and enable vulnerable people to access appropriate housing and support

The Council adopted a new Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy in 2019, with the aim of breaking the cycle of homelessness. The Strategy's priorities are:

- Homeless Prevention
- Provide Accommodation
- Support Vulnerable People and Households
- Work specifically to target and alleviate rough sleeping within the Borough

3.1 Homelessness

The introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) in April 2018 placed new duties on local authorities to act to prevent homelessness where households are threatened with homelessness. The Council were early adopters of the prevention agenda, recognising it is better to prevent homelessness occurring than to deal with the impacts of homelessness.

Homelessness prevention remains a key ambition for the Council. As well as providing high quality advice and support and personalised housing plans for people who are potentially homeless, we are investing in the use of analytics to support us in achieving better outcomes for individuals. OneView, our financial exclusion predictive analytics model, aims to drive earlier intervention by assessing and monitoring risk levels, specifically looking at where rent arrears are likely to escalate and contribute to risk.

The Council will make best use of data analytics to help identify those most at risk of presenting as homeless and to understand the most effective early interventions.

Case Study - OneView analytics model

In partnership with EY and Xantura we pioneered a new approach to tackling homelessness by designing and implementing OneView – an innovative data and analytics tool that brings together data from different service areas to provide a more effective and secure way to identify those at risk of future homelessness.

OneView brings together our data with that of partner organisations, including Kent County Council and Golding Homes, to present a ‘single view’ of a household, enabling frontline officers to develop a holistic understanding of a household’s situation and empowering them to decide the best actions for vulnerable residents. OneView generates ‘at risk’ alerts to proactively notify frontline officers up to 6 months before a household is at risk of becoming homeless or threatened with homelessness, enabling proactive intervention before crisis.

The number of people seeking housing advice during 2020/21 was higher than the previous year, driven by the hardship created by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The number of people needing to go on to make a homelessness application was lower in 2020/21 than the previous year, although 27% of households on the Housing Register as of August 2021 are either owed a homelessness prevention, relief or main housing duty. Of these, the majority (63%) are single people with an average age of 36.

These figures reflect the fact that the main reason for people being threatened with homelessness in 2020/21 was family or friends being no longer willing to accommodate them. This has consistently been the main reason for the past 3 years, but was exacerbated in 2020/21 due to the pandemic, with families nervous about hosting people who do not normally live in their home. The Council is developing an

exit strategy to help the people impacted in this way to move from temporary accommodation into more settled housing.

The moratorium on possession proceedings during most of 2020, for both the private and social housing sectors, naturally reduced the number of cases whose homelessness was due to their tenancy ending. However, this provision was temporary and the Courts are now working through the outstanding cases in order of priority. The Council anticipates and is preparing for an increase in homeless applications as this backlog is processed.

3.2 Rough sleeping

Rough sleeping impacts on both the individuals who are rough sleeping and the wider community. Street homelessness has a huge detrimental impact on health and life expectancy, with homeless men and women living 31 and 38 fewer years respectively than average. Rough sleepers often present with complex and challenging needs, including poor mental health, substance misuse issues, lack of support, financial exclusion and antisocial behaviour.

Until recently, rough sleeping across Maidstone had risen rapidly, in line with national trends. Our street count in September 2018 recorded 48 rough sleepers. We have achieved huge success through our Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI), funded through central Government, reducing our rough sleeping numbers down to single figures. We have removed the need for a winter shelter and a day centre – as the demand is so low.

Rough sleepers require a range of coordinated and compassionate interventions including stable accommodation, health and clinical input and more generic support. Our approach through RSI has been to provide a wide-ranging number of interventions to give a well-rounded and holistic approach to rough sleepers to try to secure their best life chances and reduce rough sleeping in the district. This has included securing homes for ten entrenched rough sleepers through our Housing First partnership and securing longer-term and settled accommodation for a further 255 rough sleepers.

Case Study – Housing First

In partnership with Porchlight and Golding Homes, the Council has sought to find housing for a number of long-term rough sleepers. Housing First is a specific approach, which uses independent, stable housing as a platform to enable individuals with multiple and complex needs to begin recovery and move away from homelessness. Alongside housing, intensive, flexible and person-centred support is provided.

Housing First differs from other supported housing models, as individuals are not required to prove that they are ready for independent housing. No conditions are placed on them, other than a willingness to maintain a tenancy agreement, and Housing First is designed to provide long-term, open-ended support for their on-going needs.

The Council has successfully bid for further funding from the Rough Sleeping Initiative. We will use this to continue to fund our successful Outreach Service and secure

positive holistic outcomes for rough sleepers. We will look at developing an effective strategy to bring homelessness and social value together to end the cycle of homelessness. Particularly, how we can support people to access positive social networks including into work, education, or training.

3.3 Access to housing

Sometimes we are unable to prevent households from becoming homeless and have to look for alternative solutions, which can involve placing people into temporary accommodation whilst we support them to find them a more settled place to live. In recent years, the Council has been heavily reliant on costly nightly paid accommodation, which is often unsuitable, particularly for families and has been a drain on our financial resources.

To increase the availability of good quality temporary accommodation and reduce the financial burden to the Council, over the last three years we have embarked on a programme of buying properties to use as temporary accommodation. To date we own 85 properties, including 45 houses suitable for families and 35 units of supported accommodation for rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping.

The Council will continue to explore options for increasing the level of suitable temporary accommodation within the Borough.

It is the Council's longer-term ambition that as we alleviate homelessness in the Borough, the need for temporary accommodation will reduce and the properties that we currently use for this can be transferred to Maidstone Property Holdings to provide more homes within the private rented sector.

Temporary accommodation is only part of the solution. The key to breaking the cycle of homelessness is to ensure a suitable flow of homes for people in temporary accommodation to move into. This can be particularly challenging where there are complex needs and/or a history of rent arrears, with the latter often a barrier to households being accepted into social housing.

Through initiatives such as our Homefinder Scheme, we are working to incentivise private sector landlords to house homeless households. Whilst we have had some successes, many private landlords are reluctant to house tenants on benefits, particularly those in receipt of Universal Credit. Our own market rent housing owned through Maidstone Property Holdings can help to bridge some of that gap.

The Council will continue to work with both private landlords and Registered Providers to secure appropriate settled homes for households living in temporary accommodation.

3.4 Access to support

Many homeless households are often vulnerable and have complex needs that require additional support. Providing this support can help households to

sustain their tenancies and avoid becoming homeless again; thus, breaking the cycle of homelessness.

Traditionally Maidstone funded directly, or through agencies such as Homes England, access to local supported housing and support resources. However, due to commissioning changes at the County-level, there is now significant uncertainty around resources for key vulnerable groups including young people and ex-offenders.

The Council will continue to work with and provide direct support and/or advice to vulnerable people, with a particular focus on those being discharged from hospital, those experiencing domestic abuse and those leaving prison. We will directly invest in the provision of holistic support and accommodation services for vulnerable people, such as through our Trinity project.

Case Study – Trinity

The Council have purchased Trinity in Maidstone, previously used to provide services to young people as Trinity Foyer, and are converting it to provide a multi-use communal community space.

When complete, the building will provide vulnerable households with access to a range of support within one building. Help and advice will be available not just for those who are homeless, but also those on the edge of the job market, living in temporary accommodation or with other social support needs.

It will also provide access to accommodation for homeless households, both temporary and settled accommodation.

The Council's Outreach Team and other sections of the Housing Service will also be based there and it will have onsite management and an overnight concierge service.

The Council will continue to lobby government for a change in funding arrangements to the existing scheme (where funding is provided to the upper-tier authority in two-tier areas but remains un-ring fenced), to enable it to be used to provide services to prevent homelessness and not just to those owed a duty of care by the upper-tier authority or owed the main housing duty by the local housing authority.

