

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 23 January 2024
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Cannon, Clark, Cleator (Vice-Chairman), Conyard, Eagle, English (Chairman), Mrs Gooch, Hastie, Hinder, Round, S Thompson and Webb

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

<u>AGENDA</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
1. Apologies for Absence	
2. Notification of Substitute Members	
3. Urgent Items	
4. Notification of Visiting Members	
5. Disclosures by Members and Officers	
6. Disclosures of Lobbying	
7. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information	
8. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 19 December 2023	1 - 3
9. Presentation of Petitions (if any)	
10. Question and Answer session for Local Residents (if any)	
11. Questions from Members to the Chairman (if any)	
12. Cabinet Forward Plan	4 - 16
13. Committee Work Programme	17 - 18
14. Committee Report - Environmental and Waste Crime Enforcement Review	19 - 37

Issued on Monday 15 January 2024

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

- | | |
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| 15. Medium Term Financial Strategy – Capital Programme | 38 - 60 |
| 16. Archbishop's Palace - Agreement for Lease | 61 - 71 |

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

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| 17. Exempt Appendix to Item 16 - Archbishop's Palace - Agreement for Lease | 3 – Financial/Business Affairs | 72 - 76 |
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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 19 January 2024). 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 4 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 4 p.m. on 19 January 2024). You will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on.

If you require this information in an alternative format please contact us, call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk.

To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit the [Council's Website](#).

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 19 DECEMBER 2023

Attendees:

Committee Members:	Councillors English (Chairman), Mrs Blackmore, Cannon, Cleator, Conyard, Eagle, Mrs Gooch, Round, S Thompson and Webb
Visiting Members:	Councillors Garten

33. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hastie and Hinder.

34. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

35. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman stated that there was an urgent update to Item 14 – Briefing Note – Environmental and Waste Crime Enforcement Review, which had been accepted as it contributed to the item’s consideration.

36. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor Garten was present as Visiting Member for Item 14 – Briefing Note – Environmental and Waste Crime Enforcement Review.

37. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

38. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

39. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

40. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 NOVEMBER 2023

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 November 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

41. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

42. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR LOCAL RESIDENTS

There were no questions from Local Residents.

43. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members.

44. CABINET FORWARD PLAN

The Principal Democratic Services Officer outlined the changes made to the Cabinet Forward Plan following its republication, in case the Committee wished to conduct pre-decision scrutiny on any of the items.

In response to questions concerning areas missing from the upcoming Conservation Area Appraisals, Members were advised to make representations to the relevant officer.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.

Note: Councillor Cannon arrived at 6.34 p.m.

45. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

In response to queries, the Chairman stated that the Health Inequalities review would commence at the earliest available opportunity.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

46. BRIEFING NOTE - ENVIRONMENTAL AND WASTE CRIME ENFORCEMENT REVIEW

The Principal Democratic Services Officer introduced the report and stated that the suggestions made by the Committee across the past two meetings had been collated into a set of draft recommendations for the Committee's consideration. Once agreed, the recommendations would be used to produce a formal report for consideration at the next meeting.

Councillor Thompson introduced the suggestions made within the urgent update, which focused on communications with Members. The Committee felt that the suggestions should be sent to the relevant Cabinet Member for their views on if the suggestions were feasible, given the possible work involved and potential overlap with information already being provided.

The Committee expressed their support for the recommendations which they felt were concise and clear. The following amendments were made, that:

- Recommendation 8 refer to Local litter picking groups across Maidstone, as well as Medway Council;

- Recommendation 9 refer to Kent County Council, as well as Medway Council; and
- Recommendation 1 refer to other means of communication, such as social media, as well as Borough Insight Magazine.

In response to queries, the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services clarified that volunteer litter pickers were supported by the Council, with equipment supplied to support those groups; however, litter picking on roads with a national speed limit, including single carriageways in rural areas, was not supported. If the funds were available, publishing focused editions of the Borough Insight Magazine, such as on the Waste Crime Team, would be supported.

The Committee suggested that the Council's stance be made clearer to voluntary litter picking groups.

RESOLVED: That the amended draft recommendations as outlined in Appendix 1 to the briefing note, be agreed as follows:

- a. Recommendation 8 refer to Local litter picking groups across Maidstone, as well as Medway Council;
- b. Recommendation 9 refer to Kent County Council, as well as Medway Council;
- c. Recommendation 1 refer to other means of communication, such as social media, as well as Borough Insight Magazine;
- d. To include that the Council's stance on assistance to voluntary litter picking groups; and
- e. To include the suggestions within the urgent update for review by the Cabinet Member, to see if the suggestions were feasible.

47. FRAMEWORK FOR THE ANNUAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT

The Chairman introduced the report and stated that the framework had been undertaken in a slower and more inclusive way to mitigate time pressures that affected last year's review.

The Committee expressed support for the proposed framework at point 2.3 of the report, with it suggested that a conclusion be added that would also act as a bridge to the next municipal year. It was requested that the report be concise.

RESOLVED: That the report framework included at point 2.3 of the report be agreed.

48. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.04 p.m.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN FOR THE FOUR MONTH PERIOD 1 JANUARY 2024 TO 30 APRIL 2024

This Forward Plan sets out the details of the key and non-key decisions which the Cabinet or Cabinet Members expect to take during the next four-month period.

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 Cabinet Members are:

 <p>↵ Councillor David Burton Leader of the Council DavidBurton@maidstone.gov.uk 07590 229910</p>	 <p>Councillor Paul Cooper Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development PaulCooper@Maidstone.gov.uk 01622 244070</p>	 <p>Councillor John Perry Cabinet Member for Corporate Services JohnPerry@Maidstone.gov.uk 07770 734741</p>
 <p>Councillor Claudine Russell Cabinet Member for Communities, Leisure and Arts ClaudineRussell@Maidstone.gov.uk</p>	 <p>Councillor Patrik Garten Cabinet Member for Environmental Services PatrikGarten@Maidstone.gov.uk 01622 807907</p>	 <p>Councillor Lottie Parfitt-Reid Cabinet Member for Housing and Health LottieParfittReid@Maidstone.gov.uk 07919 360000</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 Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone, ME15 6JQ or accessed from the [Council's website](#).

Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Cabinet which are normally held at the Town Hall, High St, Maidstone, ME14 1SY. The dates and times of the meetings are published on the [Council's Website](#), or you may contact the Democratic Services Team on telephone number **01622 602899** for further details.

or

David Burton
Leader of the Council

Details of the Decision to be taken	Decision to be taken by	Relevant Cabinet Member	Expected Date of Decision	Key	Exempt	Proposed Consultees / Method of Consultation	Documents to be considered by Decision taker	Representations may be made to the following officer by the date stated
Staplehurst Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Not before 10 Jan 2024	No	No	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 10 Jan 2024	Staplehurst Conservation Appraisal and Management Plan	Janice Gooch JaniceGooch@Maidstone.gov.uk
1,000 Homes Update This report provides a review of the progress made towards achieving the delivery of the Council's various housing development programmes	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Housing and Health	24 Jan 2024	No	No Open	Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 16 Jan 2024	1,000 Homes Update	William Cornall Director of Regeneration & Place williamcornall@maidstone.gov.uk
Archbishops' palace agreement for lease looking for agreement to move forward with a potential tenant for the palace	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	24 Jan 2024	Yes	No Part exempt	Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 17 Jan 2024 Overview and Scrutiny Committee 23 Jan 2024	Archbishops palace agreement for lease	Deborah Turner deborahturner@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
Elephant House A report on the Elephant House at Cobtree Manor Park	Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee	The Leader of the Council	24 Jan 2024	No	No Part exempt	Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee 24 Jan 2024	Elephant House	Mike Evans MikeEvans@Maidstone.gov.uk
Council Tax Base 2024/25 and Collection Fund Adjustment. Report setting what the 24/25 C/tax base and collection fund. Used to set the amount of Council Tax and is a statutory requirement.	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	24 Jan 2024	Yes	No Open	Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 17 Jan 2024	Council Tax Base 2024/25 and Collection Fund Adjustment.	Adrian Lovegrove Head of Finance adrianlovegrove@maidstone.gov.uk
Maidstone Leisure Centre - Leisure Services Contract A report on the Leisure Services Contract for the council's leisure facilities	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Communities, Leisure and Arts	24 Jan 2024	Yes	No Part exempt	Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 9 Jan 2024	Maidstone Leisure Centre	Mike Evans MikeEvans@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>Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024 to 2029 - Capital Programme</p> <p>Detail of the 10 year capital programme for inclusion in the budget for 2024/25 onwards.</p> <p>∞</p>	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	24 Jan 2024	Yes	No Open	<p>Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 17 Jan 2024</p> <p>Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 9 Jan 2024</p> <p>Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 10 Jan 2024</p> <p>Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 16 Jan 2024</p> <p>Overview and Scrutiny Committee 23 Jan 2024</p>	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024 to 2029 - Capital Programme	<p>Paul Holland, Adrian Lovegrove</p> <p>Head of Finance</p> <p>paulholland@maidstone.gov.uk, adrianlovegrove@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>Provision of Wheeled Bins</p> <p>Summary of the policy for charging for replacement and new wheeled bins and review of recent developments to the policy.</p>	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Environmental Services	24 Jan 2024	No	No Open	Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 16 Jan 2024	Provision of Wheeled Bins	<p>Jennifer Stevens</p> <p>Head of Environmental Services & Public Realm</p> <p>jenniferstevens@maidstone.gov.uk</p>
<p>River Medway Basin Task Force</p> <p>To provide information to Cabinet about the costs and benefits of setting up a River Medway Basin Task Force for consideration so that Cabinet can decide if they want to set up a Task Force</p>	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	24 Jan 2024	No	No Open		River Medway Basin Task Force	<p>Karen Britton</p> <p>karenbritton@maidstone.gov.uk</p>
<p>Maidstone Local Bus Focus Group</p> <p>A report on the options to for the successor to the Maidstone Quality Bus Partnership.</p>	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	30 Jan 2024	Yes	No	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 29 Jan 2024	Maidstone Local Bus Focus Group	<p>Tom Gilbert</p> <p>tomgilbert@maidstone.gov.uk</p>

