

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 12 July 2022
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Bartlett, Brindle, Fort, Khadka, McKenna (Chairman), Newton
(Vice-Chairman), Rose, R Webb 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.

AGENDA

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| 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 item needs to be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information. | |
| 8. Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 June 2022 | 1 - 3 |
| 9. Presentation of Petitions (if any) | |
| 10. Question and Answer Session from Local Residents (if any) | |
| 11. Questions from Members to the Chairman (if any) | |
| 12. Forward Plan relating to the Committee's Terms of Reference | 4 - 12 |
| 13. UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Local Investment Plan | 13 - 48 |
| 14. Food Service Plan 2022 - 2023 | 49 - 76 |

Issued on 4 July 2022

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

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 reasons specified having applied the Public Interest Test.

Head of Schedule 12A and Brief Description

15. Exempt Appendix 2 to Item 14 - Food Service Plan 2022-23	Paragraph 3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular individual (including the authority holding that information)	77 - 80
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INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

In order to ask a question at this meeting, 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 8 July 2022). 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 8 July 2022). 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.

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MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 14 JUNE 2022

Present: Councillors Bartlett, Brindle, Conyard, Hinder, McKenna, Newton, R Webb, D Wilkinson and Young

Also Present: Councillors English, Parfitt-Reid, Round and S Webb

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Fort, Khadka and Rose.

2. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

The following Substitute Members were present:

Councillor Conyard for Councillor Khadka;
Councillor Hinder for Councillor Fort; and
Councillor D Wilkinson for Councillor Rose

3. **ELECTION OF THE CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED: That Councillor McKenna be elected as Chairman of the Committee for the Municipal Year 2022/23.

4. **ELECTION OF THE VICE-CHAIR**

RESOLVED: That Councillor Newton be elected as Vice-Chair of the Committee for the Municipal Year 2022/23.

5. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

6. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

Councillor English attended as a Visiting Member for Item 15 – Verbal Briefing from the Lead Member for Housing and Health, and Item 16 – Verbal Briefing from the Lead Member for Environmental Services.

7. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

8. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

9. TO CONSIDER WHETHER ANY ITEM NEEDS TO BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBLE DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION.

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

10. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

11. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS (IF ANY)

There were no questions from Local Residents.

12. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN (IF ANY)

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

13. FORWARD PLAN

RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan be noted.

14. VERBAL BRIEFING FROM THE LEAD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES AND ENGAGEMENT

The Lead Member for Communities and Engagement set out her priorities for her portfolio. The first was to promote the Borough through pushing positive messages and reviewing the communication and engagement strategy. The second was to focus on financial inclusion, including the financial inclusion strategy, the use of data and initiatives such as 'No Wrong Door'. The Lead Member recognised the crosscutting nature of her portfolio.

RESOLVED: That the Lead Member for Communities and Engagement's briefing be noted.

15. VERBAL BRIEFING FROM THE LEAD MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND HEALTH

The Lead Member for Housing and Health set out his priorities and measures of success for his portfolio. Emphasising the importance of the health aspect as well as housing. Items for consideration over the year would be the Housing Assistance Policy, the Housing Strategy (including 1,000 affordable homes), the Building Safety Strategy, and Trinity Place.

RESOLVED: That the Lead Member for Housing and Health's briefing be noted.

16. VERBAL BRIEFING FROM THE LEAD MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

The Lead Member for Environmental Services set out his priorities for the coming year including the contract for the Waste Service, Parks and Open Spaces and the work needed to address deterioration, flood risk strategies and Enforcement. Reviewing all aspects of enforcement was given a particular emphasis and the need to work across portfolios on communication.

RESOLVED: That the Lead Member for Environmental Service's briefing be noted.

17. 4TH QUARTER FINANCIAL UPDATE & PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT 2021/22

The Lead Member for Environmental Services introduced the report setting out that the report covered the Q4 of 2021/22 as aligned to the former Communities, Housing and Environment Committee to complete the reporting cycle. The Lead Member highlighted the under spends in revenue and capital but noted that the pressures on Homelessness budgets were expected to rise.

RESOLVED: That

1. The Revenue position as at the end of Quarter 4 for 2021/22, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances have been identified, be noted;
2. The Capital position at the end of Quarter 4 be noted;
3. The Performance position as at Quarter 4 for 2021/22, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant issues have been identified, be noted; and
4. Annual Performance for 2021/22 be noted.

18. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.10 p.m.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN FOR THE FOUR MONTH PERIOD 1 JULY 2022 TO 31 OCTOBER 2022

This Forward Plan sets out the details of the key decisions which the Executive or Lead Members expect to take and the non-Key decisions that the Executive or Lead Members expect to take during the next four-month period. The plan will be updated weekly for the relevant period and a new plan for a new four-month period, published monthly on the last Friday of the month.

A Key Decision is defined as one which:

1. Results in the Council incurring expenditure, or making savings, of more than £250,000; or
2. Is significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more Wards in the Borough

The current members of the Executive Cabinet are:

<p>4</p>  <p>Councillor David Burton Leader of the Council DavidBurton@maidstone.gov.uk 07590 229910</p>	 <p>Councillor John Perry Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Corporate Services JohnPerry@Maidstone.gov.uk 07770 734741</p>	 <p>Councillor Lottie Parfitt-Reid Lead Member for Communities and Public Engagement LottieParfittReid@Maidstone.gov.uk 07919 360000</p>	 <p>Councillor Martin Round Lead Member for Environmental Services MartinRound@maidstone.gov.uk 07709 263447</p>
 <p>Councillor Simon Webb Lead Member for Housing and Health SimonWebb@Maidstone.gov.uk 07878 018997</p>	 <p>Councillor Claudine Russell Lead Member for Leisure and Arts ClaudineRussell@Maidstone.gov.uk</p>	 <p>Councillor Paul Cooper Lead Member for Planning and Infrastructure PaulCooper@Maidstone.gov.uk 01622 244070</p>	

Anyone wishing to make representations about any of the matters listed below may do so by contacting the relevant officer listed against each decision, within the time period indicated.

Under the Access to Information Procedure Rules set out in the Council's Constitution, a Key Decision or a Part II decision may not be taken, unless it has been published on the forward plan for 28 days or it is classified as urgent:

The law and the Council's Constitution provide for urgent key and part II decisions to be made, even though they have not been included in the Forward Plan.

Copies of the Council's constitution, forward plan, reports and decisions may be inspected at the Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, ME15 6JQ or accessed from the Council's website: www.maidstone.gov.uk

Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Executive which are normally held at the Town Hall, High St, Maidstone, ME14 1SY. The dates and times of the meetings are published on www.maidstone.gov.uk or you may contact the Democratic Services Team on telephone number 01622 602899 for further details.

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David Burton
Leader of the Council

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Lead Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees	Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
Food Service Plan 2022 - 2023 It outlines the service achievements and future challenges we are aware of. It covers just one year as the FSA anticipate introducing a modernised food enforcement programme in 2023/24.	Lead Member for Environmental Services	Lead Member for Environmental Services	14 Jul 2022	No	No Part exempt	Communities, Housing and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 12 Jul 2022		Food Service Plan 2022 - 2023	Anmarie Goodwin anmarie.goodwin@midkent.gov.uk
UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Maidstone Local Investment Plan	Leader of the Council	Leader of the Council	Between 15 Jul 2022 and 22 Jul 2022	Yes	No Open	Communities, Housing and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 12 Jul 2022		UK Shared Prosperity Fund - Maidstone Local Investment Plan	Angela Woodhouse Head of Policy and Communications angelawoodhouse@maidstone.gov.uk
Proposed Change to Maidstone	Executive	Lead Member for Environmental	21 Sep 2022	No	No Open	Communities, Housing and Environment		Maidstone AQMA Modelling J10-	Stuart Maxwell

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AQMA and Request to Consult on New Air Quality Action Plan As a result of a continuing trend of improvements in air quality in Maidstone in recent years		Services				Policy Advisory Committee 13 Sep 2022		12378A-10 F3 (002).pdf Maidstone AQMA Modelling J10-12378A-10 F3 (002).pdf Proposed Change to Maidstone AQMA and Request to Consult on New Air Quality Action Plan	stuart.maxwell@midkent.gov.uk
Communication and Engagement Strategy	Executive	Lead Member for Communities and Public Engagement	21 Sep 2022	No	No Open	Communities, Housing and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 13 Dec 2022		Communication and Engagement Strategy	Angela Woodhouse Head of Policy and Communications angelawoodhouse@maidstone.gov.uk
Review of Housing Assistance Policy (including DFG) This policy	Executive	Lead Member for Housing and Health	21 Sep 2022	Yes	No Open	Communities, Housing and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 13 Sep 2022		Review of Housing Assistance Policy (including DFG)	John Littlemore Head of Housing & Community Services johnlittlemore@maid

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addresses a number of services and funding streams delivered from within the Housing and Community Services department, to include the Disabled Facilities Grant and the Help You Home scheme too. The document sets out how these funding streams are utilised to deliver the desired community benefits.									stone.gov.uk
Fleet Replacement Programme Outline of the	Executive	Lead Member for Environmental Services	21 Sep 2022	Yes	No Open	Communities, Housing and Environment Policy Advisory		Fleet Replacement Programme	Jennifer Stevens

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replacement programme for the Council's fleet over a 5 year cycle in line with the Council's Green Fleet Strategy and the Capital funding budget.						Committee 13 Sep 2022			jenniferstevens@maidstone.gov.uk
Review of the Council's Housing Allocations Policy The Council has an established housing allocations policy in place, that has been refined previously through the decisions made by the Communities Housing and Environment Committee.	Executive	Lead Member for Housing and Health	21 Sep 2022	Yes	No Open	Communities, Housing and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 13 Sep 2022		Review of the Council's Housing Allocations Policy	John Littlemore Head of Housing & Community Services johnlittlemore@maidstone.gov.uk

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Lead Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees	Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
<p>However, given the ever growing demand for a largely finite pool of affordable housing in the borough, this report undertakes a more fundamental review of the existing policy and makes recommendations as to how it could be amended.</p>									
<p>Housing Strategy 2022-27 The proposed themes for the new housing strategy were approved by the CHE Committee in early 2022, and these have</p>	Executive	Lead Member for Housing and Health	26 Oct 2022	Yes	No Open	Communities, Housing and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 11 Oct 2022		Housing Strategy 2022-27	<p>John Littlemore Head of Housing & Community Services johnlittlemore@maidstone.gov.uk</p>

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Lead Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees	Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
<p>since been subject to public consultation. Therefore the new housing strategy, as drafted, takes account of these consultation responses, and is now ready for consideration for adoption.</p>									
<p>Council Fire & Building Safety Policy The role and expectations on all Council's following the Grenfell tragedy is changing, and so the creation of a new policy to cover work in this area is very important and timely. The report and policy addresses and</p>	Executive	Lead Member for Housing and Health	26 Oct 2022	Yes	No Open	Communities, Housing and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 11 Oct 2022		Council Fire & Building Safety Policy	<p>John Littlemore Head of Housing & Community Services johnlittlemore@maidstone.gov.uk</p>

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Lead Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees	Method(s) of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
<p>responds to changing guidance and legislation, as well as provides clarity in terms of best practice in terms of the Council will work to best effect with other authorities through partnership working, to manage risk in the community.</p>									

**Communities, Housing and Environment
Policy Advisory Committee**

12 July 2022

UK Shared Prosperity Fund, Local Investment Plan

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Economic Regeneration and Leisure PAC	5 July 2022
Communities, Housing and Environment PAC	12 July 2022
Leader of the Council	20 July 2022

Will this be a Key Decision?	Yes
Urgency	Not Applicable
Final Decision-Maker	Leader of the Council
Director	Chief Executive
Lead Officer and Report Author	Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance and Anna Collier, Corporate Insight, Communities and Governance Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

The Council has been allocated funding as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Release of the funding is dependent on submission of a Local Investment Plan (LIP) to the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC); DLUHC has provided substantial guidance for the scope of how the funding should be applied, the outcomes it achieves and the profiling of spend. The deadline for submission is 1st August 2022. Work has been undertaken informally with the Cabinet and key partners to create a proposed list of priority projects for the Local Investment Plan the two Policy Advisory Committees whose remit this falls within are being consulted on the proposals prior to decision by the Leader of the Council.