Implementation and monitoring

We will develop a clear, focused five-year action plan to ensure that we can deliver against the four strategic priorities set out in this Housing Strategy. We will monitor progress against the action plan and report this to the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee on an annual basis.

Housing Strategy 2016-20 Action Plan Progress

Priority 1: Enable and support the delivery of quality homes across the housing market to develop sustainable communities

Outcomes – What we plan to achieve

- a) Enable the delivery of homes as identified in the emerging Local Plan; and has an appropriate policy framework in place that delivers an appropriate mix, tenure and range of housing to meet identified need.
- b) Deliver a mix of homes of different types, tenure and size, via direct provision and in partnership with private developers, housing associations and other key partners, which meet the needs of the local population.
- c) Deliver new affordable homes that are designed to a high standard, energy efficient, accessible and respond to people’s changing needs.
- d) Maximise housing investment opportunities by seeking innovative funding and delivery options to support housing delivery within Maidstone.

Actions – What we will do in order to achieve the stated outcomes

Outcomes	What we plan to do	Key Partners	Target	Comments
1b	Create a Local Housing Company to build/acquire new affordable and private homes to meet the commercial and housing	MBC Housing & Enabling Team, MBC Property and Procurement, MBC Legal & Finance Consultants, Housing	April 2018	Maidstone Property Holdings Ltd has been established. To date 89 units of accommodation have been provided across five new sites, including two significant regeneration projects at Union Street and Brunswick Street.

56

	objectives of the Council.	Developers, MBC Planning, Landowners, Homes & Communities Agency		Several houses previously held within the MBC's general fund (former parks and open spaces properties) are gradually being moved to MPH to manage.
1a/b/c/d	Ensure the emerging Local Plan provides an appropriate policy framework for affordable housing, including the production of an Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)	MBC Housing & Enabling Team, MBC Spatial Planning Policy, Housing Developers, Registered Providers, Homes & Communities Agency	April 2017	The Affordable and Local Needs Housing SPD was adopted in July 2020. Liaison between MBC's Housing Service and Planning Department is ongoing to ensure cohesion during the review of the Local Plan.
1a/b/c	Promote home ownership products e.g. Help to Buy, Starter Homes, and Shared Ownership in Maidstone.	MBC Housing & Enabling Team, Landowners, Housing Developers, MBC Planning	Review annually	On going
1a/b/c	Establish a register to gather evidence of demand for self and custom build within Maidstone and work with planning to identify serviced plots of land to meet this demand.	MBC Housing & Enabling Team, Landowners, Housing Developers, MBC Planning	May 2016	The register of interest has been implemented and is managed by the Spatial Planning Team.

1b	Monitor and respond to the changing social housing market, including: Impact of the 1% annual reduction in social rents over the next 4 years; Impact of the affordable rent regime on affordability; Impact of the Allocation Scheme to ensure social housing is being allocated effectively and fairly.	MBC Housing & Enabling Team, Housing Developers, Registered Providers, Homes & Communities Agency, MBC Benefits	Review annually	On going
1a/b	Enable the delivery of new affordable housing, particularly 1 and 2 bedroom homes to meet the identified need.	MBC Housing & Enabling Team, MBC Planning, Housing Developers, Registered Providers	Review annually	Over 1,400 new affordable homes were delivered between April 2016 and March 2021.
1d	Explore opportunities for funding investment with a range of partners including the Local Enterprise Partnership, Homes & Communities Agency, institutional investors that will contribute towards the delivery of	MBC Housing & Enabling Team, Landowners, Housing Developers, Registered Providers, Homes & Communities Agency, DCLG, LGA, LEP	Review annually	This has been explored and MBC is committed to developing and managing a portfolio of up to 200 units of accommodation to be let on secure tenancies. Maidstone Property Holding Ltd was established to provide long-term good quality private rented accommodation managed to a high standard.

	housing across the market.			
1b/c	Consider on a site by site basis joint venture and partnership models to share expertise, income, resources and risk.	MBC Housing & Enabling Team, MBC Property and Procurement, MBC Legal, Registered Providers, Housing Developers, Landowners, External Contractors / Consultants, Kent Housing Group, DCLG, LEP, KCC	Review annually	A new Housing Development Team has been established within the Regeneration & Economic Development division to promote this action. This has enabled three sites to come forward on brownfield land within the Town Centre.
1a/b	Work with planning, the local and Gypsy Traveller and travelling communities to identify potential housing sites to meet identified need.	MBC Housing & Enabling Team, MBC Planning, Gypsy and Traveller Community, Parish Councils, Kent County Council	Review annually	A report is expected to be provided to the Communities, Housing & Environment Committee before the end of 2021 providing a needs analysis and options for meeting this requirement.
1b/c	Bring forward Brunswick Street car park to deliver a quality housing scheme to meet housing and commercial objectives	MBC Housing & Enabling Team, MBC Property and Procurement, MBC Legal, MBC Planning, Housing Developers, External contractors/consultan	September 2018	Completed. Project handed over in May 2021 and all flats occupied by July 2021.

		ts, Registered Providers, Landowners.		
1a/b/c	Continue to support Parish Councils in delivering local needs housing where this has been proven necessary.	MBC Housing & Enabling Team, Parish Councils, MBC Spatial Planning Policy, Action for Communities in Rural Kent	Review annually	On going
1a/b/c/d	Contribute to the Local Government Associations Housing Commission on exploring new routes to housebuilding and seek good practice for delivery in Maidstone.	MBC Housing & Enabling Team, Housing Developers, MBC Planning, Landowners, Registered Providers, KCC, LGA	September 2016	See comment above re Housing Development Team.
1a/b/c	Promote the development of good quality homes that are energy efficient, meet the minimum guideline space standards and embrace the	MBC Housing & Enabling Team, Housing Developers, MBC Planning, Registered Providers	Review annually.	On going

	concept of Lifetime Homes			
--	---------------------------	--	--	--

Priority 2: Ensure that existing housing in the Maidstone Borough is safe, desirable and promotes good health and wellbeing

Outcomes – What we plan to achieve

- a) To raise housing quality and standards across all tenures and improve the condition of existing homes to maximise health and wellbeing outcomes for all.
- b) To improve health outcomes for residents by reducing health inequality to ensure a healthy standard of living for all.
- c) Promote ways for residents to improve their health and wellbeing by tackling fuel poverty, energy efficiency advice and managing domestic bills.
- d) Bring empty homes back into use in order to increase the housing options available for local residents.

Actions – What we will do in order to achieve the stated outcomes

Outcomes	What we plan to do	Key Partners	Target	Comments
2a	Improve the condition and supply of accommodation within the private rental sector by engaging with landlords to support good management and take appropriate enforcement action where necessary.	National Landlords Association, Maidstone Landlords Forum, Landlords, Homeowners, MBC Housing & Health Team	Review annually	<p>We continue to work with nightly paid landlords to drive up standards. There is a TA benchmark that is set with providers and reviewed regularly.</p> <p>Work is underway with our Procurement Team to formalise the procurement and management of nightly paid providers.</p> <p>The Housing & Health team actively engages with the private rented sector</p>

				<p>using housing assistance scheme, HMO licensing and where necessary enforcement actions to improve the condition and management of homes in the private sector.</p> <p>Advice provided to empty homeowners to assist returning them back into use. Housing enforcement policy updated in 2021 to reflect new regulations imposed on private landlords. We continue to support our local Landlord Forum.</p>
2a/b/c	Assist with delivery of the Health Inequalities Action Plan	<p>Maidstone Health and Well-Being Group, MBC, KCC Children's Centres, West Kent NHS Trust – Midwives and Health visitors, West Kent CCG – Commissioners and GPs KCHT Registered Providers, Schools, Age UK, Youth Providers.</p>	Review annually	<p>The Health inequalities action plan no longer exists as a standalone document but now straddles all the priorities of the strategic plan. To support this objective the standard Committee report template includes a mandatory field for the author to consider and respond to health & wellbeing matters.</p> <p>The development of collaborative working agreements have been devised to support the health intervention workstream within specific departments including housing and planning.</p>
2a	Review key strategic documents to ensure they remain relevant to today's market, including: The Council's	MBC Planning, MBC Housing, Registered Providers, Housing Developers, Private Landlords	September 2016 April 2016	The Housing Standards Enforcement policy was reviewed and endorsed for sign off at CHE in May 2021.