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<p>Shared Revenues and Benefits Service - Consideration of expansion</p> <p>Report for the approval of Swale Borough Council joining the Mid Kent Revenues and Benefits Service</p>	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	Not before 5 Feb 2024	No	No Part exempt	<p>Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 5 Feb 2024</p> <p>Consultation with the Revenues and Benefits staff</p>	<p>Shared Revenues and Benefits Service - Consideration of expansion</p>	<p>Zoe Kent</p> <p>Interim Head of Revenues & Benefits</p> <p>zoekent@swale.gov.uk</p>
<p>1,000 Affordable Homes Programme - Scheme Re-Approvals</p>	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Housing and Health	7 Feb 2024	No	No Open	<p>Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 30 Jan 2024</p>	<p>1,000 Affordable Homes Programme - Scheme Re-Approvals</p>	<p>William Cornall</p> <p>Director of Regeneration & Place</p> <p>williamcornall@maidstone.gov.uk</p>
<p>3rd Quarter Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report</p>	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	7 Feb 2024	No	No Open	<p>Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 5 Feb 2024</p> <p>Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory</p>	<p>3rd Quarter Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report</p>	<p>Paul Holland, Adrian Lovegrove</p> <p>Head of Finance</p> <p>paulholland@maidstone.gov.uk, adrianlovegrove@m</p>

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11						Committee 6 Feb 2024 Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 30 Jan 2024 Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 29 Jan 2024		aidstone.gov.uk
Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan Update	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services	7 Feb 2024	No	No Open	Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 5 Feb 2024 Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 6 Feb 2024 Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory	Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan Update	James Wilderspin Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager jameswilderspin@m aidstone.gov.uk

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						Committee 30 Jan 2024 Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 29 Jan 2024		
Community Infrastructure Round 1 Process Review and Round 2 Bid Prospectus and Programme Report on the 1st round of CIL bidding and revised prospectus for the 2nd round of bidding with timetable/programme	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	7 Feb 2024	Yes	No Open	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 29 Jan 2024	Community Infrastructure Round 1 Process Review and Round 2 Bid Prospectus and Programme	Rob Jarman, Carole Williams Robjarman@maidstone.gov.uk, carolewilliams@maidstone.gov.uk
Enter into demolition contract Enter into demolition contract following tender to demolish the buildings	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Housing and Health	7 Feb 2024	Yes	No Open	Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 30 Jan 2024	Enter into demolition contract	Philip Morris philipmorris@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
at the former Royal Mail Sorting office site and Cantium House						Previously been to PAC on 21st September 2021 to acquire Cantium house and submit planning application.		
Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024 to 2029 - Funding Settlement and Final Saving Proposals  Details of the proposed budget for 2024/25. Revenue budget including savings and updates on government financial settlements and C/Tax increases. Capital programme for 2024/2029	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services	7 Feb 2024	Yes	No Open	Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 5 Feb 2024	Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024 to 2029 - Funding Settlement and Final Saving Proposals	Mark Green, Adrian Lovegrove Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement, Head of Finance markgreen@maidstone.gov.uk adrianlovegrove@maidstone.gov.uk
Property Acquisition 1000 affordable Homes Programme Report seeking approval to enter into works contracts for the 4 sites	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Housing and Health	7 Feb 2024	Yes	No Part exempt	Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 30 Jan 2024 Previous reports	Property Acquisition 1000 affordable Homes Programme Printed minutes 17012023 1830	Philip Morris philipmorris@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
acquired as part of the 1000 affordable homes programme.						for site acquisitions have been to HHE committee.		
<p>Over-arching Conservation Management Plan</p> <p>The over-arching Conservation Area Management Plan has been drafted to address concerns that there was limited guidance on conservation areas that do not have either a conservation area appraisal or management plan.</p>	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development	Not before 6 Mar 2024	Yes	No	Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 6 Mar 2024	Over-arching Conservation Management Plan	<p>Janice Gooch</p> <p>JaniceGooch@Maidstone.gov.uk</p>
<p>Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029 - Initial priorities and feedback</p> <p>Delivering the new strategic priorities for the Council in relation to homelessness and rough sleeping. A review of the</p>	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Housing and Health	20 Mar 2024	Yes	No Open	Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 12 Mar 2024	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029 - Initial priorities and feedback	<p>Hannah Gaston</p> <p>hannahgaston@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
themes and priorities for the Council.								
<p>Key Performance Indicators</p> <p>Key performance indicators are reviewed annually. This report proposes the KPIs for the period 2024/25.</p> <p>5</p>	Cabinet	Leader of the Council	20 Mar 2024	No	No Open	<p>Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 29 Jan 2024</p> <p>Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 30 Jan 2024</p> <p>Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 6 Feb 2024</p> <p>Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 5 Feb 2024</p>	Key Performance Indicators	<p>Carly Benville, Anna Collier</p> <p>carlybenville@maidstone.gov.uk, annacollier@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
Parish Charter Review Review of Parish Charter	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Communities, Leisure and Arts	20 Mar 2024	No	No Open	Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 5 Mar 2024	Parish Charter Review	Orla Sweeney orlasweeney@maidstone.gov.uk
Preventing Financial Exclusion 16	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Communities, Leisure and Arts	20 Mar 2024	No	No Open	Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 5 Mar 2024	Preventing Financial Exclusion	Anna Collier, Orla Sweeney annacollier@maidstone.gov.uk, orlasweeney@maidstone.gov.uk

Maidstone Borough Council

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme, 2023-24 Municipal Year

Policy Development & Reviews

Review Title & Objectives	Expected Start Date	Issue Type	Relevant Officer/s	Timetable
<u>Enforcement</u> To focus on Environmental and Waste Crime Enforcement	October 2023	Committee Review	Jen Stevens, Head of Environment and Public Realm. Additional Officers to be identified.	From October 2023 – tbc (likely December 2023).
<u>Health Inequality</u> To: - focus on the impact of poor-quality housing on health inequality - increase understanding of health inequalities across the borough	To be confirmed.	Committee Review	Alison Broom, Chief Executive, John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Regulatory Services	To be confirmed.
<u>Review of the Integrated Transport Strategy</u> Detailed objectives available on scope (see November 2023 Meeting)	Post January 2024, exact date tbc.	To be confirmed.	William Cornall, Director of Regeneration and Place, Karen Britton, Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development	To be confirmed.
<u>Water Management Cycle – Second Stage Review</u> To review the remaining elements identified by the working group through its first review.	July 2023.	Committee Review	Mark Green, Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement, Uche Olufemi, Emergency Planning & Resilience Manager, Karen Britton, Head of Spatial Planning and Economic Development	PAUSED.

Pre/Post Decision Scrutiny & Constitutional Requirements

Review Title & Objectives	Expected Start Date	Issue Type	Relevant Officer/s	Timetable
<u>Annual Scrutiny Report</u>	December 2024	Constitutional Requirement and best practice	Oliviya Parfitt, Principal Democratic Services Officer	Final – February 2023, followed by submission to Full Council.
<u>Selection of an Operator (Archbishops Palace)</u>	January 2024	Pre-decision Scrutiny	Mark Green, Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement Deborah Turner, Interim Strategic Property Consultant	N/A
<u>MTFS – Capital Programme</u>	January 2024	Constitutional Requirement	Mark Green, Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement	N/A
<u>Forward Plan Monitoring</u> 18	2023/24 Municipal Year	Pre-decision Scrutiny	As applicable.	N/A
<u>Call-Ins</u>	2023/24 Municipal Year	Post-decision Scrutiny	As applicable.	N/A

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 JANUARY 2024

Environmental and Waste Crime Enforcement Review Covering Report

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	23 January 2024
Cabinet	7 February 2024

Will this be a Key Decision?	No
Urgency	Not Applicable
Final Decision-Maker	Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Any agreed actions arising from the review will be presented to the relevant Decision Maker in March 2024
Lead Director	Angela Woodhouse, Director of Strategy, Insight & Governance
Lead Officer and Report Author	Oliviya Parfitt, Principal Democratic Services Officer
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

A report supplemented by the draft Committee report to conclude the 'Environmental and Waste Crime Enforcement' review. Once agreed, the report will be presented to the relevant decision makers from March 2024.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendation to the Committee

1. That the Committee consider the report attached at Appendix 1, make amendments as required and agree the report for submission to the relevant decision maker.

Environmental and Waste Crime Enforcement Review Covering Report

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<p>Impact on Corporate Priorities</p>	<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>We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities at this stage.</p> <p>Any actions agreed by the Committee as part of their review will be considered by the relevant Officers and Decision makers. This will take place via the presentation of the Committee’s formal report and Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation Action and Implementation Plan (SCRAIP).</p>	<p>Director of Strategy, Insight & Governance</p>
<p>Cross Cutting Objectives</p>	<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>Any actions agreed by the Committee as part of their review will be considered by the relevant Officers and Decision makers. This will take place via the presentation of the Committee’s formal report and Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation Action and Implementation Plan (SCRAIP).</p>	<p>Director of Strategy, Insight & Governance</p>

Risk Management	See Section 5 of the report.	Director of Strategy, Insight & Governance
Financial	Any recommendations agreed by the Committee as part of their review will be considered by the relevant Officers and Decision makers. This will include a consideration of the budgetary implications and will take place via the presentation of the Committee's formal report and Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation Action and Implementation Plan (SCRAIP).	Head of Finance
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Director of Strategy, Insight & Governance
Legal	In accordance with Part 1A of the Local Government Act 2000 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011) the Council is operating under Executive Arrangements. These arrangements must include provision for the appointment of one or more Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review and scrutinise the Executive Decisions made, or other actions taken relating to the exercise of Executive functions. – LGA 2000, Section 9F. Any actions agreed by the Committee as part of their review will be considered by the relevant Officers and Decision makers. This will take place via the presentation of the Committee's formal report and Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation Action and Implementation Plan (SCRAIP).	Principal Democratic Services Officer
Information Governance	The recommendations of this report do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council processes.	Senior Information Governance Officer
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment.	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	Any actions agreed by the Committee as part of their review will be considered by the relevant Officers and Decision makers. This will take place via the presentation of the	Principal Democratic Services Officer

	Committee’s formal report and Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation Action and Implementation Plan (SCRAIP).	
Crime and Disorder	<p>The report’s recommendations will not impact Crime & Disorder.</p> <p>Any actions agreed by the Committee as part of their review will be considered by the relevant Officers and Decision makers. This will take place via the presentation of the Committee’s formal report and Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation Action and Implementation Plan (SCRAIP).</p>	Director of Strategy, Insight & Governance
Procurement	No impacts identified.	Director of Strategy, Insight & Governance
Biodiversity and Climate Change	<p>No impacts identified at this stage.</p> <p>Any actions agreed by the Committee as part of their review will be considered by the relevant Officers and Decision makers. This will take place via the presentation of the Committee’s formal report and Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation Action and Implementation Plan (SCRAIP).</p>	Principal Democratic Services Officer

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A review into ‘Environmental and Waste Crime Enforcement’ has been held by this Committee between October to December 2023. These meetings were attended by the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and the relevant Officers. The agenda papers and minutes for those meetings accessible through section 9 of this report.
- 2.2 A list of possible actions suggested by the Committee during the review was presented to the Committee in December 2023, for the Committee to consider as part of formulating its recommendations. All of the actions were agreed with some amendments.
- 2.3 The Committee is asked to consider and approve the report for submission to the relevant decision-makers, making changes where it feels these are necessary.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 Option 1 – Amend and/or Approve the (draft) Committee report as contained within appendix 1 to the report.
 - 3.2 Option 2 – Do not amend and/or approve the (draft) Committee report as contained within appendix 1 to the report. This is not recommended, as this will prevent the Democratic Services Officer from formally submitting the Committee’s report (and recommendations) of the review to the relevant decision-makers. This will prevent the consideration of the Committee’s recommendations and prevent any subsequent actions from being taken.
-

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Option 1 as outlined in point 3.1 of the report.
-

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

Committee Meeting	Action
June 2023	The Committee agreed to undertake a review into Environmental and Waste Crime Enforcement
October 2023	The Committee received written and verbal evidence from the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and relevant officers.
November 2023	As Above.
December 2023	The Committee reviewed the suggestions made during the review, and agreed its recommendations from the review.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 If agreed, the report will be presented to the relevant decision makers as outlined in point 2.3 of the report.