Purpose of Report

Recommendation

This report makes the following recommendations to the Policy Advisory Committee to recommend to the Leader of the Council

1. The planned projects and actions in Appendix Four are approved as the Local Investment Plan for Maidstone.
 2. The Head of Policy, Communications and Governance be delegated responsibility to submit the plan to government by 1 August 2022.
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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 <p>Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve all our priorities as evidenced in the interventions and outcomes and the objectives of our Recovery and Renewal Plan.</p>	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
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 achievement of the cross-cutting objectives as evidenced in the interventions and outcomes.</p>	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Risk Management	Covered in the risk section	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Financial	The proposals set out in the recommendation will be funded by the Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) allocation. A funding breakdown can be seen at Appendix Five.	Senior Finance Manager (Client)
Staffing	The fund allows for up to 4% to be spent each year supporting the delivery of local investment plans. The proposal is that work	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance

	will be managed with our existing staffing with additional project management support funded through the 4% allowance to be combined with other major project support.	
Legal	Acting on the recommendations is within the Council's powers.	Interim Team Leader (Contentious and Corporate Governance)
Information Governance	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council Processes.	Corporate Insight Communities and Governance Manager
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals.	
Crime and Disorder	Some of the projects seek to increase and diversify activity in the town centre and to engage with local people and this complements our strategy to make the town centre a safer place to be.	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Procurement	On accepting the recommendations, the Council will then follow procurement exercises as required and in accordance with the Council's financial procedure rules and the rules of the UKSPF	Head of Policy, Communications and Governance
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change will meet the council's commitment to take action to mitigate climate change and promote biodiversity	

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

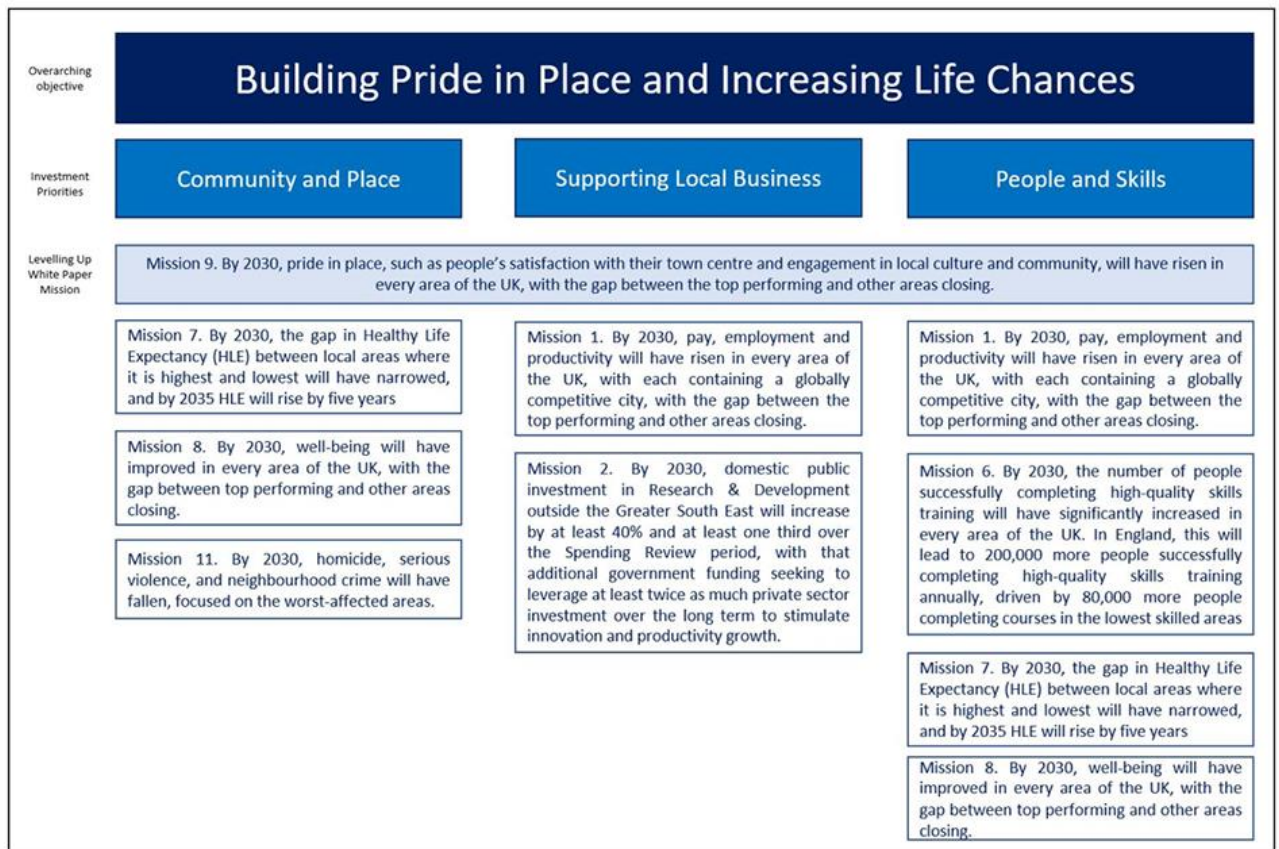
2.1 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) forms part of a suite of complementary Levelling Up funding. It builds on the competitive Levelling Up Fund and Community Ownership Fund through long term, stable funding, allocated to all places. In England the fund has been allocated at District Level in two tier areas.

Vision and Objectives of the UKSPF

2.2 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund will support the UK Government’s wider commitment to level up all parts of the UK by delivering on each of the four parts of Levelling Up:

- Boost productivity, pay, jobs and living standards, especially in those places where they are lagging.
- Spread opportunities and improve public services, especially in those places where they are weakest.
- Restore a sense of community, local pride and belonging, especially in those places where they have been lost.
- Empower local leaders and communities, especially in those places lacking local agency

2.3 The primary goal of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund is to build pride in place and increase life chances across the UK. This aligns with Levelling Up White Paper missions, particularly: ‘By 2030, pride in place, such as people’s satisfaction with their town centre and engagement in local culture and community, will have risen in every area of the UK, with the gap between the top performing and other areas closing.’ More detail is set out in the table below.



Funding

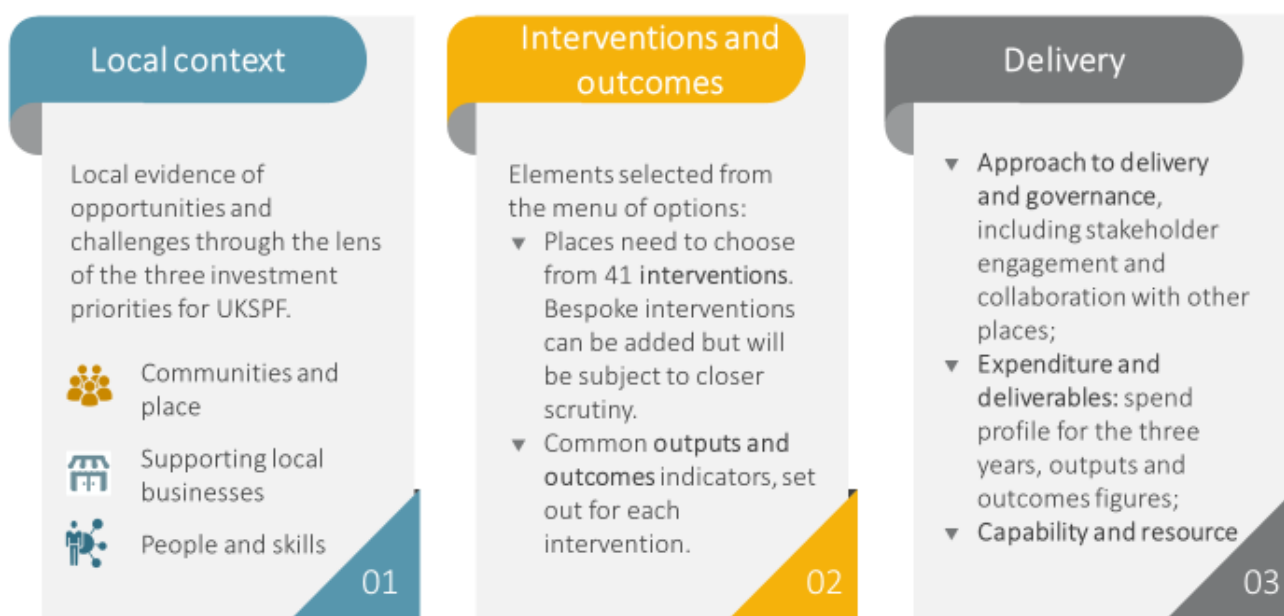
- 2.4 Maidstone has been awarded £1,199,253 to spend over the next three years profiled as follows:

Year	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Amount	£145,540	£291,081	£762,632
Support Cost (up to and taken out of in year total)	£5,821.60	£11,643.24	£30,505.28
Minimum Capital Spend out of total	10% £14,554	13% £37,840.53	20% £152,526.40

- 2.5 Release of the funding is dependent on submission of a Local Investment Plan (LIP) to the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC); DLUHC has provided substantial guidance for the scope of how the funding should be applied, the outcomes it achieves, the profiling of spend and the split between capital and revenue funding. This does not preclude alternative interventions being put forward in the LIP although to do so would require additional evidence to be included. The deadline for submission is 1 August 2022.

The Local Investment Plan

- 2.6 The local investment plans will feature three broad components:



1. **Local context:** this provides an opportunity for places to set out their local evidence of opportunities and challenges through the lens of the three investment priorities for UKSPF. Please see summary at Appendix One

2. **Selection of outcomes and interventions:** where places identify the outcomes they wish to target based on their local context, and the interventions they wish to prioritise, under each investment priority, from the menu of options. These should be clearly linked to local opportunities and challenges. Interventions and outcomes taken from the UKSPF prospectus have been included in the shortlisting at Appendix Four
3. **Delivery:** this will represent the most detailed stage of the investment plans and is broken down into the following:

- a) Approach to delivery and governance: where places outline the structures and processes that will support the delivery of their chosen interventions. Places will be expected to set out the engagement they have undertaken as part of the development of their Plan, including their engagement with MPs.

MBC has engaged with both MPs and a range of partner organisations to identify the challenges, outcomes and potential project proposals for our Local Investment Plan. Details are set out in paragraph 2.8 below.

It is proposed that strategic oversight is achieved through regular updates to the Executive and regular engagement with the MBC Anchor Institutions Group plus Maidstone MPs

Delivery of the projects will be within existing MBC staff resources complemented by One Maidstone (the Business Improvement District) and Involve Kent, with programme management overseen by The Head of Policy, Communications and Governance. Project management support will be funded through the UKSPF. There will be an operational programme board comprising representatives for each of the delivery partners managed by the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance.

- b) Expenditure and deliverables: detailing what places want to deliver with their investment plan, including the spend profile for the three years of the fund as well as outputs and outcomes figures, and where places have already identified specific projects, they wish to fund under each of the investment priorities.

It is proposed that the MBC Investment Plan focusses on Maidstone Town centre. This is consistent with our Strategic Plan, Our Economic Development Strategy, our associated Covid Recovery and Renewal Plan and complements the objectives of our Community Safety Plan. Appendix Three sets out the range of proposed projects. Given the scale of funding it is proposed to invest in a small number of projects to achieve maximum impact.

- c) Capability and resource: to allow places to outline the resource they have to manage and work on UKSPF, as well as their capability and previous experience of delivering similar funds.

To be completed by Head of Policy, Communications and Governance as part of submission once decisions on the governance and specific projects to be included in the LIP have been made. The projects include feasibility studies, expert support from within the Council and external support from partners.