	Tenancy Strategy; Council's Housing Assistance Policy; The Council's Housing Standards Enforcement Policy.		March 2017	The Housing Assistance policy is to be refreshed in the late Autumn of 2021
2a/b/c	Address the needs of the ageing population, in particular the 85+ age group, including support needs such as adapting properties, provision of care in the home, providing specialist accommodation and care/nursing home provision.	MBC Housing & Inclusion team, MBC Housing & Health team, MBC Housing & Enabling Team, Private Landlords, Registered Providers, KCC	Review annually	The DFG and the Helping you Home scheme work to ensure those most vulnerable with complex needs, can remain in their homes through adaptations. The Helping You Home scheme supports residents being discharged home from hospital and GP surgeries to prevent a hospital admission. MBC fund an Occupational Therapist to work solely on the DFG programme in order to expedite the process and meet the needs of the individual.
2a	Promote the review of the Disabled Facilities Grant to provide an efficient service that assists disabled residents to remain in their home.	KCC, MBC Housing and Health Team, Registered Providers, Private Sector Landlords, Homeowners	Review annually	The Government commissioned an independent review of the DFG in 2018. The review made a series of recommendations and Government is considering the findings.
2b/c	Initiate projects such as the Roseholme Healthy Homes	MBC Housing & Inclusion Team, MBC Housing & Health	March 2017	This project was not taken forward as a standalone piece of work but has been

	Pilot, which will improve the health and well-being of residents within the Borough.	Team, Maidstone Health and well-being group, KCC, External businesses, Voluntary groups		incorporated into the Shepway Task Force terms of reference.
2b	Work with NHS Health trainers to support residents to achieve healthier lifestyle choices with issues such as Healthy eating, quitting smoking, exercise and emotional well-being.	Kent Community Health (NHS Health Trainers), MBC Housing & Health Team , GP's, Registered Providers, CAB	Review annually	<p>We have an in-house One You service which is funded through our Public Health allocation from KCC. This programme supports individuals to try and adjust to a healthier lifestyle.</p> <p>One You is a Kent wide approach to healthy lifestyle and behaviour change and within Maidstone we have a single point of access into the service via Kent Community Health Foundation Trust.</p>
2a/d	Work with owners of long-term empty properties to bring them back in to use	National Landlords Association, Maidstone Landlords Forum, Landlords, Homeowners, MBC Housing & Health Team	14 every quarter. Review annually.	We continue to work with owners of long- term empty homes to return them into use. The number of properties brought back into use continues to be recorded.
2c	Promoting and delivering the affordable warmth strategy	MBC Housing & Health Team, Registered Providers, Home Owners, Landlords, Landlords Forum	Review annually	<p>The Warm Homes scheme partnership project between KCC and district councils has been promoted through our website helping residents to fund insulation measures in their homes.</p> <p>The affordable warmth strategy will require revisiting in the light of new</p>

				<p>national financial assistance schemes coming to the market.</p> <p>Recent regulatory changes (MEES) introduced in the domestic private rented sector will have an impact in the improvement/removal of low energy performance dwellings in the domestic property rental market. In 2021 the Government has introduced a new definition of fuel poverty which aligns with the national financial assistance schemes targeting houses that have the worst energy efficiency ratings occupied by residents on lower incomes.</p>
--	--	--	--	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

65

Priority 3: Prevent Homelessness, Secure Provision of Appropriate Accommodation for Homeless Households and Supporting Vulnerable People

Outcomes – What we plan to achieve

- a) Prevent and relieve homelessness amongst local residents who are at risk of homelessness by offering timely, expert advice that helps to prevent their homelessness.
- b) Increase the availability of suitable accommodation for homeless households via direct provision and the use of the private rented sector, to reduce temporary accommodation costs, length of stay and reliance on bed and breakfast accommodation.
- c) Support independent living and reduce risk of repeat homelessness for vulnerable residents by offering a range of housing options, advice and support to maintain or improve their health and well-being.

Actions – What we will do in order to achieve the stated outcomes

Outcomes	What we plan to do	Key Partners	Target	Comments
3a/b/c	Deliver our existing Homelessness Strategy Action Plan	MBC Housing & Inclusion team, MBC Housing & Enabling Team, Private Landlords, Registered Providers, Voluntary Groups, CAB, KCC Social Services, Schools, Supported Housing Providers	By March 2020	<p>The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy was updated in 2019 and is a live document until 2024. This document as four key priorities Prevention, Accommodation, Supporting Vulnerable People and Rough Sleepers. The strategy was signed off by CHE in 2020.</p> <p>The updated action plan attached is kept under review.</p>
3b	To expand on the success of Aylesbury House by investing in the acquisition/purchase of additional temporary accommodation within Maidstone to house homeless and vulnerable households.	MBC Housing & Inclusion team, MBC Housing & Enabling Team, Homes & Communities Agency, DCLG, Land owners, Property owners, Private institutional investors, Agents	December 2016	<p>This has been a significant success. We now have 85 units of TA. A mixture of houses, flats and shared sites (HMOs). This has enabled a better standard of accommodation and support to residents, with all units located within the Maidstone district boundary.</p> <p>Through our rough sleeper specific workstream we developed 35 units of supported accommodation for rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping. This resource provides support that operates alongside the</p>

				<p>'accommodation to support resettlement'.</p> <p>More recently MBC has purchased Trinity Place, which will be used as accommodation for rough sleepers, temporary accommodation and eventually provide secure tenancies through the Housing Register. This project will also offer education, training and employment opportunities and our aspiration is to become a community-based asset for the whole of the district, as well as those resident in Trinity Place.</p>
3c	<p>Strengthen partnership working at local, county and national level and understanding of assistance and options available to homeless and vulnerable households.</p>	<p>MBC Housing & Inclusion team, KCC, DCLG, KHOG, CAB, Voluntary groups, Registered Providers</p>	<p>Review annually</p>	<p>Whilst the MBC RSI services predates the KCC commissioned Homelessness Connect service, our officers work with colleagues from partner agencies to support homeless individuals.</p> <p>Through the RSI funding we have managed, with great success, to develop our own supported accommodation and support service for vulnerable homeless people, who would not normally be accommodated through Part 7 of the Housing Act.</p> <p>Our Housing Advice Manager is currently the Chair of KHOG and this</p>

89

				<p>affords us the ability to have close working relationships with both district and county colleagues to mobilise protocols and working agreements. This also enables us to have a thorough understanding of new services being developed etc.</p> <p>KCC commissioners regularly attend KHOG and work collaboratively with the group with reviewing commissioning decisions.</p> <p>MBC launched the Maidstone Homelessness Prevention Forum in October 2019 as a multi-agency forum, bringing together partners to shared information and strengthen partnership working to prevent and relieve homelessness.</p>
3a	Continue to support private sector landlords and tenants to maintain their tenancies by offering pre-tenancy training.	Private Sector Landlords, Registered Providers, Tenants, MBC Housing & Inclusion team	Ongoing monthly	Pre-Tenancy training has been provided in partnership with Golding Homes. The pre-tenancy training was being delivered monthly at Maidstone House, with invites being sent by Golding Homes to households placed into temporary accommodation by MBC, before being moved in 2019 to Golding Homes' new offices

