

HOUSING, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 12 March 2024
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors Hastie, Jeffery, Joy (Vice-Chairman), Khadka, Knatchbull
(Chairman), Mortimer, Riordan, Rose and Springett

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

AGENDA

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| 5. Disclosures by Members and Officers | |
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| 7. To consider whether any items should be taken in public due to the possible disclosure of exempt information | |
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Issued on Monday 4th March 2024

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

PART II

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

Head of Schedule 12 A and Brief Description

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INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

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 Friday 8 March). 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**.

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

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 30 JANUARY 2024

Attendees:

Committee Members:	Councillors Knatchbull (Chairman), English, Hastie, Jeffery, Joy, Khadka, Riordan, Springett and J Wilkinson
Cabinet Members:	Councillors Garten, Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Parfitt-Reid, Cabinet Member for Housing and Health
Visiting Members:	Councillor Cleator

116. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mortimer and Rose.

117. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following Substitute Members were noted:

- Councillor English for Councillor Mortimer
- Councillor Wilkinson for Councillor Rose

118. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman stated that Item 8 – Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 January 2024 would be taken as an urgent item because the Minutes had been published after the agenda publication and circulated to the Committee.

119. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor Cleator was present as Visiting Member for Item 11 – 1,000 Homes Programme – Individual Scheme Updates.

120. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

121. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

122. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public, unless any Member of the Committee wished to discuss the exempt appendix to Item 11 – 1,000 Homes Programme – Individual Scheme Updates, in which case the Committee would enter into closed session due to the possible disclosure of exempt information, for the reason specified having applied the public interest test.

123. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 JANUARY 2024

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed.

124. FORWARD PLAN RELATING TO THE COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan relating to the Committee's Terms of Reference be noted.

125. BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Cabinet Member for Environmental Services introduced the report which detailed the progress by the Council to reduce its carbon footprint as part of the Council's Biodiversity and Climate Change Action plan. The relevant actions that related to the Committee's terms of reference were outlined, including those on housing, solar panels, and recycling in the town centre.

The report was welcomed by the Committee and it was recognised improvements had been made to reduce the carbon footprint of the Committee's services.

In response to questions, the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services stated that sustainable transport would be addressed in the Council's Local Plan and emphasised that only appropriate locations would be chosen for solar farms in the Local Plan.

In response to further questions, the Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager stated that the boundaries for the Rural Prosperity Fund were set by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), and that a Biodiversity and Climate Change Officer had been in contact with Parish Councils to assist with applications to the fund. It was further stated that zoning for solar farms was ongoing to find the best locations to connect solar farms to the national grid.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to CABINET:

1. That the strategic considerations for tackling net zero borough wide and action plan updates show at Appendix 1 of the report, be noted.

Note: Councillor Hastie arrived during consideration of this item.

126. 1,000 HOMES PROGRAMME – INDIVIDUAL SCHEME UPDATES

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Health introduced the report and stated that changes were proposed to increase the amount of properties in Council housing projects that would be available for social rent, and that approval was required to enter the construction contracts on three (of the five sites) at a higher cost than previously agreed. The Council had received an indicative grant offer from Homes England to deliver more homes at social rent which would allow the Council to

borrow less, and largely offset the proposed additional construction costs. It was emphasised that social rent would be more beneficial for residents in temporary accommodation than affordable rent.

The report was welcomed by the Committee particularly that an increase in the amount of properties for social rent.

In response to questions, the Director of Regeneration and Place stated that the affordable and social rent charges would increase with a formula each year. It was highlighted that the grant offered from Homes England (for social rent) was nearly double the grant offered if the properties were delivered as affordable rent.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to CABINET: That

1. The increased works costs for Bathstore, Land at Granville Road and Britannia House, taking note of scheme performance summaries in Appendix 1, be approved.
2. The switch in tenure from Affordable Rent to Social Rent for all 4 sites and in addition the 7 Market rented units to social rented units at the RBL site, be approved.
3. The Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement, be given delegated authority, to appoint the preferred contractor to carry out the necessary building works as per the tenders for Britannia House, Corbens place, Land and Granville Road, and the Bathstore noting that the Corbens place works tender was returned under the works budget previously approved.