- 2.7 The plan will be submitted via an online platform. The Head of Policy, Communications and Governance has been identified as the lead officer to complete the submission. £20,000 was made available to support development of the investment plan in addition to the UKSPF money. The Council appointed Mutual Ventures, a consultancy with expertise in strategic planning, investment planning and business case development in the public sector to deliver sustainable social, economic, and cultural value to local people, to assist and advise in the development of a plan which will be approved by Government.
- 2.8 To produce a successful plan, lead local authorities are tasked with working with a diverse range of local and regional stakeholders, civil society organisations, employer bodies responsible for identifying local skills plans, and businesses or business representative groups to achieve Fund outcomes in their areas. To achieve this, an event was held with key stakeholders facilitated by Mutual Ventures. This included Kent County Council, Mid Kent College, the police, health partners, the community sector, One Maidstone and a faith group. This engagement enabled us to bring together our Anchor Institutions as proposed in the Town Centre Strategy scoping report presented to and agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee in March 2022. There have been more detailed conversations with our key delivery partners for the LIP following the workshop. Other potential projects identified with our Anchor Institutions will be considered as part of our wider Town Centre Strategy. MBC contributed through officer expertise in housing, community safety, communications, events, biodiversity and climate change, parks, public health, economic development and financial inclusion. Details of this engagement will be set out in our submission.
- 2.9 A summary of the outputs of the workshop can be seen at Appendix Two. Key challenges and opportunities considered were greening in the town centre, creating pride in place, changing the narrative around the town centre to enhance its reputation and creating an attractive and interesting destination. Emphasis was placed on the importance of greater partnership working, improving community infrastructure, and improving mental health.
- 2.10 MPs should provide an advisory role to lead local authorities, reviewing the investment plan prior to submission to UK government for sign-off. Meetings have been held with Helen Grant, MP and Helen Whatley, MP who have both indicated support for the plan and the ideas put forward. The draft plan has been sent to them both for comment and their views will be included in the final report for consideration by the Leader.
- 2.11 Regular discussions have been held with the Executive throughout this process. The Executive have identified their priority for the fund to promote pride in place, through promotion of the Town Centre, local businesses and

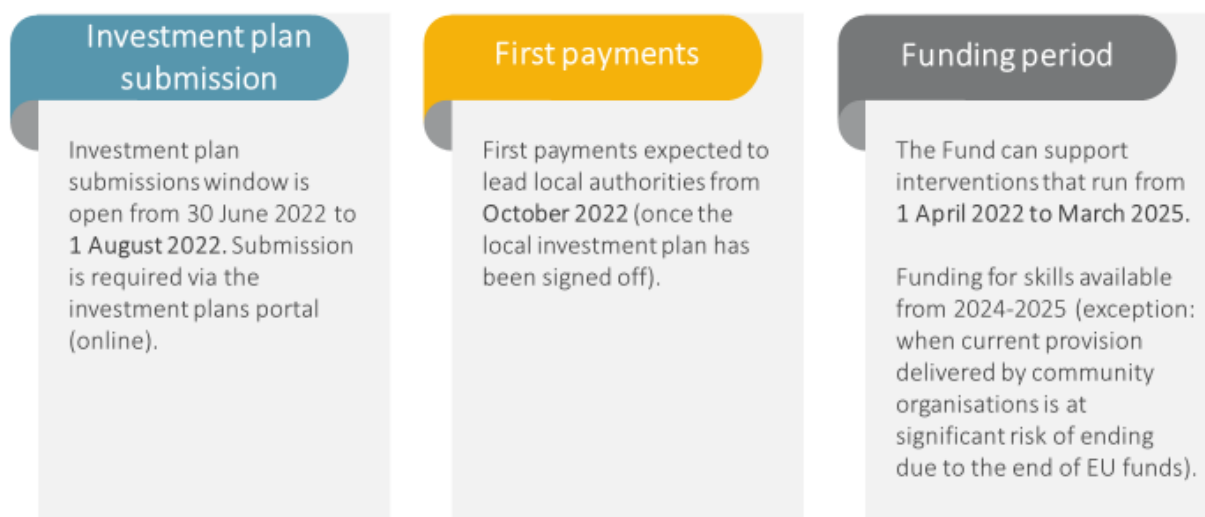
events including uplifting the quality of spaces and buildings with a strong emphasis on heritage and culture.

2.12 A full list of the 18 projects that have been produced through engagement with the Anchor Institution Group, Members and Officers submitted and considered by the Executive can be seen at Appendix Three. There are too many to be delivered with the amount of funding available and hence officers, in conversation informally with the Executive and our partners, have suggested a prioritised short list of projects.

2.13 The short list of projects and spend per year are at Appendix Four, with an easy read financial breakdown at Appendix Five.

Important Dates

2.14 There are key timescales set out by DLUHC for the submission of the investment plan, timings of the projects and connected funding, this is set out below.



2.15 The timing of shortlisted projects and the period from which they will be funded is set out in Appendix Four and Appendix Five.

2.16 To get the investment plan submitted there is a strict timeline to which we need to adhere.

- Economic Regeneration and Leisure PAC - July 2022
- Communities, Housing and Environment PAC - 12 July 2022
- Leader of the Council decision- 20 July 2022
- Final Submission date – 1 August 2022

2.17 Not meeting the final submission date on the 1 August 2022 may result in losing the funding.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The short list of projects can be seen below and full details including the correlating interventions as identified by government, outcomes, estimated spend and which year the project falls can be seen at Appendix Four with a summary of spend by year at Appendix Five.
- A. Building Pride in Place through promotion of the Town Centre and Events
 - B. A Safe and Attractive Town Centre achieved through Greening and Lighting, supported by green volunteers
 - C. A Community Arts Hub and Maker Space
 - D. Links from the Town Centre to Lockmeadow - Activity/Outdoor Gym – Callisthenics
- 3.2 The Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) could choose to revisit the original list of potential projects and propose an alternative shortlist than as shown above at 3.1. This could also include narrowing the current proposed shortlist by removing projects, expanding it to include additional projects or combining projects as has been done already.
- 3.3 It is important to note that if the PAC choose to do this, that any recommendation should be made with consideration of the available funds and the profiling of that funding that as set out at 2.4. DLUHC are very clear in their prospectus that funding has to be spent as profiled so we are not able to spend our allocation for future years early. Any spend beyond the in-year allocation would constitute growth to the Council’s budget for that year. Any underspend would need to be returned to DLUHC.
- 3.4 PAC could choose to recommend a new project or ask for an additional project to be explored. Should the PAC consider this option then the timeline as set out at 2.14, should be considered as well as the requirement to engage key stakeholders.
- 3.5 Reject Entirely, if the Committee recommends that the Council should not create a Local Investment Plan the Council would risk losing the allocation set out in the UKSPF. If a completely new plan was proposed this would require significant work in a very short space of time, with the final deadline for submission set as 1 August 2022.
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4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 It is recommended that the short list of interventions shown at Appendix Four is approved. The interventions have been developed in consultation with key stakeholders with the final list reviewed, developed and supported by Cabinet.
- 4.2 The projects meet the funding allocated by Government and can be delivered within the timescales as required as part of the investment plan.
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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. 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 An event was held with key stakeholders and facilitated by Mutual Ventures. The event was well attended and included representatives from Health, housing associations, KCC, Police, education, faith as well as council officers from Housing, Community Safety, Climate Change, Parks, Health Economic Development and Financial Inclusion.
- 6.2 Meetings have been held with Helen Grant MP and Helen Whatley MP who have both indicated support for the plan and the ideas put forward. The draft plan has been sent to them both for comment and their views will be included in the final report for consideration by the Leader.
- 6.3 Regular discussions have been held with the Executive throughout this process, identifying key priorities to guide discussions with key stakeholders and reviewing the list of identified proposed interventions.
- 6.4 Further feedback has been sought on the draft plan from stakeholders, their feedback will be reported to PACs if available and to the Leader prior to making the decision
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7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 Once approved the Head of Policy Communications and Governance will prepare the Investment Plan with advice and support from Mutual Ventures to ensure a high-quality plan and its submission before the deadline of the 1 August 2022.
- 7.2 Projects planned for the period 2022/23 can be implemented prior to receipt of funding in October 2022. So key officers and the relevant partners will put plans into action as soon as the projects have been approved by the Leader of the Council for submission as part of the Local Investment Plan.
- 7.3 The Head of Policy, Communications and Governance will appoint the operational programme board chairing the meeting monthly.
- 7.4 It is proposed that strategic oversight is achieved through the MBC Executive and regular engagement with the MBC Anchor Institutions Group plus Maidstone MPs.
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8. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix 1: Evidence of Challenges, the Local Context
- Appendix 2: Workshop Event Summary
- Appendix 3: Long List of Interventions
- Appendix 4: Short List of Projects to form part of the Local Investment Plan
- Appendix 5: Funding breakdown

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Summary of the key challenges

Underneath the overarching aim of building pride in place and increasing life chances, there are three UKSPF investment priorities: communities and place; supporting local business; and people and skills.



LOCAL BUSINESS

- Vacancy rates of retail units have risen
- Town Centre footfall has dropped
- Town Centre footfall at night-time is low and falling



PEOPLE AND SKILLS

- Relatively high numbers of people on universal credit living in High Street.
- Relatively high numbers of people on Employment and Support allowance.



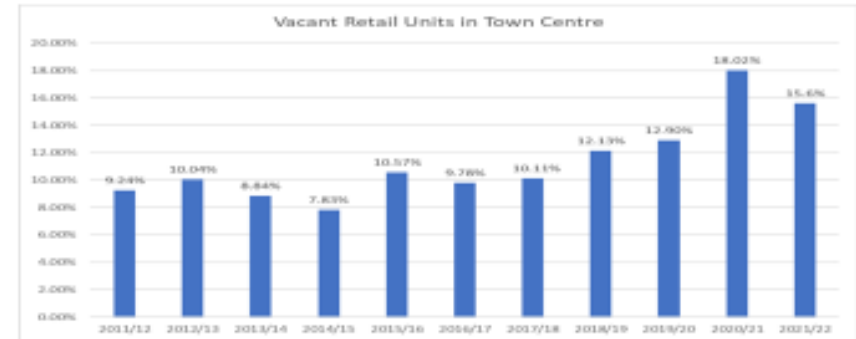
COMMUNITIES AND PLACE

- Reduction in the use of local services.
- Falling pride of place and people's happiness.
- People generally do not feel safe using the town centre at nighttime
- Residents have noticed an increase in the number of people using illegal substances in public.

Local business - challenges



Town Centre footfall has dropped from a peak of c3.25m in 2017/18 to 2.25m in 2021/22.



Vacancy rates of retail units have risen from 9.24% in 2011/12 to 15.6% in 2021/22.

Town Centre visits

69%

People said they visit the Town Centre during the day either weekly or more frequently

15%

Said they visit the Town Centre during the night at least weekly

39%

Over 75's year olds and disabled people don't visit during the night.

People and skills - challenges



PEOPLE AND SKILLS

- Significantly higher numbers of Universal Credit claimants in High Street – 1,835, which represents 15% of the total 11,350 residents.
- Higher numbers of people on Employment and Support Allowance.
- Highest numbers of people on Income Support in Park Wood and Shepway North.

Qualifications (2020)



Communities and place – key challenges

People feel less satisfied living in Maidstone...

Grant Thornton Sustainable Growth Index: community, trust and belonging (2019)

Maidstone's is ranked

172nd

out of 324 local authority areas



They are using public infrastructure less...

	2019		2021
Museum visits	78,029	↓	33,490
Leisure centre	758,290	↓	275,091

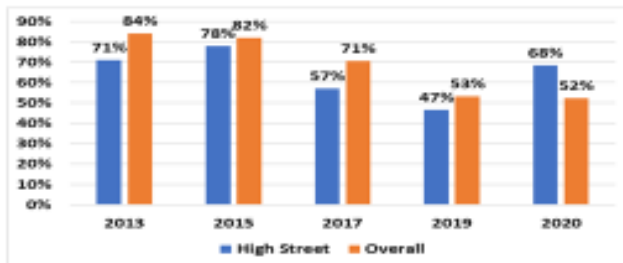
And do not feel safe in the town centre, especially at night

80% said they do not feel safe visiting the Town centre at night time

32% of young people feel least safe in the town centre

Surveys found that the three least safe areas of Maidstone were identified as:

- Town Centre
 - Brenchley Gardens
 - Week Street
- (all town centre locations)



Satisfaction with local area as a place to live

Workshop Event Summary

Attendees

- One Maidstone
- NHS
- Mid Kent College
- Golding Homes
- KCC
- Police
- Faith leader
- MBC reps – Housing, Community Safety, Climate Change, Parks, Health Economic Development, Financial Inclusion, Town Centre Strategy

Summary of Identified Challenges and Opportunities

- Its about the tone of the high street
- Footfall and dwell time.
- Decline in satisfaction in place
- Growth in poor mental health and its impacts e.g. employability
- Working poor – struggling and at risk
- Out of area placements
- Pollution and flooding long term climate impact
- Importance of green spaces for aesthetics and health.