69

				<p>In 2018 the Golding Homes also launched online E-learning pre-tenancy training with applicants to complete as part of the offer process for housing allocations.</p> <p>The online E-learning pre-tenancy training is also offered out to applicants seeking housing assistance within their Personalised Housing Plans.</p> <p>Face-to-face pre-tenancy training was suspended due to the Covid-19 pandemic.</p>
3a/c	<p>Provide specialist targeted information and advice that will enable people to improve their own housing and health circumstances, prevent homelessness and make best use of resources.</p>	<p>MBC Housing & Inclusion team, MBC Housing & Health team, MBC Housing & Enabling Team, CAB, KCC, NHS Health trainers</p>	<p>Ongoing. Review annually.</p>	<p>Information is regularly updated on our website and since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act we have switched our emphasis to preventing homelessness. This is reflected through the PHP documentation and monitored through various key performance indicators.</p> <p>Tailored advice is provided on the MBC website, under the housing pages, to specific client groups, in compliance with the HRA.</p> <p>Clients are signposted to the One You Service via Housing Advice Letters.</p>

70

				<p>MBC is working alongside the Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) to look at health inequalities in Shepway and Park Wood to understand the inequalities that exist and how partners can work together to improve health and wellbeing outcomes for our residents.</p> <p>Wider signposting advice given by Housing & Health Officers to customers requiring assistance.</p>
3a /c	<p>Promote closer co-operation with the Revenues and Benefits and DHP Team to assist customers in difficulty that require further support to help solve their financial issues.</p>	<p>MBC Housing and Inclusion Team, Registered Providers MBC Benefits, CAB</p>	<p>December 2016</p>	<p>Regular meeting between Housing and Revenues & Benefits teams were occurring until approximately 2017 when these ceased, as cooperation had improved. Discussions are taking place to consider the need for recommencing these.</p> <p>The Housing service works closely with the DHP team discussing and supporting requests; and a referral mechanism is in place to enable the Revs & Bens Team to notify the Housing Service of potentially homeless households.</p> <p>The DHP team remains within the R&B Team. A feasibility study is proposed to</p>

				consider where the allocation and decision making of DHP's best resides.
3a/c	Support affected households to manage welfare reform changes to the benefit system.	MBC Housing & Inclusion team, MBC Benefits, Registered Providers, CAB, Private Landlords	Ongoing. Review annually	<p>Following the extension of the Benefit Cap in November 2016, a project was undertaken to write to those households and individuals who were subject to the new cap offering advice and assistance.</p> <p>It is proposed to build on the learning from this initiative on a quarterly basis, with discussion already undertaken with Revs and Bens Team Manager and DWP.</p> <p>We have a financial inclusion and rent officer, who offers in-depth financial support to all our TA customers and those RS clients in supported housing. The Officer also leads on work of maximising income and support households to make sustainable changes to their budgets to ensure their accommodation is protected.</p> <p>Our predictive analytics programme (in partnership with EY Xantura) is funded from the Homeless Prevention Grant – tracks households from across the district who may be at risk of homelessness. This enables targeted</p>

				intervention at a very early stage to offer support and resources that can assist the household with financial and other difficulties that they may be experiencing.
3c	Ensure homeless households have access to volunteering, training and employment opportunities	Job Centre Plus, Voluntary groups, MBC Housing & Inclusion team, CAB	Ongoing. Review annually	<p>The accommodation team continues to work with residents to help with improving their quality of life via employment and training. This work is not without its challenges and has been particularly impacted by the Covid19 pandemic.</p> <p>A pilot project was trialled with the DWP in 2019 for job seeking clients, who were ready for work and with a housing issue, to be booked in for enhanced appointments with Work Coaches, however, this was discontinued due to a low take up.</p> <p>With Trinity Place becoming ready in late 2021, we expect to broaden our reach in terms of employment and training opportunities.</p>
3b	Secure shared housing for under-35s single homeless people.	MBC Housing & Inclusion team, MBC Housing & Enabling team, Private Sector Landlords, Agents	December 2016	This has been completed and many of those who were accommodated via our RSI team are placed into our own shared supported accommodation. We also work closely with other providers

				<p>such as Riverside and Pathways to Independence to help young people access supported accommodation.</p> <p>During the Covid19 “Everyone In” directive, we experienced a significant increase in the number of younger, single (mainly) men who were precariously accommodated and whose housing arrangements broke down. This demonstrates there is still a challenge to finding e accommodation that is affordable for those aged under 35.</p>
3b	Expand the Homefinder incentive scheme to more landlords within Maidstone and neighbouring boroughs	MBC Housing & Inclusion team, Private Landlords, National Landlords Association, Maidstone Landlords Forum, Agents	December 2016	<p>The Homefinder Scheme was developed following the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act. The Scheme was amended to introduce a new flexible cash incentive to landlords for Prevention and Relief cases. A Guaranteed Rent element of the scheme was developed, but not trialled as this was superseded by the newer iteration of the Scheme.</p> <p>The Homefinder Scheme was further developed in 2020 following MBC being awarded funding from the MHCLG PRS Access Scheme Fund, to launch a Landlord and Tenant Insurance</p>

				<p>Scheme, working in partnership with Help2Rent.</p> <p>The new Help2Rent Landlord and Tenant Insurance Scheme has enabled a move away from the Homefinder Bond, as the insurance provides a landlord with far greater protection and cover.</p> <p>The introduction of the scheme coincided with a move away from promoting cash incentives to landlords, due to concerns that the tenancies being created were not sustainable, as landlords were re-approaching at end of the AST fixed term seeking to increase their tenants rent and/or asking for additional incentive payments.</p>
3c	Work with supported housing providers to understand the potential impact of the Housing Benefit cap to supported accommodation tenants and how best to address it.	MBC Housing & Enabling Team, MBC Housing & Inclusion Team, Supported Housing Providers, KCC Accommodation Solutions Team.	March 2017	The benefit cap has not impacted supported housing as it is exempt from HB regulations. Also, the one bedroom rate exemptions have been expanded so more individuals can access a greater HB award than previously.

**COMMUNITIES, HOUSING &
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

5 October 2021

**1st Quarter Financial Update & Performance Monitoring
Report 2021/22**

Final Decision-Maker	Communities, Housing & Environment Committee
Lead Head of Service	Mark Green, Director of Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Authors	Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance Paul Holland, Senior Finance Manager (Client) Carly Benville, Senior Business Analyst
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report sets out the 2021/22 financial and performance position for the services reporting into the Communities, Housing & Environment Committee (CHE) as at 30th June 2021 (Quarter 1). The primary focus is on:

- The 2021/22 Revenue and Capital budgets; and
- The 2021/22 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that relate to the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2019-2045.

The combined reporting of the financial and performance position enables the Committee to consider and comment on the issues raised and actions being taken to address both budget pressures and performance issues in their proper context, reflecting the fact that the financial and performance-related fortunes of the Council are inextricably linked.

Budget Monitoring

Overall net expenditure at the end of Quarter 1 for the services reporting to CHE is -£0.350m, compared to the approved profiled budget of £0.209m, representing an underspend of £0.558m.

Capital expenditure at the end of Quarter 1 was £1.737m against a total budget of £27.166m. Forecast spend for the year is £10.848m.

Performance Monitoring

66.6% (2 of 3) targetable quarterly key performance indicators reportable to the Communities, Housing & Environment Committee achieved their Quarter 1 target.

Purpose of Report

The report enables the Committee to consider and comment on the issues raised and actions being taken to address both budget pressures and performance issues as at 30 June 2021.

This report makes the following Recommendations to the Committee:

1. That the Revenue position as at the end of Quarter 1 for 2021/22, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances have been identified, be noted;
2. That the Capital position at the end of Quarter 1 be noted; and
3. That the Performance position as at Quarter 1 for 2021/22, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant issues have been identified, be noted.