7.2 Following the report's receipt, the decision maker will be presented with an Overview and Scrutiny Recommendation Action and Implementation Plan (SCRAIP) at a future meeting. This SCRAIP will contain comments from the relevant officers on any considerations and/or impacts arising from each of this Committee's recommendations. This will ensure that the decision-makers are presented with all the relevant, appropriate and applicable information before reaching a decision. This is standard practice and is reflective of good governance.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: (draft) Committee Report: Environmental and Waste Crime Review
-

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Agenda and Minutes for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 17 October 2023, 21 November 2023 and 19 December 2023: [Your Councillors - Maidstone Borough Council](#)

Overview and Scrutiny Committee Environmental and Waste Crime Enforcement Review

January 2024



Committee Membership:

Councillors: English (Chairman), Cleator (Vice-Chairman), Blackmore, Cannon, Clark, Conyard, Eagle, Gooch, Hastie, Hinder, Round, S Thompson and Webb.

Contact details for the Committee can be found here:

[Your Councillors - Maidstone Borough Council](#)

Report prepared by Cassie Beckley, Democratic Services Officer, on behalf of the
Overview and Scrutiny Committee

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Introduction

In June 2023, the Council’s Overview and Scrutiny Committee (the Committee) agreed to review Environmental and Waste Crime Enforcement commencing across October and November 2023.

This report outlines the review timeline and resulting recommendations produced by the Committee.

The aim of the review was the:

‘Identification of required actions and/or policies to improve the Council’s Environmental and Waste Crime enforcement services’.

Approach to the Review

The review has taken place mainly through verbal questioning, supported by written information within the agenda papers.

The table below outlines the meetings that took place, the respective attendees and evidence provided. Links to the information have been included for each meeting.

Meeting	Attendees	Evidence provided
17 Oct 2023	<p>Cabinet Member for Environmental Services</p> <p>Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm</p> <p>Public Realm Operations Manager</p> <p>Waste Crime Manager</p>	<p>Waste Crime Enforcement Team Overview, including relevant policies.</p> <p>Verbal Q&A Session with attendees.</p> <p>Agenda for Overview & Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday 17th October, 2023, 6.30 pm :: Maidstone Borough Council</p>
21 Nov 2023	<p>Cabinet Member for Environmental Services</p> <p>Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm</p> <p>Public Realm Operations Manager</p> <p>Waste Crime Manager</p>	<p>Verbal Q&A session with attendees to build on previous discussion</p> <p>Agenda for Overview & Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday 21st November, 2023, 6.30 pm :: Maidstone Borough Council</p>
19 Dec 2023	<p>Cabinet Member for Environmental Services (as a Visiting Member)</p>	<p>Review of draft recommendations</p> <p>Agenda for Overview & Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday 19th December, 2023, 6.30 pm :: Maidstone Borough Council</p>

Recommended Actions and Intended Outcomes

During the review, the Committee gave positive feedback on and were supportive of the service, and the future actions proposed by the Environmental and Waste Crime Enforcement team.

The Committee's recommendations arising from the review will be directed to **the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services**. Where applicable, the Lead Officer for each action has been included. The recommendations produced by the Committee have been grouped and outlined below.

1. To produce more communications on successful enforcement action taken, including:
 - a. Joint Working between the Waste Crime and Waste Management Teams;
 - b. A Spotlight on the Waste Crime Team in the next Borough Insight Magazine, including individual household's duty of care and updated fixed penalty notice charges; and
 - c. Via the Council's Social Media Pages

Intended Outcome (IO): To publicise the successful enforcement action being taken to the public, and to positively impact the Council's reputation.

Lead Officer (LO): Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm

2. That Members and Parish Councillors be given updated contact details of Housing and Housing Management Associations.

IO: To ensure that Members report issues to the correct organisations, addressing issues quickly.

3. That High Street and East Wards be considered as locations for any available pilot schemes.

IO: To support the officers request in identifying suitable areas for pilot schemes, with these Wards highlighted due to the close proximity of properties reducing any travel requires, and the breaking into and vandalism of shared waste facilities occurring.

Lead Officer (LO): Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm

4. That the process notes outlining the actions taken in educating, informing and taking enforcement action against residents and/or organisations be provided to the Committee.

IO: To outline the process so that Members are able to report concerns to the appropriate Officers, due to the overlap in work between the Waste Management and Waste Crime Teams in addressing these issues.

LO: Waste Crime Manager and Waste Manager

5. That the next amended Annual High Speed Road Cleaning Programme be presented to the Committee for review.

IO: To ensure that the Committee can review the programme as concern was expressed at the increase in road litter, particularly in rural areas.

LO: Public Realm Operations Manager

6. That a briefing be provided to the Committee on the technology available to the Waste Crime Team in monitoring and enforcing against fly-tipping.

IO: To provide the Committee with further information on the technology used by the team, and that used to evade the Council's technology.

LO: Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm and Waste Crime Manager.

7. That the Waste Crime Team be supported in submitting a capital funding bid for use in obtaining technology to support service provision.

IO: The Waste Crime Team is currently applying for external funding that would support increasing the technology available to monitor and enforce against fly-tipping.

If unsuccessful, the Team should be supported in applying for capital funding to support this, as it would support the service overall. The Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm has suggested a reporting method to Members in using the funding.

LO: Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm and Waste Crime Manager

8. That the Cabinet Member liaise with Medway Council to encourage the authority to continue providing assistance to voluntary litter picking groups, as well as local litter picking groups across Maidstone, including the Council's stance on providing assistance to those groups.

IO: To encourage continued support for the work conducted by voluntary litter picking groups.

9. That Medway Council and Kent County Council be asked information and figures on whether removing the charge for bulky waste collections has impacted fly-tipping and enforcement action.

IO: To review if that approach has been beneficially, such as reducing spending on responding to fly-tipping and taking enforcement action, and if so, to consider whether it could be trialled in Maidstone.

LO: Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm.

10. That the Cabinet Member review the following suggestion for its feasibility:

That a dashboard or similar reporting system be set up with the following items reported to Members on a regular basis, for instance, a six month cycle:

- a. Number of waste (crime) incidents identified, and those reported, and a separate category for (non-crime) household waste spilt from communal areas (as an example);
- b. Identification of areas in which incidents are more frequent. (similar to that presented at the October 2023 Overview and Scrutiny Meeting);
- c. Time taken to clean up incident, with notification of stresses to service capacity;
- d. Consequence to service/taxpayer, including costs;
- e. Disposal arrangement – recycling via sorting at the Council's depot, or to landfill;
- f. Reporting of enforcement events, fines, police action, etc.
- g. Lessons and learning, for example, in conjunction with 'Neighbourhood Watch' and Litter picking groups. Members awareness and actions.

11. That the Cabinet Member and the Committee Chairman jointly write to the Medway and Kent County Councils, urging them to reconsider their charging policy for residents of other boroughs in using their Household Waste Recycling Centres.

IO: To ask for reconsideration of the policy and request a practical alternative given the impact to residents.

Summary of Stakeholder Evidence

Internal Stakeholders

Councillor Patrik Garten, Cabinet Member for Environmental Services

The Cabinet Member for Environmental Services attended all three meetings across which the review was held engaging in Q&A with the Committee.

Jennifer Stevens, Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm

As the relevant Head of Service for the review topic, the Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm attended the 17 October 2023 and 21 November 2023 Committee Meetings. The Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm answered questions regarding past and proposed approaches to education and enforcement action (including the pilot schemes); the team's intention to better utilise social media and potential sources of funding.

John Edwards, Public Realm Operations Manager

As the relevant Manager to the review, this officer attended the 17 October 2023 and 21 November 2023 Committee Meetings. The Public Realm Operations Manager outlined how the team intended to tackle fly tipping in problem areas, such as high-speed roads and rural areas and through development of enforcement technology.

Carl McIvor, Waste Crime Manager

As a new officer, the Waste Crime Manager attended the 17 October 2023 and 21 November 2023 Committee Meetings and answered queries concerning the current and future processes for education and enforcement.

Thanks to Witnesses

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee would like to extend its thanks to the stakeholders that supported the review, either through providing written evidence and/or attending a meeting of the Committee.

APPENDIX 1 – Information Relating To The Review

Written Information

Agenda and Minutes for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 17 October 2023: [Your Councillors - Maidstone Borough Council](#)

Agenda and Minutes for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 21 November 2023: [Your Councillors - Maidstone Borough Council](#)

Agenda and Minutes for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting held on 19 December 2023: [Your Councillors - Maidstone Borough Council](#)

Committee Membership during the Review

Councillors: English (Chairman), Cleator (Vice-Chair), Blackmore, Cannon, Clark, Conyard, Eagle, Gooch, Hastie, Hinder, Round, S Thompson and Webb.

Contact details for the Committee can be found here:

[Your Councillors - Maidstone Borough Council](#)

Appendix 2 – List of Recommendations arising from the Review.