Identified Outcomes

Green and Environment	Health Skills and Inclusion	Footfall Pride and Safety
Identity of 15 minute neighbourhood – carbon neutral	Strong and welcoming community	Increase footfall and reduction in vacancy rates
Improving Climate Change resilience	Access to services in one place	Increase in pride in place for those who live , work and visit
Lifting the quality of existing green and open space	Holistic approach through partnership working	Increase in people feeling safe.

Potential Interventions – ideas longlist by category

Local Business

- Arts hub located in the Town Centre using existing vacant building
- Regular festival or event organised by the Council. Council to provide seed funding which would decrease as event generates additional income in future years. Consideration of an arts sculpture trail

People and Skills

- Green skills training, linked to potential development of green space, working with Medway Valley Countryside Partnership.
- Arts Hub in Town Centre

Communities and Place

- New green space located on the top of the Town Centre car park
- Uplifting current green spaces throughout the Town and Town Centre to make Maidstone more attractive to residents and visitors, including outdoor gym equipment along the river
- Activate and animate – well being project using Brenchley Gardens
- Focused financial inclusion collaboration to help vulnerable people in the town centre, sharing data to identify and target support.
- Health hub in Town Centre – integrated care provided by multidisciplinary teams as a walk in facility

Potential Interventions – priority listing

High Priority and Strong Strategic Fit

- **New green space on the roof of the existing car park in the Town Centre. Use of the space could incorporate community activities, commercial activities and green initiatives.**
- **Green skills training – linked to the above (and potentially making use of the physical space) investing in green skills training for Maidstone.**
- **Uplift of existing parks green space throughout the town centre to make the area more appealing to residents and visitors. Research shows close links between green space and improved health and wellbeing outcomes.**
- **New annual event (or events) programme aimed at drawing more visitors to Maidstone. This could include a sculpture trail of iguanodons linked to parks. Whilst a highly popular idea this will require significant logistical support from the Council and is likely to cost more than just the UKSPF allocation.**

Medium Priority

- Improved night-time economy through partnership with local faith groups to align to existing priorities.
- Improved community outreach and information sharing with target groups
- Arts hub located in Town Centre, making use of existing venues
- 'Go Green' information centre, with businesses demonstrating green ideas and technology to residents.

Low Priority, too expensive or poor strategic fit

- Integrated Health & Wellbeing drop in centre located in the Town Centre or using the Trinity building

Appendix Three

Interventions Proposals

Ref	Project	Related Intervention	Estimated cost	Outcomes	Feedback
One	Activate and Animate for wellbeing - held in Brenchley Gardens, Trinity Park, Fairmeadow, Amphitheatre Commit to ongoing spring/ summer Olympia boxing scheme at Brenchley Gardens – outreach to young people supporting Youth Service outreach work. Install outdoor table tennis equipment at Trinity Park and Brenchley Gardens Annual series of Wellbeing Sessions across town location : morning and lunchtime Tai Chi, Mediation, Yoga. Coaching sessions at new Fairmeadow fitness station – 5pm – 6pm.	E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces.	£200,000	Increased footfall Increased visitor numbers Increased use of cycleways or paths Jobs created Improved perception of facilities/amenities Increased users of facilities/amenities Improved perceived/experienced accessibility	
Two	Activity/Outdoor Gym – Callisthenics - Fairmeadow Riverside spaces. Provides a free to use outdoor gym experience – a destination from town centre and for walkers and joggers on towpath; synergy with nearby boat café. Activation of open spaces that have potential to increase footfall, improve health outcomes, provide a focus and identity for Fairmeadow. If space allows additional provision of interactive equipment that provide an element of competition/gamification of fitness. Space would provide for coaching and training providers to develop their business.	E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces.	£106,500	Increased footfall Increased visitor number Increased use of cycleways or paths Jobs created Improved perception of facilities/amenities Increased users of facilities/amenities Improved perceived/experienced accessibility	In Suggested shortlist
Three	Arts Hub - The Project: Community Arts Hub & Maker Space Utilise an empty unit/building in the town centre and repurpose to provide: • Low cost exhibition space for	E6: Support for local arts, cultural,	£50,000	Jobs created Jobs safeguarded Increased footfall	In Suggested shortlist

Appendix Three

Ref	Project	Related Intervention	Estimated cost	Outcomes	Feedback
	<p>local artists and creatives• Space to deliver arts activities and workshops for the local community• Retail area where creatives can hire a shelf/unit to sell their products• Space for community arts groups to meet/rehearse (e.g. local choirs)• 6 – 8 low-rent studios for use by local artists and creatives• Mix of clean and messy studio spaces• Informal meeting area(s) to facilitate networking and collaboration• Potential to employ an ‘artist in residence’ to lead activities or to work with different artists/groups to deliver• Focal point for arts in the town• Base for town centre events and festivalsArtists and creatives can be offered discounted hire rates in exchange for giving some of their time to lead workshops and/or help manage the facility.If the right premises can be identified there is potential to enhance the offer to include small-scale theatrical productions/music performances/open-mic sessions/comedy nights/poetry readings, etc. which could also contribute to the early evening and night-time economy.</p>	<p>heritage and creative activities.</p>		<p>Increased visitor numbers Improved engagement numbers Improved perception of facilities/amenities Number of community-led arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes as a result of support Improved perception of events</p>	
<p>Four</p>	<p>Beam - Scheme which enables councils, communities and employers to support those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness Purchase of a system – BEAM which enables councils, communities and employers to support those who are homeless or at risk of homelessness through a caseworker who works on a support plan and the community supports through donation and support and through this they are supported into work, long term accommodation. This process removes barriers to sustaining housing.Employment Support includes• Budgeting, Identifying a suitable career path and related job training, Support with CV and job applications, Interview preparation Access to employer partners Laptops, mobile phones, wifi, Clothes and travel Childcare</p>	<p>E33: Employment support for economically inactive people:</p>	<p>60,000 - £80,000</p>	<p>Number of economically inactive individuals in receipt of benefits they are entitled to following support Increased active or sustained participants of UKSPF beneficiaries in community groups (and/or) increased</p>	<p>Project can be funded from alternative sources</p>

Appendix Three

Ref	Project	Related Intervention	Estimated cost	Outcomes	Feedback
	<p>costsHousing Support includes• 1:1 budgeting and affordability sessions, Tenancy training, Tenancy search support, Landlord introductions and management for 12 months, Rental deposit, plus 1st months rent advance, Basic home furnishings, Moving van costs</p>			<p>employability through development of interpersonal skills Increased proportion of participants with basic skills (English, maths, digital and ESOL) Number of people in supported employment (and) number of people engaging with mainstream healthcare services Number of people sustaining engagement with keyworker support and additional services Number of people engaged in job-searching following support</p>	
Five	<p>Go green info centre - Pop up, walk in community information centre for residents to access information and see real world solutions to help them become more sustainable. People who are confused, sceptical or don't know where to start can drop by for advice, resources, and to see sustainable solutions, products and services already other there that can help them become more sustainable. Local sustainable businesses are invited to</p>	<p>E13: Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to</p>	<p>£150,000 - £200,000</p>	<p>Number of people reached Number of organisations receiving financial support other than grants Number of</p>	<p>Pilot due to go live, limited link to intervention. If successful potential to</p>

Appendix Three

Ref	Project	Related Intervention	Estimated cost	Outcomes	Feedback
	showcase and demonstrate their goods and services for free to reach local people and create clarity and confidence in making greener choices. Where possible the centre will also be used for events, talks and coincide with other climate and biodiversity campaigns subject to funding and staff/expert availability	improve energy efficiency, and combat fuel poverty and climate change.		organisations receiving grants Number of organisations receiving non-financial support Number of households receiving support Number of households supported to take up energy efficiency measures Greenhouse gas reductions Increased take up of energy efficiency measures	be funded elsewhere
Six	Green Walls for Pride in place and improved mental well being -Enhancing Greenery in Town Centre - Green/Living Walls for Pride in place and improved mental well being. Numerous viable greening initiatives have been scoped in Maidstone Town Centre to improve green aesthetics, create biodiversity corridors, and mitigate the impacts of climate change. For example, two areas have been scoped as viable for large scale green or living walls, and the High Street area of Maidstone Town Centre has been accessed in terms of planting additional urban trees/hedge rows, Installing Large Tree Planters in pedestrianised areas to allow for continued access and flexibility.	E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces.	£150,000 - £200,000	Increased footfall Increased visitor numbers Increased use of cycleways or paths Jobs created Improved perception of facilities/amenities Increased users of facilities/amenities Improved perceived/experienced accessibility	Project can be funded from alternative sources

Appendix Three

Ref	Project	Related Intervention	Estimated cost	Outcomes	Feedback
Seven	Health and Wellness Centre/ developing trinity foyer		TBC		Project can be funded from alternative sources
Eight	Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty		147,200		Project rejected across Kent
Nine	Lighting the Town Centre creating a safe space and making the most of our lovely buildings.	E1: Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets, including better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs.E5: Design and management of the built and landscaped environment to 'design out crime'.	TBC	Jobs created Jobs safeguarded Increase footfall Increased visitor numbers Reduced vacancy rates Greenhouse gas reductions Improved perceived/experienced accessibility Improved perception of facilities/amenities	In Suggested shortlist
Ten	Maidstone's Green Team; a volunteer programme for people experiencing mental health issues who live in the town centre to undertake practical outdoor activity focused on nature and horticulture. The Team would be supported and led by a professional therapeutic	E35: Activities such as enrichment and volunteering to improve	£60,000-£80,000	Number of people supported to participate in education	In Suggested shortlist

Appendix Three

Ref	Project	Related Intervention	Estimated cost	Outcomes	Feedback
	<p>horticulture specialist, providing training and support to build skills and confidence. The Team will maintain and improve green spaces in the town centre (council/ partners/ privately owned) contributing to improved place, sense of pride and belonging. This will be promoted and celebrated to improve wider public perception of new residents.</p>	<p>opportunities and promote wellbeing.</p>		<p>Number of volunteering opportunities supported Number of people taking part in work experience programmes Increased number of people familiarised with employers' expectations, including, standards of behaviour in the workplace Fewer people facing structural barriers into employment and into skills provision</p>	
<p>Eleven</p>	<p>To support and promote new and existing arts and culture events in Maidstone Town Centre to help establish the pride of place and create an image of what Maidstone is known for. Through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advertisement of existing planned events for 2022/23 • Support new and existing activities in the Town Centre through the creation of a grant pot for new events • Purchase of specialist equipment for events in order to be able to support new events and commissioned events • Hire of Freelance event organiser to plan 3 events for 2023/24 including; Harvest Food Festival and Christmas Market. 	<p>E6: Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities.</p>	<p>£300,000-£400,000</p>	<p>Jobs created Jobs safeguarded Increased footfall Increased visitor numbers Improved engagement numbers Improved perception of facilities/amenities Number of community-led</p>	<p>In Suggested shortlist</p>

Appendix Three

Ref	Project	Related Intervention	Estimated cost	Outcomes	Feedback
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fund the Light Up Festival in February 2023 * Working with faith partners to ensure cultural events for all communities year round 			arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes as a result of support Improved perception of events	
Twelve	Multi-storey car park roof top Green Space/Park/Events Area (The Mall Car park Maidstone Town Centre)	E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces.	£50,000-£150,000	Increased footfall Increased visitor numbers Increased use of cycleways or paths Jobs created Improved perception of facilities/amenities Increased users of facilities/amenities Improved perceived/experienced accessibility	Concerns regarding limited impact
Thirteen	Mini Iggy Trail- a quiet Invasion of Iguanodons! Purpose of this trail is to introduce residents /visitors to the town centre offer of parks , open spaces , town centre features, history with a unique fun, tiny sculptural trail of 'Iggies'. The trail can be promoted from Maidstone's 'Mother Iggy' at Maidstone East – promotional material available through the Museum and online. Each park would have a unique resin-bronze mini Iggy discretely placed at each location and definitely not placed in full view ie. Create an element of discovery but the character of the area is retained to the general public. Suggested	E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with	£60,000	Increased footfall Increased visitor numbers Increased use of cycleways or paths Jobs created Improved perception of facilities/amenities Increased users of facilities/amenities	In Suggested shortlist