Timetable

<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Date</i>
Communities, Housing & Environment Committee	5 October 2021

1st Quarter Financial Update & Performance Monitoring Report 2021/22

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>This report monitors actual activity against the revenue budget and other financial matters set by Council for the financial year. The budget is set in accordance with the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy which is linked to the Strategic Plan and corporate priorities.</p> <p>The Key Performance Indicators and strategic actions are part of the Council's overarching Strategic Plan 2019-45 and play an important role in the achievement of corporate objectives. They also cover a wide range of services and priority areas.</p>	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Cross Cutting Objectives	This report enables any links between performance and financial matters to be identified and addressed at an early stage, thereby reducing the risk of compromising the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2019-2045, including its cross-cutting objectives.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Risk Management	This is addressed in Section 5 of this report.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Financial	<p>Financial implications are the focus of this report through high level budget monitoring. Budget monitoring ensures that services can react quickly enough to potential resource problems. The process ensures that the Council is not faced by corporate financial problems that may prejudice the delivery of strategic priorities.</p> <p>Performance indicators and targets are closely linked to the allocation of resources and determining good value for money. The financial implications of any proposed changes are also identified and taken into account in the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy and associated annual budget setting process. Performance issues are highlighted as part of the budget monitoring reporting process.</p>	Senior Finance Manager (Client)
Staffing	<p>The budget for staffing represents a significant proportion of the direct spend of the Council and is carefully monitored. Any issues in relation to employee costs will be raised in this and future monitoring reports.</p> <p>Having a clear set of performance targets enables staff outcomes/objectives to be set and effective action plans to be put in place.</p>	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Legal	<p>The Council has a statutory obligation to maintain a balanced budget and the monitoring process enables the Committee to remain aware of issues and the process to be taken to maintain a balanced budget.</p> <p>There is no statutory duty to report regularly on the Council's performance. However, under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 (as amended) a best value authority has a statutory duty to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. One of the purposes of the Key Performance Indicators is to facilitate the improvement of the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of Council services. Regular reports on Council performance help to demonstrate best value and compliance with the statutory duty.</p>	Senior Lawyer (Corporate Governance), MKLS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Privacy and Data Protection	The performance data is held and processed in accordance with the data protection principles contained in the Data Protection Act 2018 and in line with the Data Quality Policy, which sets out the requirement for ensuring data quality. There is a program for undertaking data quality audits of performance indicators.	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	There is no impact on Equalities as a result of the recommendations in this report. An EqIA would be carried out as part of a policy or service change, should one be identified.	Equalities and Communities Officer
Public Health	The performance recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	There are no specific issues arising.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Procurement	Performance Indicators and Strategic Milestones monitor any procurement needed to achieve the outcomes of the Strategic Plan.	Director of Finance and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Biodiversity & Climate Change	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and there are no direct implications on biodiversity and climate change.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2021/22 to 2025/26 - including the budget for 2021/22 - was approved by full Council on 24th February 2021. This report updates the Committee on how its services have performed over the last quarter with regard to revenue and capital expenditure against approved budgets.
- 1.2 The report includes details of the continuing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the financial position and performance of the service areas that fall under this committee and provide some further detail around any particular areas of concern.

- 1.3 This report also includes an update to the Committee on progress against its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
 - 1.4 Attached at **Appendix 1** is a report setting out the revenue and capital spending position at the Quarter 1 stage. Attached at **Appendix 2** is a report setting out the position for the KPIs for the corresponding period.
-

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 2.1 There are no matters for decision in this report. The Committee is asked to note the contents but may choose to take further action depending on the matters reported here.
-

3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 In considering the current position on the Revenue budget, the Capital Programme and KPIs at the end of June 2021, the Committee can choose to note this information or could choose to take further action.
 - 3.2 The Committee is requested to note the content of the report as no further actions are required.
-

4. RISK

- 4.1 This report is presented for information only and has no direct risk management implications.
 - 4.2 The Council produced a balanced budget for both revenue and capital income and expenditure for 2021/22. The budget is set against a backdrop of limited resources and a difficult economic climate, even before the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic became clear. Regular and comprehensive monitoring of the type included in this report ensures early warning of significant issues that may place the Council at financial risk. This gives the Committee the best opportunity to take actions to mitigate such risks.
-

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 The KPIs update ("Performance Monitoring") is reported to service committees quarterly: Communities, Housing & Environment Committee; Economic Regeneration & Leisure Committee; and the Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Committee. Each committee will receive a report on the relevant priority action areas. The report is also presented to the Policy & Resources Committee, reporting on the priority areas of "A Thriving Place", "Safe, Clean and Green", "Homes and Communities" and "Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure".
-

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 The Quarter 1 Budget & Performance Monitoring reports are being considered by the relevant Service Committees during September and October 2021, including a full report to the Policy & Resources Committee on 15th September 2021.
 - 6.2 The Council could choose not to monitor its budget and/or the Strategic Plan and/or make alternative performance management arrangements, such as the frequency of reporting. This is not recommended as it could lead to action not being taken against financial and/or other performance during the year, and the Council failing to deliver its priorities.
 - 6.3 There remains uncertainty regarding the Council's financial position beyond 2021/22, arising from the impacts of the Covid-19 crisis and the Council's role in responding to this. Future finance reports to this committee will ensure that members are kept up to date with this situation as it develops.
-

7. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: First Quarter Budget Monitoring 2021/22
 - Appendix 2: First Quarter Performance Monitoring 2021/22
-

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

First Quarter Financial Update 2021/22

Communities, Housing & Environment Committee

5th October 2021

Lead Officer: Mark Green

Report Authors: Ellie Dunnet/Paul Holland

Contents

Part A: Executive Summary & Overview Page 2

Part B: Revenue Budget Q1 2021/22

B1) Revenue Budget Page 5

Part C: Capital Budget Q1 2021/22

C1) Capital Budget Page 9

Part A

Executive Summary & Overview



This report provides members with the financial position as at 30 June 2021, covering activity for both the Council as a whole and this committee's revenue and capital accounts for the first quarter of 2021/22.

Members will be aware of the significant uncertainty in the 2021/22 budget estimates arising from the ongoing impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, both in relation to demands on the Council to respond and the speed of local economic recovery. Financial support from central government received during 2020/21 continues to support specific activities, and the unringfenced Covid-19 grant of £860,000 will be used to support recovery and renewal activities.

In addition, the Council will shortly be applying for the final round of funding under the government's sales, fees and charges compensation scheme covering income losses between April – June 2021 measured against the 2020/21 income budget. This is expected to be the final allocation of unringfenced Covid-19 funding from central government.

The headlines for Quarter 1 are as follows:

Part B: Revenue budget – Q1 2021/22

- Overall net expenditure at the end of Quarter 1 for the services reporting to this committee is -£0.350m, compared to the approved profiled budget of £0.209m, representing an underspend of £0.558m.

Part C: Capital budget – Q1 2021/22

- Capital expenditure at the end of Quarter 1 was £1.737m against a total budget of £27.166m. Forecast spend for the year is £10.848m.

Part B

First Quarter Revenue Budget 2021/22



B2) Revenue Budget

B1.1 The table below provides a detailed summary on the budgeted net income position for CHE services at the end of Quarter 1. The financial figures are presented on an accruals basis (e.g. expenditure for goods and services received, but not yet paid for, is included).