Recommendation	Intended Outcome	Cabinet Members/s and Officers
<p>1. To produce more communications on successful enforcement action taken, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Joint working between the Waste Crime and Waste Management Teams; b. A Spotlight on the Waste Crime Team in the next Brough Insight Magazine, including individual household's duty of care, updated fixed penalty notice charges; and c. Via the Council's Social Media Pages. 	<p>To publicise the successful enforcement action being taken to the public and positively impact the Council's reputation.</p>	<p>Cabinet Members for Environmental Services</p> <p>Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm.</p>
<p>2. That Members and Parish Councillors be given updated contact details of Housing and Housing Management Associations.</p>	<p>To ensure that Members report issues to the correct organisations, addressing issues quickly.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Environmental Services.</p>
<p>3. That High Street and East Wards be considered as locations for any available pilot schemes.</p>	<p>To support the officers request in identifying suitable areas for pilot schemes to be introduced, with these Wards highlighted due to the close proximity of properties reducing any travel required, and breaking into and vandalism of shared waste facilities.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Environmental Services.</p> <p>Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm.</p>
<p>4. That the process note outlining the actions taken in educating, informing</p>	<p>To outline the process so that Members are able to report concerns to the</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Environmental Services.</p>

	and taking enforcement against residents and/or organisations be provided to the Committee.	appropriate Officers, due to the overlap in work between the Waste Management and Waste Crime Teams in addressing these issues.	Waste Crime Manager Waste Manager
	5. That the next amended Annual High Speed Road Cleaning Programme be presented to the Committee for review.	To ensure that the Committee can review the programme as concern was expressed at the increase in road litter, particularly in rural areas.	Cabinet Member for Environmental Services. Public Realm Operations Manager
	6. That a Briefing be provided to the Committee on the technology available to the Team in monitoring and enforcing against fly-tipping.	To provide the Committee with further information on the technology used by the Team, and that used to evade the Council technology.	Cabinet Member for Environmental Services Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm Waste Crime Manager
34	7. That the Waste Crime Team be supported in submitting a capital funding bid for use in obtaining technology to support service provision.	The Waste Crime Team is currently applying for external funding that would support increasing the technology available to monitor and enforce against fly-tipping. If unsuccessful, the Team should be supported in applying for capital funding to support this as it would support the service overall. The Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm has suggested a reporting method to Members in using the funding.	Cabinet Member for Environmental Services Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm Waste Crime Manager
	8. That the Cabinet Member liaise with Medway Council to encourage the authority to continue providing assistance to voluntary litter picking	To encourage continued support for the work conducted by voluntary litter picking groups.	Cabinet Member for Environmental Services

<p>groups, as well as local litter picking groups across Maidstone, including the Council's stance on providing assistance to those groups.</p>		
<p>9. That Medway Council be asked to share information and figures on whether removing the charge for bulky waste collections has impacted fly-tipping and enforcement action.</p>	<p>To review if that approach had been beneficial, such as reducing spending on responding to fly-tipping and taking enforcement action, and if so, to consider whether it could be trialled in Maidstone.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Environmental Services Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm</p>
<p>35</p> <p>10. That the Cabinet Member review the following suggestion for its feasibility:</p> <p>That a dashboard or similar reporting system be set up with the following items reported to Members on a regular basis, for instance, a six month cycle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Number of waste (crime) incidents identified, and those reported, and a separate category for (non-crime) household waste spilt from communal areas (as an example); b. Identification of areas in which incidents are more frequent. (similar to that presented at the October 2023 Overview and Scrutiny Meeting); 		

<p>36</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> c. Time taken to clean up incident, with notification of stresses to service capacity; d. Consequence to service/taxpayer, including costs; e. Disposal arrangement – recycling via sorting at the Council’s depot, or to landfill; f. Reporting of enforcement events, fines, police action, etc. g. Lessons and learning, for example, in conjunction with ‘Neighbourhood Watch’ and Litter picking groups. Members awareness and actions. 		
<p>11. That the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and the Committee Chairman jointly write to the Medway and Kent County Councils, urging them to re-consider their charging policy for residents of other boroughs in using their HWRCs.</p>	<p>To ask for re-consideration of the policy and request a practical alternative given the impact to residents.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member for Environmental Services Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny</p>

Agenda Item 15

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

23 January 2024

Medium Term Financial Strategy – Capital Programme

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee	17 January 2024
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	23 January 2024
Cabinet	24 January 2024
Council	21 February 2024

Will this be a Key Decision?	Yes
Urgency	Not applicable
Final Decision-Maker	Council
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Mark Green, Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Author	Paul Holland, Senior Finance Manager (Client)
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report forms part of the process of agreeing a budget for 2024/25 and setting next year's Council Tax. It develops the outline of the capital programme and reconfirms the principles behind the Council's capital strategy, explains how the capital programme will be funded, and describes the individual projects that comprise the programme.

Note that in agreeing the capital programme it will require us to set a prudential borrowing limit of £369.1 million over the period of the programme which will be recommended to Council as part of the Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25. The revenue costs of borrowing are included in the overall budget position and contribute to the future budget gap as per the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The cost of borrowing is estimated as £15m in the 5 year period covered by the MTFS with debt repaid over 50 years.

The approved capital programme is not approval to spend. Prior to any capital commitment being entered into, a detailed report setting out a full project appraisal and detailed financial projections is considered by the relevant service committee, which will need to include the costs of borrowing.

Purpose of Report

The report enables the Committee to consider and comment on the capital programme.

This report makes the following recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

That the Committee recommends to Cabinet that it:

1. Agrees the capital strategy principles set out in paragraph 2.7;
2. Agrees the capital funding projection set out in Appendix 2 to this report;
3. Agrees the capital programme 2024/25 onwards as set out in Appendix 3 to this report;
4. Note that in agreeing recommendations 2 and 3 above the Committee will set a prudential borrowing limit of £369.1 million over the period of the programme which will be recommended to Council as part of the Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25;
5. Give delegated authority to the Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to review and give approval to the business case and related budget approval for the Biodiversity & Climate Change project related to the Maidstone House and Link as set out in paragraph 2.7.

Medium Term Financial Strategy – Capital Programme

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The Medium-Term Financial Strategy and the budget are a re-statement in financial terms of the priorities set out in the strategic plan. Specifically, the capital programme allows for investment in long term projects that support the strategic plan objectives.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Cross Cutting Objectives	The MTFS supports the cross-cutting objectives in the same way that it supports the Council's other strategic priorities.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Risk Management	This has been addressed in section 5 of the report.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Financial	Set out in the report.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	Staffing implications are taken into account when developing individual capital schemes.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Legal	<p>Under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 (LGA 1972) the Section 151 Officer has statutory duties in relation to the financial administration and stewardship of the authority, including securing effective arrangements for treasury management.</p> <p>The Medium-Term Financial Strategy demonstrates the Council's commitment to fulfilling its duties under the Act.</p> <p>Approval of the budget is a matter reserved for full Council upon recommendation by the Cabinet.</p>	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.	Senior Information Governance Officer
Equalities	This report sets out the overall capital programme. When an individual capital	Equalities and

	scheme is developed, changed or reviewed, an evidence-based equalities impact assessment will be undertaken. Should an impact be identified appropriate mitigations will be identified.	Communities Officer
Public Health	The resources to achieve the Council's objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy which sets the overall priorities for the capital programme.	Senior Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	The resources to achieve the Council's objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium-Term Financial Strategy which sets the overall priorities for the capital programme.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Procurement	Procurement of the capital schemes described in section 2 of this report will be in accordance with the procurement provisions within the Council's constitution.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Biodiversity & Climate Change	The capital programme includes provision for funding to deliver schemes which will help meet the Council's biodiversity and climate change objectives.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Background

- 2.1 The capital programme plays a vital part in the Council's Strategic Plan, since long term investment is required to deliver many of the objectives of the plan. The capital programme is now a rolling ten-year programme, so sets out over the medium term how the Council will invest its capital resources.
- 2.2 The current capital programme 2023/24 – 2027/28 was approved by Council at its meeting on 22 February 2023 and totals £201.9 million over five years. Details are set out in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 As part of the budget setting process the capital programme has been reviewed to ensure it is affordable and sustainable. To aid this we have increased the period of the capital programme to 10 years so we understand the longer term implications of borrowing. As part of setting the capital programme we have carried out challenge sessions to ensure projects meet the Council's defined core principles for the inclusion of schemes within the capital programme.
- 2.4 The updated capital programme includes some significant reprofiling of the Private Rented Sector and 1,000 Affordable Homes housing schemes, as well as several new schemes. Additional projects are to deliver other key priorities such as Temporary Accommodation, decarbonisation, public realm and greening and a new or refurbished leisure facility.
- 2.5 The 10 year programme totals £433.8m. In agreeing the capital programme it will require us to set a prudential borrowing limit of £369.1 million over the period of the programme which will be recommended to Council as part of the Treasury Management Strategy 2024/25. The revenue costs of borrowing are included in the overall budget position and contribute to the future budget gap as per the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The cost of borrowing is estimated as £15m in the 5 year period covered by the MTFS with debt being repaid over 50 years in total.
- 2.6 Individual items within the programme will be subject to specific reports for approval to spend through relevant governance including the cost of borrowing. This ensures that, before any commitment is made to individual schemes, and the related borrowing undertaken, the Council can be satisfied that it meets the Prudential Code criteria that investment be affordable, prudent and sustainable.
- 2.7 There is one project that is an urgent priority and therefore we have requested delegated approval for the business case and related budget approval for the following scheme within the overall Biodiversity & Climate Change programme. Capital works at Maidstone House and Link will cost in the region of £3,481,600 and we are bidding for external funding amounting to around 66% of the cost. If we succeed the project funding will be announced before the end of 23/24 and the work will need to be completed within 1 year. The delegated approval will allow the tight timescale to be met and allows us to maximise external funding.

Capital Strategy

- 2.8 Under CIPFA's updated Prudential Code, the Council is required to produce a Capital Strategy, which is intended to give an overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services, along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.
- 2.9 The Capital Strategy is being considered by Audit, Governance & Standards Committee at its meeting on 15th January 2024 and will subsequently be agreed by Cabinet at its meeting on 7th February 2024 and by Council at its meeting on 21st February 2024. The Strategy describes how the Capital Programme is developed and the key points are set out below.
- 2.10 The Council has defined certain core principles for the inclusion of schemes within the capital programme. Schemes may be included in the capital programme if they fall within one of the four following categories:
- (i) Required for statutory reasons, e.g., to ensure that Council property meets health and safety requirements;
 - (ii) Self-funding schemes focused on Strategic Plan priority outcomes;
 - (iii) Other schemes focused on Strategic Plan priority outcomes; and
 - (iv) Other priority schemes which will attract significant external funding.
- 2.11 All schemes within the capital programme are subject to appropriate option appraisal. Any appraisal must comply with the requirements of the Prudential Code and the following locally set principles:
- (a) Where schemes fit within a specific strategy and resources are available within the capital programme for that strategy, such as the Asset Management Plan, the schemes are also subject to appraisal and prioritisation against the objectives of that strategy. These schemes must be individually considered and approved by the relevant Policy Advisory Committee.
 - b) Where schemes require the use of prudential borrowing, a business case must first be prepared setting out the viability and justification in terms of necessity or contribution to the delivery of strategic goals.
 - c) Schemes will be evaluated against Environmental, Social and Governance objectives, within the overall Strategic Plan priorities. Schemes where this might be relevant would include those which offer:
 - Greater environmental sustainability
 - Local community benefits
 - Implementation of ethical sourcing practices.