127. DURATION OF MEETING

6:30 p.m. to 7:10 p.m.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN FOR THE FOUR MONTH PERIOD 1 MARCH 2024 TO 30 JUNE 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.

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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
3rd Quarter Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report 9	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Corporate Services.	20 Mar 2024	No	No Open	<p>Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee 6 Mar 2024</p> <p>Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 5 Mar 2024</p> <p>Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 12 Mar 2024</p> <p>Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 13 Mar 2024</p>	3rd Quarter Finance, Performance and Risk Monitoring Report	<p>Paul Holland, Adrian Lovegrove</p> <p>Head of Finance</p> <p>paulholland@maidstone.gov.uk, adrianlovegrove@maidstone.gov.uk</p>
Enter into demolition contract	Cabinet	Cabinet Member for Housing and Health	20 Mar 2024	Yes	No Open	Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 12 Mar 2024	Enter into demolition contract	<p>Philip Morris</p> <p>philipmorris@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
Enter into demolition contract following tender to demolish the buildings 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.		one.gov.uk
Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029 - Initial priorities and feedback Delivering the new strategic priorities for the Council in relation to homelessness and rough sleeping. A review of the themes and priorities for the Council.	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	Hannah Gaston hannahgaston@maidstone.gov.uk
Key Performance Indicators Key performance indicators are reviewed annually. This report proposes the KPIs for the period 2024/25.	Cabinet	Leader of the Council	20 Mar 2024	No	No Open	Communities, Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee 5 Mar 2024 Planning, Infrastructure and Economic	Key Performance Indicators	Carly Benville, Anna Collier carlybenville@maidstone.gov.uk, annacollier@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>Development Policy Advisory Committee 6 Mar 2024</p> <p>Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee 12 Mar 2024</p> <p>Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee 13 Mar 2024</p>		

Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee

12 March 2024

Draft Key Performance Indicators 2024/25

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Communities Leisure and Arts Policy Advisory Committee	5 March 2024
Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee	6 March 2024
Housing, Health and the Environment Policy Advisory Committee	12 March 2024
Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee	13 March 2024
Cabinet	20 March 2024

Will this be a Key Decision?	No
Urgency	Not Applicable
Final Decision-Maker	CABINET
Lead Head of Service	Head of Insight, Communities and Governance
Lead Officer and Report Author	Carly Benville Information and Analytics Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

Committee are provided with an update on performance management arrangements for 2024/25 including to recommend to Cabinet the draft key performance indicators for 2024/25.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report asks the Committee to consider the following recommendation to the Cabinet;

1. To agree the draft Performance Indicators at Appendix A and note the changes to reporting arrangements.
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Draft Key Performance Indicators 2024/25

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve its priorities as the Key Performance Indicators and strategic actions are aligned with the Council's overarching Strategic Plan 2019-45 and play an important role in the achievement of corporate objectives. They also cover a wide range of services and priority areas.</p>	Anna Collier - Head of Insight, Communities and Governance
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report recommendation(s) supports the achievement(s) of all cross-cutting objectives as the Key Performance Indicators and strategic actions are aligned with the Council's overarching Strategic Plan 2019-45.</p>	Anna Collier - Head of Insight, Communities and Governance
Risk Management	Already covered in the risk section.	Anna Collier - Head of Insight, Communities and Governance
Financial	The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation. Performance indicators and targets are closely linked to the allocation of resources and determining good value for money. The financial implications of any	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

	proposed changes are also identified and taken into account in the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy and associated annual budget setting process. Performance issues are highlighted as part of the budget monitoring reporting process.	
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing. Having a clear set of performance targets enables staff outcomes/objectives to be set and effective action plans to be put in place.	Anna Collier - Head of Insight, Communities and Governance
Legal	There is no statutory duty to report regularly on the Council's performance. However, under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 (as amended) a best value authority has a statutory duty to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. One of the purposes of the Key Performance Indicators is to facilitate the improvement of the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of Council services. Regular reports on Council performance help to demonstrate best value and compliance with the statutory duty.	Team Leader (Contentious and Corporate Governance)
Privacy and Data Protection	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council Processes.	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	The performance recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	There are no implications to Crime and Disorder.	Anna Collier - Head of Insight, Communities and Governance
Procurement	There are no procurement implications.	Anna Collier - Head of Insight, Communities and Governance