CHE Revenue Budget & Outturn – Quarter 1

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
Cost Centre	Approved Budget for Year £000	Budget to 30 June 2021 £000	Actual £000	Variance £000	Forecast 31 March 2022 £000	Forecast Variance 31 March 2022 £000
Parks & Open Spaces	1,007	258	218	41	969	38
Playground Maintenance & Improvements	139	34	-3	37	108	32
Parks Pavilions	37	9	5	5	37	0
Mote Park	260	66	78	-12	260	0
Parks & Open Spaces Leisure Activities	-2	-0	-0	-0	-2	0
Mote Park Leisure Activities	-19	-5	-3	-2	-19	0
Allotments	13	3	3	0	13	0
Cemetery	66	45	5	40	36	30
National Assistance Act	-0	-0	2	-2	-0	0
Crematorium	-839	-171	-296	125	-919	80
Community Safety	28	-8	-7	-1	28	0
PCC Grant - Building Safer Communities	0	-16	-18	2	0	0
C C T V	77	5	1	4	77	0
Drainage	32	8	0	8	32	0
Licences	-5	-1	-2	1	-5	0
Licensing Statutory	-63	-16	-18	2	-63	0
Licensing Non Chargeable	8	2	2	0	8	0
Dog Control	30	5	5	-0	30	0
Health Improvement Programme	10	9	0	9	10	0
Pollution Control - General	13	7	8	-1	13	0
Contaminated Land	1	0	-0	0	1	0
Waste Crime	39	8	8	-0	39	0
Food Hygiene	9	1	-2	3	9	0
Sampling	4	1	0	1	4	0
Occupational Health & Safety	-6	-2	-3	2	-6	0
Infectious Disease Control	1	0	0	0	1	0
Noise Control	1	0	0	0	1	0
Pest Control	-12	-3	-0	-3	-12	0
Public Conveniences	197	49	43	5	197	0
Licensing - Hackney & Private Hire	-61	-17	-13	-5	-61	0
Street Cleansing	1,153	280	260	20	1,153	0
Household Waste Collection	1,245	309	317	-8	1,245	0
Commercial Waste Services	-55	-16	-21	5	-55	0
Recycling Collection	713	-76	-74	-3	713	0
Climate change	26	0	0	0	26	0
Community Hub	0	-13	-0	-13	0	0
Public Health - Obesity	0	0	3	-3	0	0
Public Health - Misc Services	0	0	4	-4	0	0
Grants	166	82	82	1	166	0
Delegated Grants	2	2	1	1	2	0
Parish Services	130	65	67	-2	130	0
General Fund Residential Properties	-76	-19	-18	-1	-76	0

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
Cost Centre	Approved Budget for Year £000	Budget to 30 June 2021 £000	Actual £000	Variance £000	Forecast 31 March 2022 £000	Forecast Variance 31 March 2022 £000
Strategic Housing Role	15	3	4	-1	15	0
Housing Register & Allocations	11	9	1	9	11	0
Private Sector Renewal	-47	1	0	1	-47	0
HMO Licensing	-20	-5	-7	1	-20	0
Homeless Temporary Accommodation	398	99	63	36	304	94
Homelessness Prevention	183	-837	-860	23	183	0
Predictive Analysis and Preventing Homelessness	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aylesbury House	15	5	-3	8	15	0
Magnolia House	3	1	-11	12	3	0
St Martins House	0	-1	-1	1	0	0
Marsham Street	61	15	11	4	61	0
Sundry Temporary Accommodation (TA) Properties	-4	2	-5	7	-4	0
Pelican Court (Leased TA Property)	0	0	1	-1	0	0
2 Bed Property - Temporary Accommodation	-44	-11	-11	-0	-44	0
3 Bed Property - Temporary Accommodation	-71	-17	-25	9	-71	0
4 bed Property - Temporary Accommodation	-1	1	-6	7	-1	0
1 Bed Property- Temporary Accommodation	3	1	-1	2	3	0
Housing First Project	0	0	-0	0	0	0
Supported Accommodation	-12	-3	3	-6	-12	0
The Trinity Foyer	3	1	11	-10	3	0
Chillington House	-6	-2	-2	0	-6	0
Long Lease Properties	0	0	-1	1	0	0
Marden Caravan Site (Stilebridge Lane)	19	5	8	-3	19	0
Ulcombe Caravan Site (Water Lane)	7	-1	10	-11	7	0
Head of Environment and Public Realm	110	27	9	19	110	0
Bereavement Services Section	257	65	58	7	257	0
Community Partnerships & Resilience Section	392	82	72	10	392	0
Licensing Section	115	29	26	3	115	0
Environmental Protection Section	272	68	68	-0	272	0
Food and Safety Section	267	67	-95	162	267	0
Depot Services Section	807	201	189	12	807	0
Biodiversity & Climate Change	62	15	13	3	62	0
Head of Housing & Community Services	110	28	27	0	110	0
Homechoice Section	217	-1	-12	11	217	0
Housing & Inclusion Section	420	-135	-112	-23	420	0
Housing & Health Section	275	-57	-78	21	275	0
Housing Management	282	-20	-19	-1	282	0
Homelessness Outreach	4	-274	-265	-8	4	0
Salary Slippage	-194	-48	0	-48	-194	0
Fleet Workshop & Management	225	56	47	10	225	0
MBS Support Crew	-59	-15	-14	-1	-59	0
Grounds Maintenance - Commercial	-131	-33	-74	41	-173	42
Total	8,212	209	-350	558	7,896	316

B1.2 The table shows that at the end of the first quarter overall net expenditure for the services reporting to SPI is -£0.350m, compared to the approved profiled budget of £0.209m, representing an underspend of £0.558m.

B1.3 The table indicates that in certain areas, significant variances to the budgeted income levels have emerged during the first quarter of the year. The reasons for the more significant variances are explored in section B2 below.

B2) Variances

B2.1 The committee was impacted by the effects of Covid-19. Income from the Crematorium continues to be high due to the ongoing demand for the service, and while demand for temporary accommodation continues there has been a reduction in the cost of providing the service because of the properties that the Council has purchased to specifically deal with this issue.

	Positive Variance Q1	Adverse Variance Q1	Year End Forecast Variance
Communities, Housing & Environment Committee	£000		
Crematorium – There continues to be a higher than normal level of demand for the service, and memorial sales are also higher than forecast. It should be noted that the recent rises in gas prices may push up operating costs and this could potentially reduce the forecast year-end variance.	40		80
Homeless Temporary Accommodation – Costs have reduced due to the increase on the Council's own properties that were specifically purchased to deal with homeless families. Use has also been made of other Council and Maidstone Property Holdings properties.	36		94
Food & Safety Section – A number of Covid-related grants are held in this section that have yet to be spent. These are Test & Trace Support, Compliance & Enforcement and Test & Trace Door Knocking Service.	162		0

Part C

First Quarter Capital Budget 2021/22

B1) Capital Budget: Communities, Housing & Environment Committee (CHE)

B1.1 The position of the 2021/22 CHE element of the Capital Programme at the Quarter 1 stage is presented in Table 3 below. The budget for 2021/22 includes resources brought forward from 2020/21.

CHE Capital Programme 2021/22 (@ Quarter 1)

Capital Programme Heading	Adjusted	Actual to June 2021 £000	Budget Remaining £000	Projected			Projected Expenditure £000	Projected Slippage to 2022/23 £000	Budget Not Required £000
	Estimate 2021/22 £000			Q2 Profile £000	Q3 Profile £000	Q4 Profile £000			
Communities, Housing & Environment									
Housing - Disabled Facilities Grants Funding	1,717	163	1,553	200	200	250	813	903	
Temporary Accommodation	3,008	4	3,003		1,000	2,003	3,008		
Brunswick Street	233	183	50	50			233		
Union Street	217	167	50	50			217		
Springfield Mill - Phase 1 & 2	3,066	1,121	1,945	843	964	120	3,049	17	
Granada House Extension	954	2	952				2	952	
Private Rented Sector Housing Programme	12,366	19	12,347	80	322	42	463	11,903	
Affordable Housing Programme	2,384	5	2,379	300	930		1,235	1,149	
Acquisitions Officer - Social Housing Delivery P/ship	74	47	28	56	48	53	204	-129	
Granada House Refurbishment Works	976		976		25	25	50	926	
Street Scene Investment	50		50	20	15	15	50		
Flood Action Plan	244		244	80	80	84	244		
Electric Operational Vehicles	84		84	84			84		
Vehicle Telematics & Camera Systems	35		35	35			35		
Rent & Housing Management IT System	19	4	15	15			19		
Installation of Public Water Fountains	15		15			15	15		
Crematorium & Cemetery Development Plan	378	21	357		157	200	378		
Continued Improvements to Play Areas	200		200	75	50	75	200		
Parks Improvements	149		149	50	50	49	149		
Gypsy & Traveller Sites Refurbishment	1,000	2	998	50	100	250	402	598	
Total	27,166	1,737	25,430	1,989	3,941	3,181	10,848	16,319	

B1.2 Comments on the variances in the table above are as follows:

Granada House Extension and Refurbishment Works – The rooftop extension is no longer going ahead. Some of this budget may be required for the refurbishment works should the cost of the works be greater than currently anticipated. These works are not scheduled to commence until towards the end of the year.