Appendix Three

Ref	Project	Related Intervention	Estimated cost	Outcomes	Feedback
	size 30-35cm tall.Project lends itself to social media posts photos, collecting a full set , education pack. It is accessible , free and inclusive and can be used at the simplest level by small children yet also provide a means to engage with adults Each Iggy can have it's own tale to tell about the area , it's history , or provide a creative writing platform . They can be utilised for seasonal events too.	incorporating natural features into wider public spaces.		Improved perceived/experienced accessibility	
Four-teen	The One You Kent Service is a health improvement service aiming to help adults across the county avoid future diseases caused by modern day life. One You' aims to encourage adults to take control of their health to enjoy significant benefits in life expectancy and healthy life expectancy. Everyday habits and behaviours, such as eating too much unhealthy food, drinking more than is recommended, continuing to smoke and not being active enough, are responsible for around 40% of all deaths in England.Healthy changes start with little changes. Whether you want to lose weight, get active, quit smoking, or just feel better about life One You Kent is here to support YOU.The Interactive Health Kiosk is an invaluable tool to check the health of your workforce, community, organisation or individual. The Health Kiosk is portable, quick, easy to use and delivers immediate confidential results. Taking a Health MOT can take from as little as 8 minutes enabling users to self-test key indicators of their general health and wellbeing and walk away with an anonymous printout of their results with a comparison to medical accepted standards. The Interactive Health Kiosk is effective as an early warning system for potential health problems such as high blood pressure.The Health MOT Roadshow is a mobile unit designed to deliver health MOTs to individuals. Targeting areas of health inequality, the Roadshow enables	E15: Investment and support for digital infrastructure for local community facilities.	TBC	Greater engagement as a result of support Improved perception of facility/infrastructure project	Project funded from elsewhere

Appendix Three

Ref	Project	Related Intervention	Estimated cost	Outcomes	Feedback
	<p>members of the community to have one-to-one sessions with trained staff and use of Wellbeing People’s Interactive Health Kiosk. The Recalibrate Wellbeing® Programme is an online coach-led course that promotes behavioural change. This 12-week wellbeing programme focuses on 4 key elements that bring about transformational and sustainable results: Mindset, Nutrition, Movement & Lifestyle</p>				
Fifteen	<p>Promoting the Town Centre to Increase Pride in the Borough - Create and Establish a Brand for Maidstone Town Centre—so that residents, businesses and visitors identify with what Maidstone stands for. To do this we will commission an external expert agency to create a brand and communications strategy e.g. Love Ashford and Love where you live. This will include engagement and reach on social media. Improve and Increase our digital presence• Temporarily increase expertise on digital reach – either commission or hire expertise to improve our digital presence and maximise brand impact. It is vital now more than ever to keep the innovative communication going through social media platforms and take advantage of local marketing campaigns to build brand awareness and reach a wider audience both locally and from new visitors to their high street. • A Digital High Street – create a dedicated website for Maidstone Town Centre to include places to stay, things to do, shopping, food and drink, latest events, venue hire, travel and parking. Example - first one launched in Ashford (www.loveashford.com) promotes everything that is happening in the town centre. This type of website that could be created include Canterbury / Herne Bay – https://www.canterbury.co.uk/homepage/48/buy_in_the_bay Borough Insight - a dedicated edition of the magazine focusing on shopping, food and drink, events,</p>	<p>E8: Funding for the development and promotion of wider campaigns which encourage people to visit and explore the local area. E17: Funding for the development and promotion (both trade and consumer) of the visitor economy, such as local attractions, trails, tours and tourism products more generally.</p>	£150,000	<p>Increased footfall Increased visitor numbers Increased number of web searches for a place Reduced vacancy rates</p>	In Suggested shortlist

Appendix Three

Ref	Project	Related Intervention	Estimated cost	Outcomes	Feedback
	venue hire, travel and parking in the Town Centre. One edition annually Creating inward investment brochures – Maidstone a premiere town to get people to come in to invest Promotional Video created– create positive images of Maidstone that can be used online– for leisure, business, communities, homes, shops, restaurants, parks and heritage. There are a huge number of activities coming up in July 2022 that would showcase the town centre – needs to be captured so it can be used in future years as well as capturing future events so a video that can be added too and clipped as needed depending on promotion purpose.				
Sixteen	Royal British Legion Industries, delivery of the Building Better Opportunities Projects		TBC		Insufficient information supplied – appears out of area
Seventeen	Targeted financial inclusion projects/targeted community outreach - Targeted project work focused on an identified area of concern – for example looking at financial uptake in certain groups, like pensioners/or families struggling with fuel/food poverty, as well as projects where it is the actual benefit that we are trying to promote/increase, like Council Tax Support or Free School Meals(FSM)/Healthy Start Vouchers. With this sort of project you can also concentrate on certain areas within the borough, that we know struggle with deprivation, like Parkwood/Shepway.It would be a great opportunity to work collaboratively with other agencies, NHS/Housing Associations/DWP/Local Schools/Charities and Local Communities. The dream project if we had resources would be to complete a project where we could pool the data held with our partners, concentrate on a specific area – for example Council Tax Support Take UP, and	E13: Community measures to reduce the cost of living, including through measures to improve energy efficiency, and combat fuel poverty and climate change.	TBC	Number of people reached Number of organisations receiving financial support other than grants Number of organisations receiving grants Number of organisations receiving non-financial support Number of households receiving support	Project can be achieved through alternative means

Appendix Three

Ref	Project	Related Intervention	Estimated cost	Outcomes	Feedback
	each resident that we are in contact with is provided with a holistic review of their needs. So not only are we getting Council Tax Support uptake, but if there is a need we refer for any additional benefits, complete applications for FSM, refer for digital uptake and any other support.			Number of households supported to take up energy efficiency measures Greenhouse gas reductions Increased take up of energy efficiency measures	
Eigh-teen	Young Person GREENSKILLS volunteer Programme Work with our project partners at Medway Valley Countryside Partnership to create a supported environmental volunteering and learning programme specifically targeted towards 16-20 years olds . There is an appetite amongst this cohort of young people to want to take action for their environment and for biodiversity and other drivers such as Duke of Edinburgh Awards and National Citizen Service create a desire to seek out suitable long term volunteering opportunities. Session would run 40 weeks of the year in sync with academic year – 9.30- 12.30 every Saturday at a location listed above or close environs facilitated by experienced staff from MVCP who would provide tools, gloves , leadership, insurance and risk management. Tasks would range from litter removal, habitat creation and management, making and installing nest boxes, environmental art, planting trees and gardening. Engagement with young people to create tangible positive outcomes in the townscape, builds self-esteem, builds connections and pride in one’s home town and a greater understanding of how to be an active citizen for the ‘now’ and into the future.	E9: Funding for impactful volunteering and/or social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places.	£22,000	Improved engagement numbers Volunteering numbers as a result of support	In Suggested shortlist

Appendix Four

Final Shortlist of Interventions

Project	Intervention	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	Outcomes (taken from Government Guidance)
<p>Project A - Building Pride in Place through promotion of the Town Centre and Events. (original projects eleven, Thirteen and Fifteen combined):</p> <p>Actions and Costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Creative communities funds for local organisations and groups to support events £30,000 per annum •Festive Trail event – working with One Maidstone to create a festive trail to run through the Town Centre from the last week of November through to December £20,000 in year 1 •Advertising budget to promote events across all channels £20,000 per annum •Borough Insight Events and Town centre focussed £25,000 per annum •Events Expertise to develop bespoke events £5,000 in year 1 and £20,000 in year 2 and year 3 •Promotional video for business and events in TC £10,000 year 1, £5,000 years 2 and 3 •Equipment purchase to support events £10,000 year 1 and £20,000 year 3 •Iggy Sculpture Trail, £60,000 in year •Arts Carnival £20,000 in year 2 and 3 – making the July event bigger than present this will include engaging more schools and community groups with 	<p>E1: Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets, including better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs.</p> <p>E5: Design and management of the built and landscaped environment to 'design out crime'.</p> <p>E6: Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities.</p> <p>E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces.</p>	£120,000	£175,000	£180,000	<p>Jobs created Jobs safeguarded Increased footfall Increased visitor numbers Improved engagement numbers Improved perception of facilities/amenities Number of community-led arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes as a result of support Improved perception of events Increased footfall Increased use of cycleways or paths Increased users of facilities/amenities Improved perceived/experienced accessibility</p>

Appendix Four

Project	Intervention	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	Outcomes (taken from Government Guidance)
<p>the creative workshops as well as potentially adding a skills training scheme for emerging local artists and producers to create a stronger, lasting legacy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner for Elmer 2, £60,000 in year 3 					
<p>Project B - A Safe and Attractive Town Centre achieved through Greening and Lighting (Original Projects Six, Nine, Ten and Eighteen): have been combined for exploration through a feasibility study in year 1, £20,000 before any works are approved. The feasibility study will be combined with other work required for the Town Centre Strategy so the amount allocated reflects the study being partly funded from the TCS allocation</p> <p>Project C - Ten and Eighteen combined: Green Volunteering Project to Improve Town Centre Green Spaces, Increase Volunteering and Improve Wellbeing</p> <p>the remit has been widened to provide volunteering to all age groups.</p> <p>A volunteering project will be commissioned externally through Involve this will be supported by our parks and open spaces manager</p>	<p>E1: Funding for improvements to town centres and high streets, including better accessibility for disabled people, including capital spend and running costs.</p> <p>E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces.</p> <p>E5: Design and management of the built and landscaped environment to 'design out crime'.</p> <p>E9: Funding for impactful volunteering and/or social action projects to develop social and human capital in local places</p>	<p>£20,000</p>	<p>£60,000</p>	<p>£440,000</p>	<p>Increased footfall Increased visitor numbers Jobs created Improved perception of facilities/amenities Increased users of facilities/amenities Improved perceived/experienced accessibility Jobs safeguarded Reduced vacancy rates Number of people supported to participate in education Number of volunteering opportunities supported Number of people taking part in work experience programmes Increased number of people familiarised with employers' expectations, including, standards of behaviour in the workplace Fewer people facing structural barriers into employment and into skills provision</p>

Appendix Four

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Project	Intervention	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	Outcomes (taken from Government Guidance)
<p>50 volunteers per annum</p> <p>Cost breakdown, £60,000 in year 2 and 3: Salary of Horticultural Therapist- £35k including oncosts. Project Leader (Vol recruitment, support, coordination and identification and management of sites) £20k (part time role, includes on costs)</p> <p>Contribution towards materials, plants, tools, insurance, health and safety, rent for storage, use of vehicle, recruitment and management costs £5k. Involve will also match fund £15k per year</p> <p>Project will begin in council owned/leased or accessed sites in the town centre, with plans for future sites to be taken on as the scheme grows to unloved sites in the town centre, e.g. Fairmeadow</p>	<p>E35: Activities such as enrichment and volunteering to improve opportunities and promote wellbeing.</p>				<p>Improved engagement numbers Volunteering numbers as a result of support</p>
<p>Project C - A Community Arts Hub & Maker Space (Original project three)</p> <p>Utilise an empty unit/building in the town centre and repurpose to provide:</p>	<p>E6: Support for local arts, cultural, heritage and creative activities.</p>		<p>£5,000</p>	<p>£45,000 est</p>	<p>Jobs created Jobs safeguarded Increased footfall Increased visitor numbers Improved engagement numbers</p>

Appendix Four

Project	Intervention	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	Outcomes (taken from Government Guidance)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low cost exhibition space for local artists and creatives • Space to deliver arts activities and workshops for the local community • Retail area where creatives can hire a shelf/unit to sell their products • Space for community arts groups to meet/rehearse (e.g. local choirs) • 6 – 8 low-rent studios for use by local artists and creatives • Mix of clean and messy studio spaces • Informal meeting area(s) to facilitate networking and collaboration • Potential to employ an ‘artist in residence’ to lead activities or to work with different artists/groups to deliver • Focal point for arts in the town • Base for town centre events and festivals. Artists and creatives can be offered discounted hire rates in exchange for giving some of their time to lead workshops and/or help manage the facility <p>If the right premises can be identified there is potential to enhance the offer to include small-scale theatrical productions/music performances/open-mic sessions/comedy nights/poetry readings, etc. which could also contribute to the early evening and night-time economy. A site appraisal to identify the best space will be undertaken in 2023/24, and work may begin that year on the space – budget dependent</p>					<p>Improved perception of facilities/amenities Number of community-led arts, cultural, heritage and creative programmes as a result of support Improved perception of events</p>