		Governance & Section 151 Officer
Biodiversity and Climate Change	This report aligns with Action 9.2 to “Ensure service plans consider biodiversity and climate change and monitor with performance indicators, so that managers plan their services to ensure opportunities for enhancing biodiversity and mitigating and adapting to climate change are taken” of the Council’s biodiversity and climate change Action Plan	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Performance management is a key tool to ensuring that the Council is delivering on its priorities, as set out in our strategic plan, and which indicates whether action is required to ensure that we improve our services, give value for money and good outcomes for the residents of Maidstone.
- 2.2 Performance Management has undergone a few evolutions both nationally and locally, with a general reduction in emphasis on performance monitoring. Nationally there has been a recent increase in focus. In July 2023, the Office of Local Government (OFLOG) launched a beta-version of a new online tool, which brings together a range of existing metrics across local government service areas, to provide authoritative and accessible data and analysis about the performance of local government and support its improvement.
- 2.3 Not all metrics have yet been confirmed, and there are currently no published metrics falling under the remit of this committee. The Local Authority Data Explorer can be found here: <https://oflog.data.gov.uk/>.
- 2.4 The government have also committed to ensuring that OFLOG will develop all future metrics by July 2025, and under their current proposed future metrics, the following are relevant for this committee:
- Homelessness and rough sleeping
 - Public Health
 - Animal Welfare
 - Anti-social behaviour
 - Environment
 - Housing
 - Neighbourhood Crime
 - Parks and Green Spaces

Draft Key Performance Indicator Set 2024/25

- 2.5 Proposed key performance indicators for consideration for the period 2024/25 are outlined in the tables over the page. Indicators have been developed based upon:

- New and potential Oflog indicators as described above,
- Current Strategic Priorities,
- Feedback from members over the course of the year,
- Advice from Head of Services and key managers.

2.6 Thirty-seven indicators are proposed for this committee, an increase from the current twenty-four.

2.7 The below indicators are proposed to be removed from this committee:

- Percentage of successful Prevention Duty outcomes
- Percentage of successful Relief Duty outcomes
- Number of completed housing assistances
- Percentage of CPWs to CPNs in period (CPT/SMP)
- Number of trees planted/size of area rewilded

2.8 The new indicators proposed for this committee are:

- Percentage of rent arrears (as a percentage of total rent roll) of properties managed by MBC's Accommodation Team
- Percentage of void residential properties managed by MBC's Accommodation Team (re-lets)
- Percentage of repairs completed within 21 Days (on residential properties managed by MBC's Accommodation Team)
- Percentage of gas safety certificates in place on residential properties managed by MBC's Accommodation Team
- Percentage of electrical safety certificates on residential properties managed by MBC's Accommodation Team
- Percentage of Fire Risk Assessments in place for residential properties where this is a requirement under the Fire Safety Order (2005) (properties managed by MBC's Accommodation Team)
- Number of Homeless Applications made
- Number of applicants where S195(2) Prevention Duty ended as applicant became homeless and S189B(2) Relief Duty accepted
- Percentage of fly tips assessed within 2 working days
- Percentage of fly-tips clear or assessed within 4 working days
- Fly-tipping fixed penalty notices issued per incident
- Fly-tipping fixed penalty notices percent paid
- Fly-tipping fixed penalty notices paid per incidents
- Fly-tipping enforcement actions per incident
- Number of Green Flag parks
- Percentage of Animal licensed establishments rated 4* or above
- Size of areas rewilded through MBC schemes (volume of land)
- Number of trees planted (through MBC planting initiatives)

Reporting

2.9 Reporting will change in 2024/25 to increase transparency of the Council's performance. Dashboards of performance will be developed for each committee, which will be refreshed monthly for members.