Private Rented Sector Housing and Affordable Housing Programmes – The housing team are working on various projects which are currently at different stages. Expenditure is very much indicative at this stage and expected to increase during the last two quarters of the year once schemes have progressed further and new ones are potentially secured.

Acquisitions Officer Social Housing Delivery Partnership – The overspend is due to an extra resource being required with two acquisition officers now being in post to help deliver the housing capital programme, both of which have had contract extensions. Funding for this will be identified.

Gypsy & Traveller Sites Refurbishment – The tenders for work have come in at £1.8m, which is significantly above the budget for the scheme. It was recommended to Policy & Resources Committee that additional funding of £0.9m be approved from the affordable housing programme budget, which will include an allowance for an increase in the employer's agents costs of £0.1m. The Committee asked for further information and this is addressed in a separate report on this evening's agenda.

CHE: Quarter 1 Performance Report

Key to performance ratings

RAG Rating	
	Target not achieved
	Target slightly missed (within 10%)
	Target met
	Data Only

Direction	
	Performance has improved
	Previous data not captured
	Performance has declined
N/A	No previous data to compare

Performance Summary

RAG Rating	Green	Amber	Red	N/A ¹	Total
KPIs	2	0	1	8	11
Direction	Up	No Change	Down	N/A	Total
Last Quarter	1	0	4	6	11
Last Year	3	0	2	6	11

- 66.6% - 2 of 3 targetable quarterly key performance indicators (KPIs) reportable to this Committee achieved their Quarter 1 (Q1) target¹.
- Compared to last quarter (Q4 2020/21), performance for 20% (1 of 5) KPIs has improved, and for 80% (4 of 5) KPIs has declined¹.
- Compared to last year (Q1 2020/21), performance for 60% (3 of 5) KPIs has improved, and for 40% (2 of 5) KPIs has declined¹

Communities

Performance Indicator	Q1 2021/22				
	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
Number of households living in temporary accommodation last night of the month (NI 156 & SDL 009-00) (average taken from April – June)	121	N/A			
Number of households living in nightly paid temporary accommodation last night of the month (average taken from April – June)	27	N/A			
Percentage of successful Prevention Duty outcomes	75.76%	60%			
Number of households prevented or relieved from becoming homeless	135	112.5			

¹ PIs rated N/A are not included in the summary calculations

Performance Indicator	Q1 2021/22				
	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
Percentage of successful Relief Duty outcomes	38.04%	60%			
Number of Rough Sleepers accommodated by the Council on the last night of the month	29	N/A			
Number of Rough Sleepers newly engaged in the period	TBC	N/A			
Number of households newly in temporary accommodation due to loss of tenancy and home ownership	15	N/A			
Number of homeless cases where the cause of homelessness is domestic abuse ²	36	N/A			
Percentage of CPWs to CPNs in period (CPT/SMP)	0%	N/A			
Percentage of noise complaints followed up with diary sheets by a customer	5.0%	N/A			

The '**Percentage of successful relief duty outcomes**' KPI achieved a outcome of 38.04% in quarter one, against its target of 60%. The Housing Options team continue to note that the target of 60% successful Relief Duty outcomes is a fairly ambitious target, significantly higher than national figures on the percentage of successfully relieving homelessness. The performance of 38.04% of homelessness relieved in the quarter is slightly below the national average for the quarter of 40.4%, taken from the new MHCLG interactive data dashboard.

It is recognised that relieving homelessness is more difficult than preventing homelessness and this has been seen in the previous quarter, which saw significant challenges with accessing the private rented sector, as there is an ever-growing demand on the sector. Additionally, applicants who are in priority need and unintentionally homeless, can only be owed the relief duty of 56 days, before they become owed the main housing duty, giving only a short window of opportunity to relieve homelessness.

The changes to the Council's Allocations Scheme, which went fully live in August 2020, has seen significant increases in the number of households prevented from becoming homelessness and helped to reduce overall numbers of homelessness, but has also meant a decrease in the number of homelessness households being successful in being allocated accommodation through the Council's Housing Register.

² In Q1, this indicator is monitoring the number of homeless cases where either the victim or the perpetrator of domestic abuse was accommodated by the council. From Q2, this figure will just be counting victims.

Agenda Item 18

Communities, Housing & Environment

5 October 2021

Proposed refurbishment of the Council owned Stilebridge Lane and Water Lane G&T Sites

Final Decision-Maker	Communities, Housing & Environment
Lead Head of Service	William Cornall, Director of Regeneration & Place
Lead Officer and Report Author	William Cornall, Director of Regeneration & Place
Classification	Public with one private appendix. The information contained within this report is considered exempt under the following paragraph of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972:- Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person.
Wards affected	Water Lane – Headcorn Ward Stilebridge - Marden & Yalding

Executive Summary

The two mobile home sites owned by Maidstone Borough Council and managed by Kent County Council, Water Lane and Stilebridge require significant investment. The budget in the capital programme for this project is £1m but this needs to be increased to allow for an increased project scope and the construction cost impacts brought about by the pandemic and Brexit. This report sets out the justification for this approach.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. To endorse the revised scope of the project and request to the Policy & Resources Committee that it makes the requisite funds available within the Council's capital programme.

Timetable	
<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Date</i>
Community, Housing & Environment Committee	5 October 2021
Policy and Resources Committee	20 October 2021

Proposed refurbishment of the Council owned Stilebridge Lane and Water Lane G&T Sites

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The proposals support the Homes and Community priority and the outcome "Existing housing is safe, desirable and promotes good health and well-being"</p> <p>Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve the above outcome. The reasons other choices will be less effective is set out in Section 2.</p>	Director of Regeneration & Place
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report supports the achievements of the cross-cutting objectives by providing much needed improvements to the Council owned G&T sites.</p>	Director of Regeneration & Place
Risk Management	Already covered in the risk section.	Director of Regeneration & Place
Financial	The increased scope of the project requires that the sum allowed for in the capital programme be increased from £1m to £1.9m, with the excess being funded from slippage within the affordable housing allocation for 2021/22.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	We will need access to external expertise to deliver the works.	Director of Regeneration & Place
Legal	The Council has a general power of competence pursuant to Section 1 of the	Team Leader, Contentious,

	<p>Localism Act 2011 which enables it to do anything that individuals generally may do.</p> <p>The Local Government Act 1972 (LGA 1972) section 111(1) empowers a local authority to do anything (whether or not involving the expenditure, borrowing or lending of money or the acquisition or disposal of any property or rights) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to the discharge of any of their functions. Acting on the recommendations is within the Council's powers as set out in the above statutory provisions.</p> <p>The procurement processes referred to in this report should be in accordance with the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the Public Contract Regulations 2015. All necessary legal documentation arising from the recommendations in this report should be approved by Legal Services before completion.</p>	and Commissioning, Legal Team
Privacy and Data Protection	There is no direct impact resulting from the recommendations in the report.	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	An equalities impact assessment will be completed to consider the impact of the programme on protected characteristics and will outline any mitigating measures taken.	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	Poor housing and amenity facilities have detrimental impacts on health and wellbeing. The refurbishment programme will address the current poor conditions on both sites.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	The recommendation will have no negative impact on Crime and Disorder.	Director of Regeneration & Place
Procurement	All procurement activities necessary to deliver the project have already been undertaken.	Director of Regeneration & Place & Section 151 Officer
Biodiversity and Climate Change	There are no implications on biodiversity and climate change.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Officer

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 The Council owns two public mobile homes sites:

- Water Lane (in the Staplehurst Ward) consisting of 14 plots (plus 7 semi-detached amenity blocks).
- Stilebridge (in the Marden & Yalding Ward) consisting of 18 plots (plus 8 semi-detached amenity blocks).