Appendix Four

Project	Intervention	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	Outcomes (taken from Government Guidance)
<p>Project D - Links from the Town Centre to Lockmeadow - Activity/Outdoor Gym – Callisthenics – (original project two</p> <p>It is a good idea to provide facilities/activities to draw people between the town centre and Lockmeadow; the play equipment recently installed at Lockmeadow has been very popular.</p> <p>Fairmeadow Riverside spaces. Provides a free to use outdoor gym experience – a destination from town centre and for walkers and joggers on towpath; synergy with nearby boat café.</p> <p>Activation of open spaces that have potential to increase footfall, improve health outcomes, provide a focus and identity along with an opportunity to uplift the area and renew existing facilities in the area.</p> <p>If space allows additional provision of interactive equipment that provide an element of competition/gamification of fitness. Space would provide for coaching and training providers to develop their business.</p>	<p>E3: Creation of and improvements to local green spaces, community gardens, watercourses and embankments, along with incorporating natural features into wider public spaces.</p>		<p>£40,000</p>	<p>£66,500</p>	<p>Increased footfall Increased visitor number Increased use of cycleways or paths Jobs created Improved perception of facilities/amenities Increased users of facilities/amenities Improved perceived/experienced accessibility</p>

Project	2022/2023	2023/2024	2024/2025	Total
Projects A - Building Pride in Place through promotion of the Town Centre and Events.	£120,000	£175,000	£180,000	£475,000
Project B - A Safe and Attractive Town Centre achieved through Greening and Lighting supported by volunteering	£20,000	£60,000	£440,000	£520,000
Project C - A Community Arts Hub & Maker Space		£5,000	£45,000	£50,000
Project D - Links from the town centre to Lockmeadow - Activity/Outdoor Gym – Callisthenics –		£40,000	£66,500	£106,500
Total Projects	£140,000	£280,000	£731,500	£1,151,500
Total Project Management	£5,821.60	£11,643.24	£30,505.28	£47,970
Total Spend	£145,822	£291,643	£762,005	£1,199,470
Government Planned Spend	£145,540	£291,081	£762,632	£1,199,253
Difference	-£282	-£562	£627	-£217

Total Check

£1,151,500

£1,199,470

Communities, Housing and Environment Committee Policy Advisory Committee

12 July 2022

Food Service Plan 2022 - 23

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Communities, Housing and Environment Committee Policy Advisory Committee	12 July 2022
Lead Member on the Executive for Environmental Services	14 July 2022

Will this be a Key Decision?	No
Urgency	Urgent 28-day notice requirement relating to exempt information has been waived by the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in accordance with Rule 16, Part C4 of the council's Constitution
Final Decision-Maker	LEAD MEMBER ON THE EXECUTIVE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
Lead Head of Service	John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Community Services
Lead Officer and Report Author	Tracey Beattie Environmental Health Manager & Annmarie Goodwin – Food & Safety Team Leader
Classification	Public Report & Appendix 1 Exempt Appendix Appendix 2: Food Standards Agency Covid Recovery Plan. The appendix contains exempt information as classified in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 in that it contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any

	particular person (including the authority holding that information). The public interest in maintaining this exemption outweighs the public interest in its disclosure as the Food Standards Agency have requested that any reference to the COVID_19 Local Authority Recovery Plan be treated as confidential..
Wards affected	all

Executive Summary

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) require all food law enforcement authorities to prepare a Food Service Plan to reflect achievements, plan for future challenges and identify resource to meet this need.

The Food Service Plan is subject to urgency requirements as the 28-day notice period for private information has not been met in this instance. This is due to the deadline for the Food Service Plan to be agreed and submitted to the FSA by 15 July 2022.

Purpose of Report

Recommendation

This report makes the following recommendation to the Communities, Housing and Environment Policy Advisory Committee to Recommend to the Lead Executive Member to:

1. To approve the Mid Kent Food Service Plan 2022-23 (Appendix 1).

Food Service Plan 2022 - 23

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 <p>Accepting the recommendation will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve Safe, Clean and Green.</p>	Tracey Beattie
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 achievement of the Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced cross cutting objective by helping to ensure food available to all residents is safe to eat.</p>	Tracey Beattie
Risk Management	<p>The Food Service Plan seeks to reduce risk to the Council of failing to deliver a service to meet the food law responsibilities by prioritising recruitment and retention of appropriately qualified staff.</p> <p>No health and safety implications have been identified.</p>	Tracey Beattie
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so 	Paul Holland

	need no new funding for implementation.	
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The current staffing level is not sustainable given the service demands and we need to review the service to ensure we continue with a core of well trained and competent officers 	Tracey Beattie
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepting the recommendations will fulfil the Council's duties under Food Standards Act 1999. Failure to accept the recommendations without agreeing suitable alternatives may place the Council in breach of Food Standards Act 1999 	Robin Harris
Information Governance	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council Processes.	Information Governance Team
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Equalities & Communities Officer
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. In accepting the recommendations, the Council would be fulfilling the requirements of the Health Inequalities Plan 	Tracey Beattie
Crime and Disorder	There are no Crime and Disorder implications.	Tracey Beattie
Procurement	Not applicable	Tracey Beattie
Biodiversity and Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no implications on biodiversity and climate change. 	Tracey Beattie

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Food Standards Agency (FSA) require all food law enforcement authorities to prepare a Food Service Plan to reflect achievements, plan for future challenges and identify resource to meet this need.
- 2.2 Given the impact the Covid_19 pandemic has had on the hospitality sector, together with the recruitment difficulties we are experiencing, due to a national shortage of competent enforcement officers, this service plan outlines the challenges that lie ahead for the service and how managers and officers intend to respond.
- 2.3 At this point in time, with the UK position of importing food into the country, the impact of the UK leaving the EU is not anticipated to impact on the service.
- 2.4 The FSA require the Food Service Plan to demonstrate we follow principles of:
 - Good regulation.
 - Focus on key delivery issues and outcomes.
 - Provide an essential link with corporate and financial planning.
 - Set objectives for the future and identify major issues that cross service boundaries.
 - Provide a means of managing performance and making performance comparisons; and
 - Provide information on the authority's service delivery to stakeholders, including businesses and consumers.

The format for the plan is set down by the FSA, and as a shared service we benefit by providing comparison information for all partnership local authorities, Maidstone, Swale and Tunbridge Wells.

- 2.5 The Covid-19 pandemic has had a major impact on the delivery of food enforcement over the last two years. The effect of numerous lockdowns on the hospitality sector is well documented, but for food enforcement this meant that the inspections that were due during times of lockdown have caused a backlog of inspections, that need to be addressed.
- 2.6 Locally, Kent has seen the creation of a new Border Inspection Post at Ashford and the reinstalment of Dover as one the busiest ports of entry to the country from Europe. This has had an impact on our ability to recruit and retain competent officers for food enforcement by creating even more competition for staff, on top of the competition from London authorities, plus individuals making life changes.
- 2.7 Lockdowns saw a surge in new food business registrations, a trend which is continuing. Some of these businesses are transitory (furloughed individuals) but they impact on officer time as we must process their registration, arrange visits for an initial hygiene risk rating, provide guidance and advise them.

- 2.8 The pandemic also required the service to respond to the numerous Covid enforcement measures, diverting resource to projects and activities as the county went through Tiers, Steps and eventually the opening of the economy.
-

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

1. Approve the Mid Kent Food Service Plan 2022-23 (Appendix 1)
 2. Don't approve the Mid Kent Food Service Plan (Appendix 1) - This would be counter to the requirement of the FSA Framework Agreement and suggest that the authority was not having due regard for their food law enforcement responsibilities.
 3. Do nothing – as point 2.
-

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To approve the Mid Kent Food Service Plan 2022-23 (Appendix 1). It outlines the service achievements and future challenges we are aware of. It covers just one year as the FSA anticipate introducing a modernised food enforcement programme in 2023/24.

There are two focuses for the work of the team for the coming year:

- Recruitment and retention of authorised officers
- Recovery of the inspection programme

The current staffing level is not sustainable given the service demands and we need to review the service to ensure we continue with a core of well trained and competent officers.

We will work closely with the Director of Finance and Business Improvement to ensure that the service remains within the financial parameters for the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

5. RISK

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. We are satisfied that the associated risks are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy. However, missing the FSA submission deadline could suggest the Council does not have due regard to its enforcement responsibilities which would not align with the risk appetite

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

Consultation is taking place via the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee Policy Advisory Committee prior to the decision made by the relevant Lead Member.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

7.1 The Mid Kent Food Service Plan 2022 -23 (Appendix 1) must be published on the Maidstone Borough Council website following approval.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix 1: Mid Kent Food Service Plan 2022-23
 - Appendix 2: Food Standards Agency Food Recovery Plan 2022-23 (EXEMPT)
-

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None



MID KENT ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

FOOD SERVICE PLAN

2022– 2023

Introduction

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This plan explains the work undertaken by the Food and Safety Team, Mid Kent Environmental Health Service (MKEH). It has regard to the Food Standards Agency’s Food Law Code of Practice and looks forward to for the next year following which we anticipate the Food Standards Agency (FSA) to announce changes in the enforcement model.

MKEH Food and Safety Service aims to protect and improve the quality of life of the local community, workforce, and visitors to the districts of Maidstone, Swale and Tunbridge Wells. Officers are based at two locations – Sittingbourne and Tunbridge Wells but have utilised remote working as a way of maximising efficiency of time and planning visits and interventions; they also have access to Maidstone House when working in Maidstone.

The purpose of the Food & Safety Service, in relation to its food activity, is to reduce risk to the public from food purchased, produced, or eaten in the Mid Kent area. We have a responsibility to ensure we provide accurate and timely advice to food businesses, based on national guidance produced by the FSA. Most of the team’s work focuses on food safety, health and safety at work, infectious disease control and the registration of tattooing, cosmetic piercing etc. The service also delivers shellfish monitoring for Swale and animal welfare for Tunbridge Wells.

Food composition, labelling, and feed stuffs are dealt with by Kent County Council Trading Standards.

Included in this service plan is:

- Where we work and what we do
- How we deliver our food service
- Our achievements 2018 - 2021
- Planning ahead and the challenges we face

1. Where we work

The service is delivered from Swale House, Sittingbourne and Town Hall, Tunbridge Wells. Officers use Maidstone House as a place of work when working in or near the town, for meetings with other service areas and for administrative needs.

We support home working in line with HR policies to ensure that officers work efficiently and flexibly. We work according to business demands including evening and weekend visits to premises that are inaccessible during 'normal' working hours.

Tunbridge Wells

The main urban area is the historic town of Royal Tunbridge Wells and Southborough and the two market towns of Cranbrook and Paddock Wood. Beyond these towns, the Borough is predominantly rural in character and nearly 70% of the borough is designated as an area of outstanding natural beauty. There are eleven premises approved under EU Vertical Directives, including a cheese manufacturer, meat and fish products and cold stores.

Swale

There are eleven premises approved under EU Vertical Directives, including a cheese manufacturer, meat and fish products and a cold store. Sittingbourne has one of the largest bottling and packing plants in Europe for cherries and other fruit, whilst Faversham has one of the oldest breweries in the country. In the summer months there is an increase in fast food and mobile food operators within the district and a general increase in business as tourism attracts an influx of people, especially on caravan and chalet sites on the Isle of Sheppey. As a coastal authority the Council has responsibility for sampling of shellfish from the Swale.

Maidstone

Maidstone is the county town of Kent and has the largest population of all the Kent Districts. A large, diverse number of food premises are situated in the town centre which also has a vibrant night-time economy. There are many catering establishments in the rural communities with much of the countryside designated areas of outstanding natural beauty. The M20 corridor along the north of the borough provides easy access to Europe and the rest of Britain for a number of food distribution sites. Maidstone has a flourishing weekly market (Tuesdays and Saturdays). Ten premises are approved under EU Vertical Directives, including dairy, meat, and egg products.