- 2.10 In addition to the monthly dashboard, Committee can request more detail about performance from Heads of Service or Managers at committee on any aspect of the performance to feature on the Committee agenda.
- 2.11 A formal summary of performance will be reported biannually, with the annual report providing a more in-depth analysis including trends and benchmarking data.
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3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 Members of the Policy Advisory Committee can choose to recommend to Cabinet the draft key performance indicator set, as it set out at appendix A.
- 3.2 Alternatively, Members can recommend to Cabinet to remove or add any indicators suggested as they feel are relevant for the committee.
- 3.3 Members could recommend that performance is not monitored but this is not recommended. Performance management is a cornerstone of a well-performing authority and this would reduce transparency and oversight of the Council's services and overall performance.
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4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 That Members of the Policy Advisory Committee recommend the draft indicator at appendix A to Cabinet, as this has been developed based upon aligning to national data sets, strategic priorities and expert officer advice.
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5. RISK

- 5.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. The recommended approach reduces the risk to the Council. 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 Key Performance Indicators are presented to committees and cabinet throughout the year and feedback is continually collected and fed into the indicator review process at the end of the municipal year.
- 6.2 Meetings have been had with Corporate Leadership Team, Heads of Service and key Managers which has led to the draft set presented to committee today.
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7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 The development of a performance dashboard is currently underway and will continue once the final set of indicators is approved.
- 7.2 Once the dashboard is at a stage of user-testing, the Chair and Vice-Chair of this committee will be invited to feedback on the contents and outputs of the dashboard, which will contribute towards its final view.
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8. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix 1 - Draft 2024-25 KPIs for HHE PAC
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Draft Indicators 2024/25 for comment
Housing, Health & Environment Policy Advisory Committee

Homes and Communities			
Indicator	Responsible Officer	Committee	Current/New KPI?
Percentage of rent arrears (as a percentage of total rent roll) of properties managed by MBC's Accommodation Team	John Littlemore	Housing Health and Environment	New
Percentage of void residential properties managed by MBC's Accommodation Team (re-lets)	John Littlemore	Housing Health and Environment	New
Percentage of repairs completed within 21 Days (on residential properties managed by MBC's Accommodation Team)	John Littlemore	Housing Health and Environment	New
Percentage of gas safety certificates in place on residential properties managed by MBC's Accommodation Team	John Littlemore	Housing Health and Environment	New
Percentage of electrical safety certificates on residential properties managed by MBC's Accommodation Team	John Littlemore	Housing Health and Environment	New
Percentage of Fire Risk Assessments in place for residential properties where this is a requirement under the Fire Safety Order (2005) (properties managed by MBC's Accommodation Team)	John Littlemore	Housing Health and Environment	New
Number of Homeless Applications made	John Littlemore	Housing Health and Environment	New
Number of homeless cases where the cause of homelessness is domestic abuse	John Littlemore	Housing Health and Environment	Current
Number of households prevented or relieved from becoming homeless	John Littlemore	Housing Health and Environment	Current
Number of applicants where S195(2) Prevention Duty ended as applicant became homeless and S189B(2) Relief Duty accepted	John Littlemore	Housing Health and Environment	New
Number of Rough Sleepers accommodated by the Council on the last night of the month	John Littlemore	Housing Health and Environment	Current

Number of households living in temporary accommodation last night of the month (NI 156 & SDL 009-00)	John Littlemore	Housing Health and Environment	Current
Number of households living in nightly paid temporary accommodation last night of the month	John Littlemore	Housing Health and Environment	Current
Number of completed Disabled Facilities Grants	John Littlemore	Housing Health and Environment	Current
Number of private sector homes improved through PSH interventions	John Littlemore	Housing Health and Environment	Current
Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	John Littlemore	Housing Health and Environment	Current
Affordable homes as a percentage of all new homes	John Littlemore	Housing Health and Environment	Current

Safe Clean Green			
Indicator	Responsible Officer	Committee	Current/New KPI?
The percentage of relevant land and highways that is assessed as having acceptable levels of litter	Jen Stevens	Housing Health and Environment	Current
The percentage of relevant land and highways that is assessed as having acceptable levels of detritus	Jen Stevens	Housing Health and Environment	Current
Missed bins per 100,000 collections	Jen Stevens	Housing Health and Environment	Current
Tonnage of household waste produced per household	Jen Stevens	Housing Health and Environment	Current
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	Jen Stevens	Housing Health and Environment	Current
Contaminated tonnage (rejected) as a percentage of tonnage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting	Jen Stevens	Housing Health and Environment	Current
Percentage of fly tips assessed within 2 working days	Jen Stevens	Housing Health and Environment	New
Percentage of fly-tips clear or assessed within 4 working days	Jen Stevens	Housing Health and Environment	New
Fly-tipping fixed penalty notices issued per incident	Jen Stevens	Housing Health and Environment	New