2.2 Both of the sites are managed by KCC and there is an aspiration that the ownership of the sites will eventually transfer to KCC once the sites have been refurbished. This matter was considered by the Corporate Leadership Team in June 2019, resulting in a decision to this effect. Only limited investment has been made on these sites for many years, meaning that significant expenditure is now required to bring the sites up to a modern standard.

2.3 During late 2019, a firm of Building Surveyors were appointed to establish the scope, nature and cost of the works required to address the situation. This building survey, finalised in Jan 2020, identified a number of areas where considerable investment in the sites was required.

2.4 The Corporate Leadership Team considered a report from the Head of Housing & Community Services on 5th Feb 2020, that included reference to these surveys and gave an in-principle investment decision (£0.9m of works). This figure was increased to £1m to allow for contractor's prelims, overheads, profit and client professional fees and this sum was then included in the 20/21 capital programme that was approved by the Policy & Resources Committee.

2.5 At this time, any improvements to the foul drainage of the sites were out of scope of the project. This is because this area of work was being investigated by the Council's Housing team. It was known that there was investment required in the foul and surface drainage of both sites, but these investigations and requisite works were understood to be in train.

2.6 Following the CLT decision, a surveying firm, FFT, were procured and appointed (March 2020) to deliver the reinvestment project, through the following disciplines: building surveying, design, project management, quantity surveying and contract administration. The client brief at this stage was to bring about the following improvements at the sites:

- To provide a separate metered electricity supply to each plot and amenity unit, to enable the resident to choose their utility provider and for the Council to achieve full recovery.
- To provide a separate metered water supply to each plot and amenity unit, to enable the resident to choose their utility provider and for the Council to achieve full recovery.
- To fully replace or refurbish each amenity block.
- To make improvements to the road surfaces, surface water drainage and signage of the sites.

- 2.7 Following their appointment, FFT commissioned detailed site surveys, to include topographical and Mechanical & Engineering surveys and developed the investment options and potential specifications. It then became apparent that the scope of FFT should be increased to include the design and delivery of improved foul and surface drainage solutions to both sites too as these two areas of works could not be delivered independently. Consequently, the Housing Team were stood down. In mid-2020, the scheme budget was recast accordingly and the detailed designs and specifications developed.
- 2.8 The surface and foul drainage works needed at Stilebridge have proved not to be quite so onerous, but at Water Lane, there is a need to replace the rising main sewer and all the associated connections, to include a run of circa 50m. The scope of the works was also increased to include improvements to the roads and hard landscaping too. By this time, the surveys indicated that more extensive works would be required against most cost lines and that there would also be cost pressures brought about by the impacts of Brexit and the pandemic, which are now being felt across the construction sector.
- 2.9 The budgets allowed for the replacement of the amenity blocks at Water Lane and refurbishment at Stilebridge. In terms, of Water Lane, FFT initially advised that these could be renewed with factory-built pod units at an advantageous cost, but subsequent soft market testing showed that would not be possible, and that this solution would be no more cost efficient than traditional construction, so it was decided to proceed with the latter.
- 2.10 The next stage was to secure Planning consent for the proposed works, and this was secured for both sites in Jan and March 2021 respectively.
- 2.11 In terms of procurement the possibility of using a sector-wide framework was considered but dismissed. It was decided to pursue an unrestricted single stage tender process, via the Kent Business Portal, which is simply an eTendering platform and is the vehicle by which all the Council's opportunities are advertised. This project was also advertised on the Contracts Finder website, which is managed by central Government and gives us UK wide exposure to ensure that we can attract as much interest and competition as possible. Our first tender in early Spring 2021 resulted in the following:
- 38 Expressions of Interest
 - 28 Failed to respond
 - 9 Opted out of the process
 - 1 submission was received, well in excess of the recast budget
- 2.12 It was decided that this did not provide value for the Council, as the quoted figure was in excess of the 2020 budget estimate. The Council therefore undertook a second tender process in late Spring 2021, with the following results:
- 23 Expressions of Interest
 - 12 Failed to respond

- 7 Opted out of the process
 - 4 submissions were received, with the preferred bid being reflective of the revised costs proposed to the Policy & Resources Committee.
- 2.13 FFT have also commented that they have noted a significant increase in material costs as supply chains have been severely affected since Brexit and Contractors are now including added costs in regards to risk in relation to time as many projects are overrunning due to this issue. However, these adverse cost impacts were correctly foreseen and allowed for within the 2020 budget.
- 2.14 In conclusion, around 30% of the cost increase from the sum allocated in the capital programme budget relates to broadening the scope of the works to include remedying the longstanding foul and surface drainage issues to the sites, most notably Water Lane, and the balance is as a result of rising cost and pressures being experienced in the contracting / tendering market, which are undoubtedly sector wide issues. More generally the specification became more comprehensive once the need for this was evidenced by the findings of the detailed surveys.
- 2.15 The table provided in **Exempt Appendix 1** shows the starting budget approved in 2019, the revised budget prepared mid-2020, and the preferred bid pricing. The preferred bid figure is inclusive of all value engineering opportunities that have been explored by the professional team.
- 2.16 Officers thought it best to bring the scheme back to the Policy & Resources Committee for re-approval of any increased costs once these were firmed up at post tender stage, and this was what occurred at September 2021 Policy & Resources Committee. With hindsight, it would have been appropriate to have kept this Committee informed too.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 **Option 1.** The Council could decide to do nothing, but this is not recommended as the Council would then not meet its landlord obligations in respect of maintaining the sites to an appropriate standard.
- 3.2 **Option 2.** The Council could decide to choose to undertake some of the work as outlined. However, taking this approach will only delay inevitable work, and the Council would again still fall short of its landlord obligations in the intervening period.
- 3.3 **Option 3.** The Council could decide to undertake all the work as outlined in this report for a total cost of £1.9m inclusive of professional fees and request that the Policy & Resources transfer £0.9m of monies allocated from the affordable homes capital budget, to this project, in order to bridge the shortfall.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 **Option 3** is recommended. This will address the condition shortfalls identified and provide residents with the facilities that a modern public-owned, mobile homes site should provide.

5. RISK

5.1 The following risks and mitigations have been identified:

Risk	Mitigation
Performance of contractors	Officers and Employers Agent will pro-actively manage suppliers and update the project team on status of supply chain procurement and performance. The risk of cost overruns has also been managed by procuring detailed condition surveys at the pre contract stage.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

6.1 The Policy & Resources Committee requested that this Committee consider the project and revised costs in more detail, hence this report, before it would make any changes to the re-allocation of resources within the capital programme.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 Assuming that the report recommendations are supported, a further report will go to the next Policy & Resources Committee to make the necessary funds available.
- 7.2 The agreed programme of works will be communicated to the KCC Team managing both sites and to the residents. Due to the scale of the works required, there will inevitably be some disruption to residents.
- 7.3 A site visit with the selected contractor will take place before any works onsite commence. This will be discussed with KCC prior to the visit.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Exempt Appendix 1: Cost comparison table.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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

Document is Restricted