- 2.12 Where schemes do not fit within the criteria above, but an appropriate option appraisal has been completed, they may still be included within the programme if they fall within one of the four categories set out above.
- 2.13 If, following all considerations, there are a number of approved schemes that cannot be accommodated within the current programme, a prioritised list of schemes that can be added to the programme as future resources permit will be created and approved by Cabinet, thus allowing officers to focus funding efforts on delivering schemes that are next in priority order.
- 2.14 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) requires the Council to identify actual funding before commencement of schemes. Accordingly, while schemes may be prioritised for the programme, ultimately commencement of any individual scheme can only occur once all the necessary resources have been identified and secured.
- 2.15 The MTFS principles require that the Council will maximise the resources available to finance capital expenditure, in line with the requirements of the Prudential Code, through:
- a) The use of external grants and contributions, subject to maintaining a focus on the priority outcomes of its own strategies;
 - b) Opportunities to obtain receipts from asset sales as identified in the asset management plan and approved for sale by Cabinet;
 - c) The approval of prudential borrowing when the following criteria also apply to the schemes funded by this method:
 - i. financial viability of the schemes can be clearly evidenced;
 - ii. the outcome returns economic value commensurate to the cost incurred by borrowing to fund the schemes;
 - iii. after covering the cost of funding, a further benefit accrues to the Council that directly or indirectly supports the objectives of the strategic plan or the medium-term financial strategy.
 - d) The use of residual New Homes Bonus and Funding Guarantee for capital purposes in line with the Council's strategic plan priorities;
 - e) The implementation of a community infrastructure levy (CIL) and the management of its use, along with other developer contributions (S106), to deliver the objectives of the infrastructure delivery plan.
- 2.16 Service managers submit proposals to include projects in the Council's capital programme. Bids are collated by Corporate Finance who calculate the financing cost (which can be nil if the project is fully externally financed). Each Policy Advisory Committee appraises the proposals based on a comparison with corporate priorities. The Cabinet then recommends the capital programme which is then presented to Council in February each year.

2.17 Prior to any capital commitment being entered into, a detailed report setting out a full project appraisal and detailed financial projections is considered by the relevant service committee.

Funding the Capital Programme

2.18 All capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (grant funding and other contributions), the Council's own resources (revenue contributions, earmarked reserves, internal borrowing and capital receipts) or debt (external borrowing and other forms of corporate finance).

2.19 The Council currently has external borrowing of £5 million, representing Public Works Loan Board borrowing plus we have also committed to borrow £80 million in advance over the period 2024 to 2026 at an affordable rate. With internal resources expected to be fully utilised in future, the Council will look to increase external borrowing to a maximum of £359.9m over the 10-year lifetime of the capital programme. Over this time the Council will seek a mixture of long term and short-term debt to minimise the risk of refinancing. The Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement may look to procure forward borrowing terms ahead of requiring funding for the capital programme. This is to lock into preferential rates in case of future rate rises.

2.20 The Council has hitherto used the New Homes Bonus to fund capital expenditure. The allocation for 2024/25 onwards has been reduced to £1.9 million, so to ensure that there is sufficient funding to support the viability of the 1,000 New Homes programme it is envisaged that this will be topped up from the Funding Guarantee that was announced as part of the Local Government Financial Settlement in December 2023.

2.21 External funding is sought wherever possible. The Council has received funding from the Government via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, some of which is allocated to capital schemes, and funding will be sought in particular from Homes England to support the Affordable Housing Programme.

2.22 Funding is also available through developer contributions (S 106) and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

2.23 The resource available for the capital programme, based on the detail above, is given in Appendix 2. The appendix shows total resources expected in the period 2024/25 to 2033/34 (excluding external borrowing) as £84.6m.

Capital Programme Proposals

2.24 Capital Programme proposals have been developed based on the principles set out above and reflect the strategic priorities agreed by Council when it set the current Strategic Plan.

2.25 Appendix 3 to this report sets out the recommended programme for schemes which were programmed for 2024/25 – 2028/29 within the existing capital programme together with new schemes that it is now

proposed to include within the capital programme. Further details are set out below.

Planning, Infrastructure Economic Development

2.26 Public Realm & Greening relating to the Town Centre - £1.0 million

Public realm and greening plans reflect work to be funded by UKSPF and associated works in the Town Centre.

2.27 Medway Street Car Park - £195,000

This budget will allow the two existing parts of this car park to be merged, which will require extensive works for ramps, new surfaces and lighting.

Housing, Health & Environment

2.28 The Housing Programme comprises a mix of Affordable Homes, Private Rented Sector, and Temporary Accommodation. As projects develop in the later years of the 10 year programme we will get greater clarity on the mix of different tenures.

2.29 1,000 Homes Affordable Housing Programme - £155.7 million

In the Autumn of 2021, The Leader of the Council announced his ambition to build 1,000 affordable homes in the shortest period possible. A development strategy setting out how this ambition can best be achieved was agreed by Policy & Resources Committee on 19th January 2022. It is likely that the whole programme will take ten years to deliver. The programme is likely to provide only Affordable Rented homes that will be let at 80% of market rent, capped at the Local Housing Allowance. The expenditure shown excludes any grant receipts from the likes of Homes England that will be necessary to deliver the programme. Assumptions have been made around the level of funding that could be received and this is dealt with in the funding section of this report. During 2023/24 a number of sites were identified and they are schemes that are now being actively developed.

2.30 Private Rented Sector Housing Programme - £99.8 million

This encompasses a number of schemes that are in the process of being identified and brought forward. This covers projects such as Maidstone East and Springfield library, but at this stage in the main are not contractually committed. These will be the subject of separate committee reports at the point a decision to proceed or not is required. All these PRS assets will be owned by the Council but leased (on a long-term basis) upon completion to Maidstone Property Holdings Limited to manage.

Note that no PRS housing is shown in years 7-10 of the capital programme. This is not intended to indicate that the Council will move away from promoting a mix of tenures in future, rather that there have been no specific schemes with a PRS component identified in those years.

2.31 Temporary Accommodation - £20.0 million

The Council has a programme to acquire housing on the open market for temporary accommodation, as it is more cost-effective to use our own property for this purpose and enables delivery of a revenue saving. It is proposed to buy further units in 2024/25 to help deal with the rising numbers of people who are being made homeless because of the current economic crisis.

2.32 Commercial and Community Developments £3.8m

The New Business and Housing Development team are in the process of preparing and submitting a planning application for the sites including Maidstone East, St Faiths Community Centre and Heather House Community Centre

2.33 Disabled Facilities Grants - £8.0 million

The Council works with Kent County Council Social Services to deliver adaptations and facilities to enable disabled people to remain at home. This element of the capital programme therefore has a directly beneficial impact for individual local residents. Assistance under this budget is not funded by the Council but is funded from the Department of Health Better Care Fund (BCF) as a specific capital grant.

2.34 Street Scene Investment - £500,000

This capital programme allows for items such as the provision of new bins.

2.35 Flood Action Plan - £350,000

The flood action plan budget was set up to allow the Council to deliver, or contribute towards, schemes that would mitigate flood risk. At this stage, the only schemes that have been identified have been small scale natural flood management schemes. Officers are discussing with counterparts in the Environment Agency, Kent County Council and the Upper Medway Internal Drainage Board what can be done to promote appropriate and practical schemes in the future.

2.36 Continued Improvements to Play Areas - £740,000

This budget allows for play areas to continue to be upgraded to ensure they meet the current specifications and requirements.

2.37 Parks Improvements - £1.1 million

This is an annual budget to allow for any works that are identified in the parks to be undertaken to improve the standard of the facilities for the public when they visit the parks.

2.38 Parks & Open Spaces Infrastructure Maintenance – £2.0 million

Ongoing investment in the infrastructure of the parks will enable the revenue budgets to remain focused on delivering the more regular

maintenance such as shrub bed pruning, grass cutting, weeding etc and on ensuring the parks are safe and functional for residents and visitors. Poor maintenance of the parks infrastructure will also impact on the parks revenue budgets due to insurance claims or having to close sections of pathway.

2.39 Grounds Maintenance Machinery Replacement Programme – £855,000

This is a new budget to enable the regular replacement of grounds maintenance equipment when it is no longer adequate for purpose.

2.40 Waste Crime Team Additional Resources - £40,000

This budget will allow the team to invest in new technology to assist in the investigation, detection and prosecution of offenders.

2.41 Section 106 Funded Works Open Spaces – £4.0 million

This reflects open spaces capital projects that are funded by S.106 contributions. These works have been taking place for a number of years, but it is considered appropriate that the programme reflects this to show the total forecast capital expenditure.

2.42 Improvements to the Cemetery - £120,000

Further works are required to complete the tarmacking works in the cemetery and there are further plans for new fencing and possible expansion of the site to create space for new graves.

2.43 Purchase of New Waste Collection Vehicles - £6.3 million

Funding is allocated within the Capital Programme for the purchase of the waste collection fleet that forms part of the new contract for Refuse Collection due to commence in March 2024. Replacement of the fleet is envisaged seven years later when the fleet acquired in March 2024 has reached the end of its useful life.

Communities, Leisure & Arts

2.44 Museum Development Plan - £180,000

The Maidstone Museums Forward Plan 2022-27 was presented to this Committee's predecessor Committee in July 2022. The Forward Plan set out an ambitious programme, inspired by a mission to inspire, educate and challenge its visitors and users through the use of its collections, staff and buildings. A first step in delivering this plan was a new archaeology gallery, due to open in early Summer. Nearly £700,000, including contributions from external funders, will have been invested in this gallery and this forms part of the existing capital programme.

The immediate next steps in the Development Plan are as follows.

Upgrading Local History Gallery

It is planned to improve the Local History Gallery, which adjoins the new archaeology gallery, to make it more attractive and consistent in standard with the new gallery. A proposal is being developed to an external funder to carry out this work, which is expected to cost £100,000.