Fly-tipping fixed penalty notices percent paid	Jen Stevens	Housing Health and Environment	New
Fly-tipping fixed penalty notices paid per incidents	Jen Stevens	Housing Health and Environment	New
Fly-tipping enforcement actions per incident	Jen Stevens	Housing Health and Environment	New
Number of Green Flag Parks	Jen Stevens	Housing Health and Environment	New
Percentage of Animal licensed establishments rated 4* or above	John Littlemore	Housing Health and Environment	New
Improvement in Air Quality	John Littlemore	Housing Health and Environment	Current
Borough wide carbon emissions reduction (Government Data)	Anna Collier	Housing Health and Environment	Current
Size of areas rewilded through MBC schemes (volume of land)	Anna Collier	Housing Health and Environment	New
Number of trees planted (through MBC planting initiatives)	Anna Collier	Housing Health and Environment	New
Number of Community Protection Warnings (CPWs) in period	John Littlemore	Housing Health and Environment	Current
Number of Community Protection Notices (CPNs) in period	John Littlemore	Housing Health and Environment	Current

Agenda Item 11

HOUSING, HEALTH & ENVIRONMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

12 March 2024

3rd Quarter Finance Update & Performance Monitoring Report 2023/24

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Housing, Health & Environment Policy Advisory Committee	12 March 2024
Cabinet Meeting	20 March 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 & Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Author	Paul Holland, Senior Finance Manager Carly Benville, Senior Information Analyst
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report sets out the 2023/24 financial and performance position for the services reporting into the Housing, Health & Environment Policy Advisory Committee (HHE PAC) as at 31st December 2023 (Quarter 3). The primary focus is on:

- The 2023/24 Revenue and Capital budgets; and
- The 2023/24 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that relate to the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2019-2045.

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

Budget Monitoring

Overall net expenditure at the end of Quarter 3 for the services reporting to HHE PAC is £6.402m, compared to the approved profiled budget of £5.952m, representing an overspend of £0.448m. Continuing pressure on the budget for Temporary Accommodation for Homeless Persons means that the year-end overspend is projected to be £0.606m.

Capital expenditure at the end of Quarter 3 for HHE PAC was £16.572m against a total budget of £39.438m. Projected total expenditure is £24.867m.

The budgets used in this report are the revised estimates for 2023/24.

Performance Monitoring

75.0% (6 of 8) the targetable quarterly KPIs reportable to this Committee achieved their Quarter 3 target.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update

An update on progress made against schemes using this funding is shown at Appendix 3.

Purpose of Report

The report enables the Committee to consider and comment on the issues raised and actions being taken to address both budget pressures and performance issues as at 31st December 2023.

This report makes the following recommendations to the Housing, Health & Environment Policy Advisory Committee:

1. That the Revenue position as at the end of Quarter 3 for 2023/24, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances have been identified, be noted;
2. That the Capital position at the end of Quarter 3 for 2023/24 be noted;
3. That the Performance position as at Quarter 3 for 2023/24, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant issues have been identified, be noted.
4. That the UK Shared Prosperity Fund update, attached at Appendix 3 be noted.

3rd Quarter Finance Update & Performance Monitoring Report 2023/24

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>This report monitors actual activity against the revenue budget and other financial matters set by Council for the financial year. The budget is set in accordance with the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy which is linked to the Strategic Plan and corporate priorities.</p> <p>The Key Performance Indicators and strategic actions are part of the Council's overarching Strategic Plan 2019-45 and play an important role in the achievement of corporate objectives. They also cover a wide range of services and priority areas.</p>	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Cross Cutting Objectives	This report enables any links between performance and financial matters to be identified and addressed at an early stage, thereby reducing the risk of compromising the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2019-2045, including its cross-cutting objectives.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Risk Management	This is addressed in Section 5 of this report.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Financial	Financial implications are the focus of this report through high level budget monitoring. Budget monitoring ensures that services can react quickly enough to potential resource problems. The process ensures that the Council is not faced by corporate financial problems that may prejudice the delivery of strategic priorities.	Senior Finance Manager (Client)