Table 1: Total Premises and EU Approved Premises

	Maidstone	Swale	Tunbridge Wells
EU Approved Premises	10	11	11
Total Number of Food Establishments (as reported in 20/21 Food Standards Agency return)	1488	1384	1292

All districts have a proportion of food establishments catering for world cuisines such as, European, Asian, Indian, Chinese, Nepalese, Mexican and many employees whose first language is not English.

1.1. Our Service Standards

We pride ourselves on the professionalism, integrity, and experience of our officers. The service reports to the MKS Shared Service Board for Environmental Health, members at each authority, and the public. As food authorities we must ensure we work to the standards defined by the Food Standards Agency Code of Practice and associated Practice Guidance as well as meeting the standards set by the Health and Safety Executive. We also ensure all officers' competency is maintained in line with FSA's competency framework. We also ensure that each officer working in food safety maintains their annual minimum of 10 hours Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in food safety matters to comply with the Food Law Code of Practice and 10 hours made up from other professional matters.

Our performance standards include:

- Responding to service requests within 5 working days
- Carrying out all food interventions within the timescales in the Food Standards Agency Code of Practice.
- Ensuring regular updates of national food hygiene rating scores (FHRS) to the Food Standards Agency website
- Applying a risk-based approach to prioritizing new food businesses

1.2. How we provide information, guidance, and advice

We carry out advisory visits to food premises on request and payment of the relevant fee; we do respond to enquiries via the telephone or e-mail and make no charge. We provide technical information and signpost to national standards, guidance, and legal requirements. Each authority website provides help and guidance with links to other reference sources and is updated regularly.

MKEH have a dedicated and trained administration team who triage many enquiries, update database information and are responsible for collation of system information. They can be contacted at:

01622 602460 or 01622 602450

e-mail: ehadmin@midkent.gov.uk

1.3. How we check compliance with the law, assess risks and let those we regulate know what they should expect from us.

We visit food businesses and respond to customer service requests. Using the Food Standards Agency Food Law Code of Practice, we assess the risks to food safety and rate businesses accordingly. This process governs how often we will visit a food premises, for example, with A rated businesses (the highest risk) receiving visits every 6 months.

We give feedback to food business operators, verbally and in writing at the time of visiting, distinguishing between what is required by law and recommendations of good practice. If a business is rated 0-2 for National Food Hygiene Rating, then a letter including photographs, when appropriate, is sent providing further detail. These letters are sent to ensure that the food business operator is clear about the work needed to comply with food laws.

Additionally, we give eligible businesses a rating under the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) which is published on the Food Standards Agency website. Ratings can vary between 0 [urgent improvement necessary] to 5 [very good]. Not all food businesses are eligible for inclusion in the scheme governed by the FSA's Brand Standard (for example home caterers and manufacturers are excluded).

We will undertake enforcement revisits to food premises where the risk to health requires action to be taken before the next inspection, usually premises with a rating of 0, 1 or 2. We charge £168 (2022/23) for requests for re-inspection for re-rating purposes. This enables those businesses that wish to improve their score quickly and demonstrate to officers they have completed the necessary work, the opportunity to have their rating reviewed, there is no limit to the number of times they can request a re-inspection for re-rating purposes. Businesses have a 'right to appeal' the officers original risk rating and a 'right to reply'. By publishing the ratings consumers can make informed decisions about premises they visit.

- **How we deal with non-compliance**

We advise and educate to achieve compliance. Persistent and/or serious non-compliance may lead us to serve statutory notices requiring action within a specified time and/or to prosecute offenders in line with our enforcement policy.

▪ **Our Enforcement Policy**

This explains in more detail our aim to provide a service that is proportionate, targeted, transparent, and consistent. All three local authorities have adopted the Government's Enforcement Concordat and we have a common Enforcement Policy based upon its principles. The Enforcement Policy is consistent with the Regulator's Compliance Code.

We seek to ensure that local businesses comply with important statutory requirements designed to protect the health, safety and welfare of employees, the public and the environment whilst placing the minimum possible burden on businesses.

This is achieved by targeting food business operators posing the highest risk to food safety and taking a 'softer touch' to lower risk and fully compliant operators.

▪ **Our fees and charges and the reasons behind them**

We carry out our services because we are legally obliged to as a 'Food Authority'. We charge for the following services.

- Attestations for exporting low risk goods
- Voluntary surrender certificates for insurance claims
- Requests for a re-inspection for re-rating purposes
- Advice visits

Fees are calculated according to how much it costs us to provide the service. These must be reasonable, and we do not make a profit.

▪ **How to comment or complain about our service**

Each council has a complaints policy that can be found on their respective websites or by contacting EH Admin.

2. How We Deliver our Food Service

We do this by:

Enforcing food safety in all food premises through targeted interventions, investigate and respond to food service requests/complaints, investigate food poisoning notifications and outbreaks, undertake food sampling, imported food, infectious disease control, sampling, and classification of shellfish, and dealing with general enquiries from the public.

2.1. Programmed food hygiene inspections & Food Hygiene Rating Scheme

We target those businesses posing the highest risk to food safety, interventions are carried out in premises risk-rated as A - D, with A rated posing the highest risk. Premises rated as the lowest risk, E (unless they are Approved Premises) are targeted as part of an alternative enforcement strategy, using questionnaires every 3 years to track changes in food operations that may trigger an intervention. If a response to the questionnaire indicates higher risk activities are being carried out an inspection will be made. Visits may be made as a follow-up to a 'non-response' by a business.

Other premises will be targeted where intelligence arises from various sources including the public, FSA and neighbouring authorities or other agencies.

Premises profile

On the 1st April 2022 there were 3872 operating food premises within the Mid Kent Shared Service. The table below shows the number of food businesses in each risk category per area.

A = indicates the category with the highest risk.

O = those premises registered but outside of the inspection regime, usually because the risk is perceived to be so low or they may be inspected by other agencies.

The figures vary during the year as new businesses open, some premises close or change food business operators. Table 2 shows the FSA Local Authority Enforcement Management return figures for 2021 – 22.

Table 2: Premises by Risk Category

Category	Maidstone	Swale	Tunbridge Wells	Total
A	1	2	2	5
B	13	17	17	47
C	129	113	161	403
D	597	560	444	1601
E	660	630	526	1816
O	57	40	111	208
TOTAL	1457	1362	1261	4080

2.2. New premises

New food businesses are required to register with the local authority and are allocated to officers for inspection. The figure varies, but averages about 16 new businesses per local authority per month. An initial inspection will be carried out to assess the business risk rating and subsequent routine inspections frequency will be based on the overall risk profile.

2.3. Investigating complaints about food and food premises.

All officers are expected to respond to all food service requests within the time scales specified in the service Standard Operating Procedures, currently 5 working days. Priority is based on the perceived risk to health and depends on

information received from the complainant, the resource available. Some service requests will not be investigated as they pose no risk or we have no powers, however, contact will still be made with the complainant to advise them of this.

2.4. Investigating cases of food poisoning, food borne diseases & other infectious diseases.

We investigate cases of food poisoning, or suspected food poisoning, usually associated with food consumption. Notifications are received from the Kent branch of UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) and are investigated using Department of Health Guidelines and our Food Poisoning / Infectious Disease Investigation Procedure.

'Other' infectious diseases generally refer to Hepatitis or Legionella and we assist the UKHSA in the investigation and prevention process of a variety of infections, either locally or part of a wider outbreak.

Outbreaks of sickness and diarrhoea, often associated with Norovirus type infections are also investigated, although many people can be affected, such outbreaks are rarely associated with food safety. Where a problem of wider importance is discovered, relevant food enforcement authorities and the Food Standards Agency will be notified in accordance with the Food Law Code of Practice

2.5. Approving and monitoring compliance with food law in businesses manufacturing products of animal origin.

These 'specialist' food premises often pose a potential higher risk to food safety because they distribute their food products over wide areas, sometimes internationally. Typically, producers of meat, fish and dairy products are required to be 'approved' rather than registered with their local authority to reflect slightly more stringent requirements of food law.

2.6. Sampling and arranging for microbiological analysis of food.

Sampling is carried out in accordance with our Sampling Policy. To prioritise resources, this is based mainly on the national sampling programme produced by UKHSA and Local Government Regulation (LGR) and co-ordinated across Kent by the Food Sampling Sub-Group.

The exception to this is sampling of shellfish in the Swale estuary. 60 shellfish samples are submitted annually for microbiological examination (5 per month) with additional samples tested for the presence of algal toxins. Sampling is undertaken by the Port of London under contract with Swale BC.

The purpose of sampling is to provide potential evidence to assist when suspect food has been implicated in food illness, to gain information about emerging trends in food safety or to monitor food business controls of food likely to support bacterial growth.

We provide feedback and guidance to those food business operators on sampling results.

2.7. Maintaining a register of all Food Businesses (except exempted businesses)

We are obliged to maintain a register of food businesses within each district under the Food Law Code of Practice. This can be provided from the database on request in hard or electronic copy. It contains the name, address and nature of all the relevant food business (i.e. restaurant, manufacturer).

2.8. Food Safety Incidents & Food Alerts

We receive food alerts, either from the FSA or local businesses where action needs to be taken because of a problem with food that has been distributed, usually affecting more than one local authority area. We may need to prevent the distribution of food and help trace where it has been distributed to prevent further food safety issues.

2.9. Supporting Businesses

Imported Food Products & Checks for Illegally Imported Foods

Checks are made during our visits to businesses to make sure food can be traced back to its origins. This includes checks on imported food to ensure fitness and that it has the correct documentation.

Advice on Good Practice in relation to Food Safety

We not only enforce the law, but we give advice to food business operators and members of the public about food safety and health and safety at work. If a business asks for advice, we can give over the telephone there is no charge, however, if an advice visit is requested this is chargeable (as above). In addition to this there is information available on all 3 websites including signposts to FSA and other relevant external agencies.

2.10. Maintaining a High Quality, Professional Workforce

The service organisation chart is provided in section 5 together with the cost of the Food & Safety Service. We consider the development and training of staff important to our success in delivering quality services are to our customers.

All officers are appropriately qualified and receive regular training to maintain their level of competency and continuous professional development. Regular update training is provided in-house for policy and procedures, especially when new legislation or for changes in approach, all officers have access to a high-quality online training platform.

We have fortnightly team meetings involving all officers to promote consistency and work across boundaries to ensure targeted work is achieved. We encourage shadowing between officers including inspecting more complex food operations (approved premises) and team leaders have a programme of accompanied visits to support officer development and provide constructive feedback on inspection skills. We participate in the annual Food Standards Agency annual national consistency exercise as well periodic inhouse consistency exercises.

2.11. Working with Government Agencies & other Organisations to Maintain or Improve Standards in Food Businesses

We are committed to ensuring the enforcement approach we take is consistent with neighbouring authorities and authorities with similar premises. We have regular contact with colleagues in other Kent authorities. There is a conscious effort between the organisations to ensure that there is a consistency of working practices. Arrangements to ensure engagement and collaboration are:

- Kent & Medway Food Liaison Group - review legislation and Codes of Practice and develop good-practice guidance to be available for use by all Kent authorities.

- Kent & Medway Sampling Sub-Group - co-ordinate sampling, exchange ideas and provide low-cost training opportunities.
- Inter-Authority Audit Schemes via Kent & Medway Environmental Health Manager's Group
- Local Government Regulation (LGR) – for guidance and advice
- Food Standards Agency – for guidance and training
- UK Health Security Agency for support in sampling, food poisoning and outbreak control.
- Planning and Building Control Sections – Notification of relevant planning applications are submitted to the team for perusal and comment and food safety advice is often provided before the formal application is submitted.

3. Our Achievements in 2018 - 21

3.1. Programmed Inspections

Each authority is required to submit annual returns to the FSA. The following information provides a summary of the workload and outputs achieved by the teams over the last 3 years. There are a range of interventions carried out by the team to reflect the needs of the food businesses we regulate, this includes the programmed inspections and audits, verification & surveillance and reactive interventions such as advice and education.