Accessibility

It is part of the museum's mission to ensure that its collections are available to all. It is therefore proposed to install a flexi-step and ramp for more inclusive access to the natural history and dinosaur galleries, at an estimated cost of £80,000.

2.45 Existing Leisure Centre – Capital Improvements £2.25 million

This Committee considered proposals for minor capital improvements to the Leisure Centre at its meeting on 7 February 2023. The purpose was to reduce costs and generate increased revenue over the likely extension period of the existing contract. This was agreed by Cabinet and built into the capital programme for 2023/24. As this work has been dependent on decisions about extension of the contract, it has not started as yet and the majority of the expenditure is now likely to slip to 2024/25.

2.46 New Leisure Centre - £60.0 million

The Council is committed to providing leisure services that are accessible to all the borough's residents. This follows from the Council's strategic priorities, and in particular the cross-cutting priority of addressing and reducing health inequalities.

The existing Mote Park Leisure Centre is over 50 years old. It is becoming increasingly expensive to maintain and detracts from the Council's net zero carbon emissions objective. Modelling presented to this Committee's predecessor in February 2023 indicated that the optimum time for a replacement, or at the very least a significantly refurbishment, would be towards the end of the extension period for the existing leisure contract (which is subject to a separate report on this agenda).

It was reported in February 2023 that projected capital costs for a new build leisure centre would be in the region of £40 million. A Passivhaus centre or more sophisticated design would cost in excess of £50m. Owing to the complexity of a major refurbishment, the capital costs arising would be at least £35 million, ie not significantly less than the cost of a complete replacement.

It is proposed to make provision in the capital programme for £60 million, which would offer the opportunity to build a new leisure centre commensurate with the Council's ambitions, given current prices. Expenditure is profiled over the next six years, with some initial investment in design and feasibility in 2024/25 and a build programme extending over the three years 2027/28 to 2028/29.

All opportunities to source external funding to mitigate the cost to the Council will be explored. At this stage the proportion to be externally funded cannot

be estimated, so the figure of £60 million represents the gross cost of a new leisure centre.

2.47 Mote Park Kiosk Refurbishment & Extension - £250,000

£200,000 was included for this project in the existing capital programme for 2023/24. The intention was to provide clean and safe facilities to replace the existing toilet block on the northern side of Mote Park Lake, to complement the new café facility on the opposite side. This work has not yet commenced so will slip to 2024/25.

Corporate Services

2.48 Asset Management / Corporate Property - £3.27 million

The Property Services section carries out a 5-year cycle of condition surveys of Council property which provide a costed programme of essential replacement or refurbishment of building elements to ensure the proper, compliant and efficient operation of the buildings in accordance with the Asset Management Plan. There is no financial return from the projects, but they do eliminate the accumulation of a backlog of maintenance, reduce the risk of failure and interruption of service and the cost of reactive maintenance.

2.49 Corporate Property Acquisitions - £25.0 million

It is envisaged that the Council will continue to seek further suitable opportunities to acquire assets which help deliver the Council's strategic objectives, following the previous acquisitions of the Lockmeadow Leisure Complex, Maidstone House and various industrial units. The capital programme includes this fund which is intended to give the capacity to pursue opportunities to enhance the corporate property portfolio. The Council continues to work with selected agents to identify suitable opportunities and these will be brought forward for member approval when identified.

2.50 Kent Medical Campus Innovation Centre - £350,000

This budget will provide funding for a wet lab and the purchase of new research and development equipment to continue to make the centre attractive for prospective tenants. Further funding is also required for road infrastructure improvements adjacent to the centre.

2.51 Lockmeadow ongoing investment - £1.0 million

Given the current economic environment and vacant units further investment in the site will be needed to encourage both existing tenants to continue to operate and to also attract new ones in the future, as well as continuing to make it an attractive place to visit. This will help protect existing rental income streams and possibly increase them in due course.

2.52 Garden Community - £1.982 million

The Heathlands Garden Community is a public sector led proposition, whereby the Council is working in partnership with Homes England to promote the scheme through the Maidstone Local Plan Review (LPR). Positive progress continues to be made, as Heathlands now features as a draft "allocation" within the LPR, which has recently undergone consultations on Main Modifications with adoption programmed to take place in early 2024. Both partners are sharing the promotional and planning costs 50:50. Upto the end of 23/24 they are expected to total circa £3m. A further £4m of shared expenditure to achieve the outline planning permission with work on that starting in 2024/25. The £2m in the capital programme reflects these potential costs.

2.53 Infrastructure Delivery - £10.0 million

Infrastructure schemes as outlined in the Local Plan are in general funded directly from the benefits gained from the development. However, in some cases, it is appropriate for the Council to invest directly in infrastructure, for example where viability assessments indicate a funding gap and where it is appropriate for the Council to meet the shortfall in order to enable strategic priorities to be met. An annual amount of £1.0 million has been set aside within the capital programme for this purpose.

2.54 Other Property Works - £1.0 million

This budget is for work required to various commercial properties to meet the requirements of the current Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards. This will mainly be upgrades to LED lighting and heating systems, but there may be a need to replace windows and improve insulation in some of the older buildings.

2.55 Carbon Reduction to Maidstone B.C. Estate - £14.867 million

This funding will be used for a number of projects including the purchase of electric vehicles along with investment in charging infrastructure, carbon offsetting, solar investment and looking to make the Council's buildings more energy efficient with a view to reducing both costs and carbon emissions.

2.56 Parkwood Property Investment to meet EPC targets - £1.225m

This budget is for the removal of concrete asbestos roofs and their replacement with lighter insulated metal roofs offers the opportunity for tenants to reduce their energy bills. In addition, it facilitates the installation of solar panels on the roofs (not previously possible due to load restrictions on the asbestos roofs).

2.57 Feasibility Studies - £500,000

An allowance has been included in the capital programme for feasibility works on schemes that are not yet ready to be included in the main programme.

2.58 Digital Projects - £300,000

This programme is for hardware and software development carried out in-house by the Digital team, such as website re-design, new webcasting facilities, and investment to streamline ways of working.

2.59 Software/PC Replacement - £2.0 million

This is an annual budget to allow replacement of ICT resources on an ongoing basis.

2.60 Maidstone House Works - £800,000

This budget is to continue to allow further investment in the building to make it an attractive place to work, to protect existing rental income streams and to encourage prospective new tenants.

2.61 Leeds Langley preliminary costs- £1.m

The costs relate to the potential contribution of cost towards development/construction costs of Leeds Langley road /site. In order to achieve this infrastructure, forward funding is required to help pump prime the project and assist with preliminary work.

2.62 Fleet Vehicle Replacement Programme – £3.248 million

This programme allows the Council's vehicle fleet (excluding electric vehicles which are currently included in the Decarbonisation of the MBC Estate) to be kept up to date and operating costs to be kept to a minimum. Funding includes capital receipts from the sale of vehicles when they reach the end of their useful life.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 Recommend that the capital strategy principles, funding arrangements and detailed proposals as set out in section 2 above are approved by the Cabinet and then submitted to Council.
 - 3.2 Recommend the capital programme as presented for approval by the Cabinet and then for consideration by Council.
 - 3.3 Recommend amendments or deletion to some or all of the proposals and make any new alternative projects for consideration by the Cabinet.
 - 3.4 Defer a decision on the proposals to this Committee's meeting on 5th February 2024 where it can be considered along with the final revenue budget proposals.
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4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The preferred option is that the Committee agrees capital strategy principles (option 3.1) and recommend the proposed capital programme (option 3.2) to the Cabinet. Whilst a final decision is not required until Council sets a budget on 21 February 2024, an early decision by this Committee will allow advance planning to commence and will potentially allow the benefits of investment to be realised more quickly.
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5. RISKS

- 5.1 From now on, the capital programme will primarily be funded through prudential borrowing. Many of the schemes outlined above are projected to be self-funding. However, this assumes that the income assumptions on which they are based are reliable. In an uncertain economic environment, there is a significant risk that the cost of borrowing and the requirement to make provision for repayment will not be covered.
- 5.2 The scale of the capital programme – around £433.8 million - will require considerable capacity for delivery and project management.
- 5.3 At present it is anticipated that funding will be available for the capital programme. The funding risk has been mitigated by committing to borrow £80 million in advance over the period 2024 to 2026 at an affordable rate. We will use our Treasury Management Strategy to manage the cost of subsequent borrowing but there is a risk that funding could become more expensive generally, thus putting at risk the viability of more marginal schemes.
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6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 Corporate Services PAC received an initial report on the MTFS at its meeting on 12 July 2023. It was then consulted on the revenue budget proposals at its meeting on 11 September 2023 and on fees and charges and the budget consultation at its meeting on 13 December 2023. This consultation identified that the most popular area amongst respondents for new investment was infrastructure, with flood prevention and the street scene cited as examples in the survey to illustrate what 'infrastructure' means. The other PACs and Overview and Scrutiny are considering the budget proposals relating to capital schemes within their portfolios during January 2024.
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7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

7.1 The timetable for setting the budget for 2023/24 is set out below.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Action</i>
24 January 2024	Cabinet	Agree 24/25 Capital Programme
21 February 2024	Council	Approve 24/25 budget proposals for recommendation to Council

8. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix 1: Existing Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28
- Appendix 2: Estimated Capital Resources 2024/25 to 2033/34
- Appendix 3: Proposed Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2033/34

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers.

Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2027/28

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total (5 years)
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Communities, Housing & Environment						
Private Rented Sector Housing	3,090	6,765	6,832	9,578	6,861	33,125
1,000 Homes Affordable Housing Programme - Expenditure	6,123	20,080	22,825	25,487	22,442	96,958
1,000 Homes Affordable Housing Programme - Social Housing Grant	-5,790	-3,120	-1,290	-8,250	-6,060	-24,510
Temporary Accommodation	12,000	12,000	8,000			32,000
Commercial Development - Maidstone East	156	623	623	468	100	1,970
Heather House Community Centre	319	701	351	75		1,446
Housing - Disabled Facilities Grants Funding	800	800	800	800	800	4,000
Acquisitions Officer - Social Housing Delivery P/ship	200					200
Street Scene Investment	50	50	50	50	50	250
Flood Action Plan	200	200	150			550
Continued Improvements to Play Areas	50	50	60	60	60	280
Parks Improvements	50	60	70	70	80	330
Section 106 funded works - Open Spaces	400	400	400	400	400	2,000
Expansion of Cemetery (New scheme)	80	120				200
Expansion of Crematorium (New scheme)	340					340
Purchase of New Waste Collection Vehicles (New scheme)	5,800					5,800
Total	23,868	38,730	38,871	28,737	24,733	154,939
Economic Regeneration & Leisure						
Mote Park Lake - Dam Works	20					20
Museum Development Plan	389					389
Leisure Provision	3,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	7,000
Tennis Courts Upgrade	20					20
Riverside Walk Works	250					250
Mote Park Kiosk Refurbishment & Extension (New scheme)	200					200

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total (5 years)
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Town Centre Strategy (New scheme)	450	2,700	2,350			5,500
Total	4,329	3,700	3,350	1,000	1,000	13,379

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	Total (5 years)
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Corporate Services						
Asset Management / Corporate Property	875	175	175	175	175	1,575
Corporate Property Acquisitions	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	12,500
Kent Medical Campus - Innovation Centre		250				250
Lockmeadow Ongoing Investment	500	250	250	250	250	1,500
Garden Community	733	200	200	200	200	1,533
Infrastructure Delivery	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	5,000
Other Property Works	500	380				880
Biodiversity & Climate Change	2,788	1,540	500	500		5,328
Photovoltaic Panels	234					234
Feasibility Studies	50	50	50	50	50	250
Digital Projects	28	28	28	28	28	140
Software / PC Replacement	200	200	200	200	200	1,000
Maidstone House Works	500	250	250	250	250	1,500
Fleet Vehicle Replacement Programme	456	457	270	96	250	1,529
Automation of Transactional Services (New scheme)	150					150
Total	10,514	7,280	5,423	5,249	4,903	33,369
Planning & Infrastructure						
Bridges Gyratory Scheme	206					206
Total	206					206
TOTAL	38,917	49,710	47,644	34,986	30,636	201,893

ESTIMATED CAPITAL PROGRAMME RESOURCES 2024/25 - 2033/34

Source of Funding	Estimate					5 year Total £000	Estimate					10 year Total £000
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29		2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000		£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
External Sources	5,421	2,979	13,486	21,356	9,963	53,205	1,200	1,200	13,900	1,200	1,200	71,905
Own resources (including Internal borrowing)	1,445	1,250	1,250	1,250	1,250	6,445	1,250	1,250	1,250	1,250	1,250	12,695
External Borrowing	88,795	82,322	48,067	26,736	48,358	294,278	28,817	15,001	-3,303	7,936	6,486	349,214
Total	95,661	86,551	62,803	49,342	59,571	353,928	31,267	17,451	11,847	10,386	8,936	433,814

Draft Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2033/34

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	5 Year Total	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	10 Year Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Housing, Health & Environment												
Private Rented Sector Housing (Gross cost)	21,065	31,879	25,574	12,370	7,274	98,161	1,656					99,817
1,000 Homes Affordable Housing Programme (Gross cost)	31,096	42,722	25,921	13,908	14,995	128,643	10,251	4,711	5,487	4,026	2,576	155,693
Temporary Accommodation	20,000					20,000						20,000
Other Property - Community and Commercial	1,809	1,089	663	143	100	3,804						3,804
Housing - Disabled Facilities Grants Funding	800	800	800	800	800	4,000	800	800	800	800	800	8,000
Street Scene Investment	50	50	50	50	50	250	50	50	50	50	50	500
Flood Action Plan	200	150				350						350
Continued Improvements to Play Areas	50	60	70	80	80	340	80	80	80	80	80	740
Parks Improvements	260	70	80	90	100	600	100	100	100	100	100	1,100
Parks Improvements - Infrastructure Maintenance	200	200	200	200	200	1,000	200	200	200	200	200	2,000
Grass Grounds Maintenance Machinery Replacement Programme	100	110	105	123	42	480	75	75	75	75	75	855
Waste Crime Team - Additional Resources	20	10	10			40						40
Open Spaces - Section 106 funded works	400	400	400	400	400	2,000	400	400	400	400	400	4,000
Improvements to Cemetery	120					120						120
Purchase of New Waste Collection Vehicles								6,380				6,380
Total	76,170	77,540	53,873	28,163	24,041	259,787	13,612	12,796	7,192	5,731	4,281	303,398
Communities, Leisure & Arts												
Museum Development Plan	180					180						180
Leisure Provision	2,250					2,250						2,250
New Leisure Centre	500	500	2,000	15,000	29,000	47,000	13,000					60,000
Mote Park Kiosk Refurbishment & Extension	250					250						250
Total	3,180	500	2,000	15,000	29,000	49,680	13,000					62,680

	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29	5 Year Total	2029/30	2030/31	2031/32	2032/33	2033/34	10 Year Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Corporate Services												
Asset Management / Corporate Property	1,695	175	175	175	175	2,395	175	175	175	175	175	3,270
Corporate Property Acquisitions	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	12,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	25,000
Kent Medical Campus - Innovation Centre	350					350						350
Lockmeadow Ongoing Investment	100	100	100	100	100	500	100	100	100	100	100	1,000
Garden Community	1,187	630	83	82		1,982						1,982
Infrastructure Delivery	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	5,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	10,000
Other Property Works	800	200				1,000						1,000
Carbon Reduction to Maidstone B.C. Estate	5,542	2,616	2,493	1,641	1,075	13,367	300	300	300	300	300	14,867
Parkwood Property Investment to meet EPC targets	785	440				1,225						1,225
Feasibility Studies	50	50	50	50	50	250	50	50	50	50	50	500
Digital Projects	30	30	30	30	30	150	30	30	30	30	30	300
Software / PC Replacement	200	200	200	200	200	1,000	200	200	200	200	200	2,000
Maidstone House Works	400	100	100	100	100	800						800
Leeds Langley					1,000	1,000						1,000
Fleet Vehicle Replacement Programme	478	470	200	300	300	1,748	300	300	300	300	300	3,248
Total	15,116	8,511	6,931	6,178	6,530	43,267	4,655	4,655	4,655	4,655	4,655	66,542
Planning, Infrastructure & Economic Development												
Public Realm & Greening relating to the Town Centre	1,000					1,000						1,000
Medway Street Car Park	195					195						195
Total	1,195					1,195						1,195
TOTAL	95,661	86,551	62,803	49,342	59,571	353,928	31,267	17,451	11,847	10,386	8,936	433,814

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 JANUARY 2024

Archbishop's Palace – Agreement for Lease

Timetable	
<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Date</i>
CLT	19 December 2023
Corporate Services PAC	17 January 2024
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	23 January 2024
Cabinet	24 January 2024

Will this be a Key Decision?	No
Urgency	Not Applicable
Final Decision-Maker	Cabinet
Lead Head of Service	Mark Green, Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Author	Deborah Turner, Corporate Property
Classification	<p>Public report with private appendix</p> <p>The information contained within the Appendix is considered exempt under the following paragraph of part I of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972:-</p> <p>3 = Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)</p>
Wards affected	High Street

Executive Summary

An extensive process of member and public consultation has been carried out concerning the future use of the Archbishop's Palace. Following expiry of our former preferred development partner's exclusivity period, and vacation of the building by

Kent County Council, it was agreed that the opportunity to lease the Palace Complex be advertised.

The report presents the results of the marketing exercise and recommends that the Council now enter into an agreement for lease with the preferred tenant, appoints a specialist team to obtain the necessary consents to make the required changes to the premises to enable its use as a wedding venue, and agrees to a capital spend of £1.5m to enable the project to proceed. This will meet the Council's objectives for future use of the Palace and is consistent with the emerging Town Centre Strategy.

Purpose of Report

Recommendation to Cabinet.

This report makes the following recommendation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

That the Cabinet is recommended to:

1. Agree to capital expenditure of up to £1.5 million
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement to select and appoint professional advisers to obtain all relevant consents, enter into contracts for applicable services as necessary, and to enter into a conditional agreement for lease with the preferred tenant.
3. Delegate authority to the Head of Legal Services to negotiate and complete all necessary legal formalities for the agreement for lease and purchase of services as set out above.

ARCHBISHOP'S PALACE – NEXT STEPS

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p><i>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure</i> • <i>Safe, Clean and Green</i> • <i>Homes and Communities</i> • <i>A Thriving Place</i> <p>The project described in this report supports the Council's Strategic Plan objectives, most notably A Thriving Place.</p>	Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p><i>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Heritage is Respected</i> • <i>Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced</i> • <i>Deprivation is reduced and Social Mobility is Improved</i> • <i>Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected</i> <p>The report recommendations support the achievements of the cross-cutting objectives by respecting the heritage of the existing building with sensitive design and addressing environmental sustainability by upgrade works to improve the use and condition of the building.</p>	Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement
Risk Management	Already covered in the risk section.	Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement
Financial	Running costs of the building were previously in the region of £250k per annum. These were previously met by the former tenant, who additionally paid the Council £100k per annum rent. Accordingly, there is a net shortfall of £350k per annum against ongoing	Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement

	budgets whilst the building remains in its present state. The capital budget £1.52m has been included in the draft 2024/25 capital programme, which will form part of the budget due to be signed off by Council in February 24.	
Staffing	We need access to additional expertise externally, to deliver the recommendations.	Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement
Legal	Acting on the recommendations is within the Council's powers as set out in local authority legislation including the general power of competence under the Localism Act 2011 and the Council's Constitution. Further, under section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council has power to do anything (whether or not involving the expenditure, borrowing or lending of money or the acquisition or disposal of any property or rights) which is calculated to facilitate, or is conducive or incidental to, the discharge of any of its functions. All necessary Legal documentation will be approved by Mid-Kent Legal Services before completion.	Team Leader (Contentious and Corporate Governance)
Information Governance	No implications.	Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement
Equalities	There is no impact on Equalities as a result of the recommendations in this report. An EqIA would be carried out as part of a policy or service change, should one be identified.	Equalities and Communities Officer
Public Health	No implications.	Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement
Crime and Disorder	No implications.	Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement
Procurement	The Council will follow its usual procurement processes in selecting professional advisers	Director of Finance, Resources &

	and a contractor for works at the site.	Business Improvement
Biodiversity and Climate Change	Any new use/lease of the Archbishop's Palace would need to be consistent with the Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Background

2.1 The Archbishop's Palace is a landmark building of unique significance for the borough and the town of Maidstone. Until March 2023, it was let to Kent County Council (KCC) for use as a Registry Office and Coroners Court. Knowing that KCC were due to vacate, an extensive process of member and public consultation has been carried out about its future use, starting in early 2020. The following objectives were set for any future use:

- Respect the historical fabric of the buildings
- Bring the building promptly back into active use
- Any proposed use should be economically viable
- Develop linkages to the property with the surrounding area, particularly the River Medway, Lockmeadow and the Town Centre.