Table 3: Type of Intervention Undertaken

Category of Intervention	Maidstone			Swale			Tunbridge Wells		
	18/19	19/20	20/21	18/19	19/20	20/21	18/19	19/20	20/21
Inspections and audits	341	429	269	307	395	256	221	350	179
Verification and surveillance	14	48	42	26	36	46	30	35	19
Food sampling	50	14	16	58	11	41	33	117	0
Advice and education	36	220	43	53	221	47	178	257	52
Information/intelligence gathering	86	141	87	94	107	101	60	132	71
TOTAL	527	852	457	538	770	491	522	891	321

3.2. Service Requests

Reactive work is generated by complaints or information from the public, other local authorities and agencies.

Table 4: Service Request by Type and Year

Category	Maidstone			Swale			Tunbridge Wells		
	18/19	19/20	20/21	18/19	19/20	20/21	18/19	19/20	20/21
Food	47	43	41	42	38	50	30	37	27
Hygiene of Premises	133	127	71	99	97	92	87	78	66
TOTAL	180	170	112	141	135	142	117	115	93

3.3. New Business Registrations

The service must inspect and risk rate new businesses that register with the local authority within 28 days of registering, with the FSA indicating these businesses should be regarded as high priority. In practice many businesses register before they are ready to trade which can require us to monitor their progress to enable officers to undertake an inspection. We also find that some registrations don't materialise into trading businesses.

Since the pandemic we have seen a noticeable increase in the number of food business registrations which places further demands on officers time.

Table 5: Number of New Business Registrations (average per month) per local authority

Year	Average number of new food registrations received per LA per month
19/20	12
20/21	23
21/22	16
22/23 to date	15

3.4. Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS)

Appeals against the food hygiene rating score and requests for re-inspection and re-score

Businesses have a right to appeal against the FHRS score decision made by food inspectors, the process for appeals is laid out in the FSA Brand Standard. Both Food & Safety Team Leaders review the inspection information for the business to provide a robust process.

Businesses also have a right to request a re-score of the initial inspection score, where they have completed the work required by the inspecting officer. Generally, this is where a business has scored below a five and would like to improve

their score to prevent negative publicity. The inspection for re-rating must be carried out by the service within three months of receipt of this request.

Table 6: Appeal and Re-Scoring Requests

Category	Maidstone			Swale			Tunbridge Wells		
	18/19	19/20	20/21	18/19	19/20	20/21	18/19	19/20	20/21
Appeal	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	1	1
Rescoring inspection	7	18	6	9	17	2	17	11	5

3.5. Projects and Initiatives

- 3.5.1.** As a result of the Covid 19 pandemic the way we worked changed dramatically with officers being fully based at home. The way we conducted our inspections changed with the FSA requesting that all inspections from 1 April 2020 to 30 June 2020 ceased and when they did resume, they had to be undertaken in a covid secure fashion. Much of the 2020/21 and 2021/22 period was taken up with responding to the demands of Covid Enforcement, with officers involved in numerous projects. Visiting many local businesses to speak to them regarding their Covid secure measures and providing free of charge signage for mask wearing, social distancing etc. which was well received.
- 3.5.2.** In the recovery phase of the pandemic ongoing proactive surveillance was/is essential to re-establish an accurate picture of the local business landscape and to identify open/closed/ recently re-opened/ new businesses; as well as businesses where there has been a change of operation, activities, or food business owner. We were successful in obtaining specific FSA funding relating to new businesses, all new food registrations received during the pandemic were subject to triage to identify premises which are deemed to be high priority for inspection.
- 3.5.3.** We also successfully applied for funding from the Food Standards Agency to fund personal protective equipment and officer time for the inspection of the numerous fishing vessels registered within the Swale area. This project involved a Senior EHO making direct contact with fishing businesses and boarding each boat to undertake a food inspection.
- 3.5.4.** In the summer of 2019/2020, we received a high number of reports from various sources, including Kent Police, regarding the illegal harvesting of shellfish from around The Swale. This posed a food hazard as the illegal harvesting was not from classified beds subject to regular sampling, and the qualities taken suggested that it may

enter the food chain rather than for personal consumption. Our officers attended various patrols along with Kent Police, The Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority and Kent & Essex Inshore Fisheries & Conservation Authorities. In association with these agencies and Natural England our officers designed signs which was subsequently erected at common harvesting points. The number of reports the following year was very low in comparison.

3.5.5. In July 2021 routine sampling of the Swale indicated the presence of microorganisms necessitating the temporary closure of Cleve Marsh Beds. Notices alerting the public were positioned either side of the Swale to inform the public. The beds remained closed until September following further sampling of shellfish and water indicating levels of contamination had reduced to safe levels. The beds were not being harvested by the authorised shellfish fisherman at the time due to low stock levels.

4. Planning Ahead & challenges 2022 - 25

4.1. Overview

There will be some notable external challenges ahead of us in relation to realigning the routine inspection plan to pre-Covid pandemic levels, due to several factors. The pandemic saw a high level of food business closure and opening, plus the present challenging economic environment; staffing shortages in the service sector, increasing energy and wage costs, and the backdrop of financial constraints on household finances.

Change is anticipated for food regulation in the UK that may include changes to how we regulate food safety following the UK leaving the EU – particularly in relation to imported food. Maidstone, Swale and Tunbridge Wells do not have port-based imported food inspection responsibilities, but our proximity to two of the busiest ports of entry into the country may impact on the future arrangements for inspecting food entering the country.

4.2. Workforce

We have a strong record of providing access to food training courses to ensure officers maintain and go beyond their professional CPD requirements. Looking forward it is even more important to ensure that suitable training provisions are available to deliver the agile and resilient workforce required to meet the demands of the future. We currently have 4.5 FTE vacancies within the Food & Safety team. Despite several recruitment attempts over the past two years we have been unsuccessful in appointing to these posts. This reflects regional pressures of high cost of living in the SE England, plus competition of London weighting salaries and very competitive Border Control Points at Dover and Ashford, within easy commuting distance to our authorities makes recruitment very difficult.

Given these pressures it is inevitable that we need to radically rethink of what skill set officers need to deliver interventions; to this end we are exploring alternative options to reflect recent changes in the FSA's competency framework for authorising officers. To address the short-term resource issue team leaders are undertaking more front-line work, the vacancy budget is used to fund contractors, plus we offer overtime to staff on a voluntary basis.

4.3. Modernising Regulation

The FSA has introduced the Achieving Business Compliance (ABC) programme approach to modernising the way food businesses are regulated by the FSA and LA's. Today, 95% of our groceries come from 10 large supermarkets. Online food sales have substantially increased, with online food sales almost doubling in the last 5 years. In addition, businesses have more data available.

For some parts of the food sector, there may be more effective ways to make sure businesses comply with the rules than our current regulatory model, which is based heavily on in-person and regular inspection of food business premises by local authorities.

The ABC programme will develop a set of smarter regulatory approaches which:

- make it easier for businesses to provide safe and trusted food for consumers
- target regulatory resources at the areas which pose the greatest risk
- improve compliance across the system by working with and through others, including regulatory partners and influential businesses

4.4 Process Efficiencies

The service actively encourages officers to identify ways of making their inspection processes more efficient. We have introduced some pre-inspection checks to establish if the businesses are still trading following their food registration or they have a low inspection frequency. These checks are carried out by Admin and help save on journey time to businesses that have ceased trading or 'no show' visits.

4.5 Attestations & Export Health Certificates

The provision of Export Health Certificates has been currently suspended due to key trained officers leaving the service this will be re-examined when resources allow. We currently charge on a cost recovery basis for attestation service for food business operators who wish to export low risk food stuffs to the rest of the world, this may be a growing area of work but may have to withdraw this offer if staffing levels do not improve.

4.5 Mobile working

We have been working closely with the Mid Kent IT development team to explore more efficient ways of working using up to date technology, we have partnered with an external agency which is a market leader in field service and mobile workforce management technology. We will shortly be providing officers with new hardware to adopt phase 1 of this project, integration between the software and the Uniform database with an aim to extend this to food inspections later in the year. The objective is to streamline processes by recording visit and inspection outcomes directly to the database, allowing officers to focus time on undertaking inspections not the paperwork.

4.6 Hybrid working

In line with the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's flexible working policy our officers have adopted a hybrid way of working. Whilst officers have always spent time in the borough's undertaking various interventions. Alongside this however, we recognise the importance of maintaining strong team bonds to provide officers with sufficient support to enable them to develop and have confidence that should they need support when faced with serious enforcement

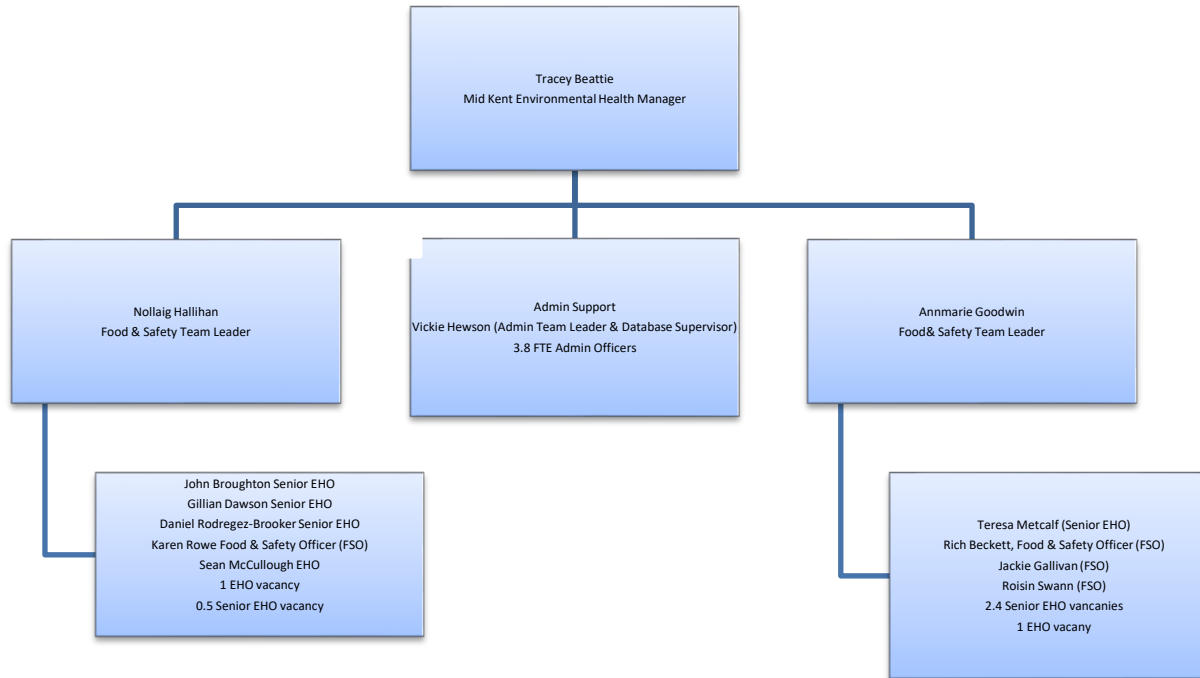
situations. To this end Team Leaders encourage team working days in the offices and annual Service Planning days, where system improvements are identified by all participants.

4.7 Internal Audit Jan – March 2023

The Food & Safety team will be subject to an internal audit in early 2023 to ensure we are maintaining our service standards etc.

5. Resources

Mid Kent Organisational Chart (As of 1 April 2022)



6. Budget Allocation to Food Safety

The allocation of budget across MKEH is provided in the table 7 below. The budget set for 2022/23 remains the same as the previous Mid Kent Service Plan. It is based on an estimate of 60% of Management time, 80% of Professional officer time and 60% of Admin time spent on food functions. Table 8 provides the cost to each local authority.

Table7: Total Shared Service Costs for Food Safety

	Budget 2022/23 (£)
Management costs (60% of team leader time & 30% Service Manager)	100,914
Professional Employee Costs (Includes overtime, PRP, NI and Superannuation and training)	530,924
Mileage & Transport Expenses	21,912
Administrative support costs	86,502
Income (est)	-14,000
TOTAL (Available expenditure)	728,777

Table 8: 2022/23 Food costs per Local Authority

	Maidstone	Swale	Tunbridge Wells
Food Service costs	228,763	240,424	259,590

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

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