2.2 The steps in this process may be summarised as follows.

February 2020	Options for future use of Palace were considered at an open meeting for councillors on 20 th February.
July 2021	A feasibility study was presented to Policy and Resources Committee. This considered a wide range of different potential uses, with the following short list drawn up as meriting detailed review: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Co-Working and/or Serviced Offices 2. Training and Seminar Centre 3. Wedding and Seminar Venue 4. Boutique Hotel 5. Commercial Mixed Use (ie combination of 1 and 2) 6. Mixed Use Culture and Weddings Agreement was reached to seek a preferred partner, through an open procurement process, for development of further proposals.
October 2021	Council undertook public consultation. This attracted considerable interest, with over 2,000 individual responses. The top three options for respondents were a wedding and seminar venue, mixed use culture and weddings, and a boutique hotel.

March 2022	Policy and Resources Committee selected a preferred partner. This was Balfour Hospitality, who proposed to develop the Palace as a boutique hotel.
March 2023	KCC vacated the premises and the building was taken over on a temporary basis by Parking Services.
April 2023	The preferred partner exclusivity period expired. Balfour Hospitality, as promoter of the boutique hotel concept, concluded that it would not be commercially viable, given the scale of investment required.
July 2023	Cabinet approved a proposal to seek an operator for the Palace, focused of on more modest investment and change of use to a wedding/events venue.

- 2.3 As part of the expression of interest submissions in October 2021, the Council received an in-house proposal to operate and manage the Palace as a wedding and event venue itself. The proposal was assessed against the success criteria required for the future use of the Palace and was not considered a viable option. The Council do not have the experience or expertise to manage this type of facility or service.
- 2.4 The Palace's current use as a service location ensures that the building is occupied, but it does not generate any income, and the council is currently incurring the costs of occupancy, previously borne by KCC. These comprise principally business rates and repairs and maintenance costs. The total marginal cost now incurred amounts to approximately £350,000 – being £100,000 of annual rent foregone and approximately £250,000 of running costs.
- 2.5 It was agreed at Cabinet in July 2023 that the property be put back on the market for lease by potential wedding/events venue operators and a professional team be appointed to develop plans for the change of use and consider essential landlord works. The council's previous experience with a potential tenant with ambitious plans for development of the Palace, which on detailed exploration turned out not to be viable, indicate that a pragmatic solution, involving minimal structural alteration to the Palace, would be preferable.
- 2.6 The Council invited potential operators to submit offers for an agreement to lease of the Palace Complex as a wedding and event venue. The opportunity was advertised in national publications and was given extensive publicity. This resulted in 7 viewings by potential tenants of the Palace and 4 firm offers.
- 2.7 Despite undertaking extensive marketing, with the assistance of specialist leisure sector consultants, the response in terms of firm offers was relatively modest. It is likely that this was for the following reasons.

- It is risky to commit to a long term lease in the current economic climate. Note that one party (existing venue and wedding venue operator) expressed interest in an operator licence as an alternative.
- The building has a Grade 1 listing and is architecturally significant, which means its layout is not ideal for many operators who are typically looking for fewer and larger open plan spaces, with greater flexibility. Several parties commented that the building and its layout were too 'awkward' for them.

The Palace has continued to receive some interest following the informal tender, with those more recent applicants being provided with a copy of the brochure and being advised that the Council is looking to progress the interest of a number of short-listed parties. However, none of those more recent applicants has sought to 'disrupt' the short list.

- 2.8 One of the four offers (to run the Palace as a wedding venue by a wedding planner) was discounted after Council further due diligence since they lacked the necessary business experience and a stable financial position. The three other bidders were invited to present their proposals at an interview panel. Immediately before the interview date, one of these bids was withdrawn.
- 2.9 Two parties have therefore presented proposals for use of the Palace as a wedding and hospitality venue. The first interviewee had experience of leasing and operating pubs and restaurants in Kent but did not have experience of venues of the size and scale of the Palace and had only three years of audited accounts.
- 2.10 The second bid was from an existing hotel and wedding venue owner/operator. The organisation has over 20 years' experience of owning and operating hotels and within their existing portfolio have a successful dedicated wedding venue in a Grade II listed castle. They currently host over 400 events a year. Their pitch included details of previous development projects, their ability to resource the Palace project with experienced staff and a business plan demonstrating their financial position and ability to cover both rent to the Council and the operational and running costs of the building.
- 2.11 Both bids were fully considered and based on the offered lease terms, previous experience of historical buildings, industry experience and expertise, financial acumen, company and staff resourcing. Only the second bid met the council's criteria and this is therefore the preferred bid.
- 2.12 The intention would be to enter into a conditional agreement for lease as soon as possible with the preferred bidder. A condition for subsequent completion of the lease itself would be for the council to obtain planning and listed building consent for specified works and change of use to a wedding venue. Details of the lease terms are set out in the confidential appendix.
- 2.13 The preferred bidder is aware of the pedestrian public access to the Palace complex and is confident this would not affect their proposals. At their

other venues, they host free 'showround' open day events throughout the year. Whilst these are primarily designed to encourage new clients, they are open to all and would serve as an opportunity for residents of the Borough to see the inside of the Palace.

- 2.14 The Council propose to seek the necessary planning and listed building consents for the proposed future use as a wedding venue. The marketing exercise confirmed that this is the most popular and financially viable use of the Palace buildings and therefore proceeding with obtaining these consents does not restrict the Council to proceeding just with the current preferred bidder.
- 2.15 Due to the sensitive nature of the Palace and its importance within the Council's portfolio it is deemed appropriate for the Council to, in the first instance, maintain a level of control over the application process and the specification and nature of the Landlord works. The limited interest in the property resulting from its historical significance and complex nature, is an indication that the property required specialist advice, attention, and management. By the Council managing the first stage of the process we can ensure that the appropriate team is appointed.
- 2.16 Upon obtaining the necessary consents the Council can seek to appoint its own team to carry out and manage the Landlord works or it may satisfy itself at this stage that the preferred bidder has a competent team to manage the next phase of works.
- 2.17 The realistic timescale to prepare the necessary details for submission to planning and Historic England is approximately 3 months and is dependent on appointment of the specialist team. Consent will then be subject to the statutory planning timeframe (13 weeks) and could be extended beyond that due to the additional sign off required by Historic England.
- 2.18 The planning application and listed building consent would include proposals for typical Landlord works for a project of this nature. These works would include:
- External landscaping
 - Installation of a commercial kitchen including food preparation and serving area
 - Creation of accessible entrance, communal and reception area
 - Redecoration and floor coverings
 - Upgrade of all services and compliance with all statutory obligations.

The specification of these works is not operator specific. There would be an enhancement in the value of the Palace as a wedding/events venue, from carrying out these works.

- 2.19 The tenant would in turn be investing in fixtures, fittings, furniture, equipment, and kit necessary to open and operate as a wedding venue, including but not limited to soft furnishings, crockery, cutlery, glassware, tableware, storage cupboards, white goods, office equipment, IT and technology kit. The preferred bidder has confirmed their intention their initial tenant investment in the first year to include fitout, marketing,

website , social media, working capital would be in the region of £400-£500,000.

Financial appraisal

- 2.20 The draft Heads of Terms envisage that the council would invest up to £1.5 million in landlord improvements prior to leasing the Palace. In return, the Council would cease to be liable for running costs, currently estimated as £350,000 per annum (£100,000 lost rental income + £250,000 previous running costs), and would generate annual rental income from the Palace of £120,000 (or more if the Gatehouse and Dungeon were also brought into use). It can be seen that this investment will achieve payback in less than four years and comfortably meets the council's investment appraisal criteria.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 Option 1: Do nothing

The Council would continue to incur significant annual costs in maintaining the Palace. There would be an opportunity cost, both in financial terms and in failing to allow potential users to benefit from this prime Council asset.

3.2 Option 2: Lease the Palace as a wedding and events venue

Enter into an agreement for lease with the preferred bidder and appoint the professional team to finalise the detailed plans to obtain all necessary consents for change of use and landlord works. Upon obtaining consent, the Council to sign the lease and undertake the agreed landlord works.

Alternative options, including operation of the Palace as a hotel, have been thoroughly explored in the period of nearly four years since options were first canvassed with members in February 2020. No other options have been identified which are viable or financially sustainable.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The preferred option is option 2. The property has been widely marketed and it has been established that the most popular and viable alternative use is as a wedding and events venue. This is consistent with residents' preferences as evidenced in public consultation. The preferred bidder has a successful track record of delivering and operating projects of this nature. It is a viable option in financial terms, and would meet the Council's objectives for future use of the Palace.

5. RISK

- 5.1 There are a number of risks associated with this proposal.

Project risk – Delivering the required improvements to the Palace to accommodate a new tenant will bring all the usual risks associated with construction projects. These will be mitigated as much as possible by use of experienced and qualified contractors and application of strong project management disciplines.

Delay risk – Whilst all parties are minded to progress with a detailed application and procure works as quickly as possible, Historic England have previously lacked resources to process applications and consents in a timely manner. Experience of the Council’s appointed professional team will help minimise the risk of slippage to the proposed timescale.

Commercial risk – The proposed future use of the Palace depends on the commercial success of the operator, which in turn depends on the overall health of the local economy.

Site specific risks – The palace is a historic and sensitive site. Carrying out any work at the site therefore brings a heightened degree of risk. These will be mitigated so far as possible by working with contractors and partners who have relevant experience and can be expected to anticipate and respect the specific issues involved. The Council’s conservation specialists have been consulted during the project to date and will continue to be involved.

There is a risk that existing services to the Palace would not support any form of development and in that case, the upgrade works to those services could far exceed our budget costs. The services survey to establish the condition and capacity of the services will commence December 2023.

- 5.2 The above risks, 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 As describe above, a comprehensive public consultation exercise was held in 2021 about the future of the Palace. It is considered that the findings from this remain relevant and they have helped to determine the recommended way forward.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 The proposed next steps are set out below.

2024	Action to be undertaken
January	Appoint specialist team including architect and engineer to prepare the detailed plans required for submission to Historic England (Listed Building Consent) and Planners (Change of Use and Planning Consent) for necessary consents
Jan/Feb	Agree final heads of terms of the lease and complete the Agreement for Lease
March	Submit planning and listed building consent applications
April/May	Develop detailed costed scope of landlord works and agree project management strategy
June	Assuming necessary consents obtained, lease signed and landlord works commence.
October	Completion of works and opening of Palace as wedding venue.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

Exempt Appendix – Heads of Terms and Cost Estimates

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Agenda Item 17

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

Document is Restricted