	<p>Performance indicators and targets are closely linked to the allocation of resources and determining good value for money. The financial implications of any proposed changes are also identified and taken into account in the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy and associated annual budget setting process. Performance issues are highlighted as part of the budget monitoring reporting process.</p>	
Staffing	<p>The budget for staffing represents a significant proportion of the direct spend of the Council and is carefully monitored. Any issues in relation to employee costs will be raised in this and future monitoring reports.</p> <p>Having a clear set of performance targets enables staff outcomes/objectives to be set and effective action plans to be put in place.</p>	<p>Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)</p>
Legal	<p>The Council has a statutory obligation to maintain a balanced budget and the monitoring process enables the Committee to remain aware of issues and the process to be taken to maintain a balanced budget.</p> <p>There is no statutory duty to report regularly on the Council's performance. However, under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 (as amended) a best value authority has a statutory duty to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. One of the purposes of the Key Performance Indicators is to facilitate the improvement of the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of Council services. Regular reports on Council performance help to demonstrate best value and compliance with the statutory duty.</p>	<p>Team Leader (Contentious and Corporate Governance)</p>
Information Governance	<p>The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK</p>	<p>Policy and Information Team</p>

	GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council processes.	
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	Monitoring performance indicators, revenue budget, expenditure and strategic milestones will have a positive impact on the public's health or that of individuals.	Senior Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	There are no specific issues arising.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Procurement	Performance Indicators and Strategic Milestones monitor any procurement needed to achieve the outcomes of the Strategic Plan.	Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement (Section 151 Officer)
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and there are no direct implications on biodiversity and climate change.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2023/24 to 2027/28 - including the budget for 2023/24 - was approved by full Council on 22nd February 2023. This report updates the Committee on how its services have performed over the last quarter with regard to revenue and capital expenditure against approved budgets.
- 2.2 Attached at Appendix 1 is a report setting out the revenue and capital spending position at the Quarter 3 stage. Overall net expenditure at the end of Quarter 3 for the services reporting to HHE PAC is £6.402m compared to the approved profiled budget of £5.952m, representing an overspend of £0.448m. There continues to be a significant overspend on the budget for

housing temporarily homeless persons and families. Capital expenditure at the end of Quarter 3 for HHE PAC was £16.572m against a total budget of £39.438m, with total spend projected to be £24.867m. There are a number of significant variances that are currently forecast by the end of the year, and these are also detailed in Appendix 1.

- 2.3 Attached at Appendix 2 is a report setting out the position for the KPIs for the corresponding period. Attached at Appendix 3 is an update on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.
-

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Committee is asked to note the contents but may choose to comment.
-

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 In considering the current position on the Revenue budget, the Capital Programme, and the KPIs at the end of December 2023, the Committee can choose to note this information or could choose to comment.
-

5. RISK

- 5.1 This report is presented for information only and has no direct risk management implications.
- 5.2 The Council produced a balanced budget for both revenue and capital income and expenditure for 2023/24. The budget is set against a continuing backdrop of limited resources and the continuation of a difficult economic climate. Regular and comprehensive monitoring of the type included in this report ensures early warning of significant issues that may place the Council at financial risk. This gives the Cabinet the best opportunity to take actions to mitigate such risks.
-

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 The KPIs update ("Performance Monitoring") are reported to the Policy Advisory Committees (PAC) quarterly: Communities, Leisure & Arts PAC, Housing, Health & Environment PAC and Planning, Infrastructure & Economic Development PAC. Each committee also receives a report on the relevant priority action areas. The report was also presented to the Corporate Services PAC reporting on the priority areas of "A Thriving Place", "Safe, Clean and Green", "Homes and Communities" and "Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure".
-

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 The Quarter 3 Budget & Performance Monitoring reports are being considered by the relevant Policy Advisory Committees during March 2024.
-

8. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Third Quarter Budget Monitoring 2023/24
 - Appendix 2: Third Quarter Performance Monitoring 2023/24
 - Appendix 3: UK Shared Prosperity Fund Update 2023/24
-

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

APPENDIX 1 – THIRD QUARTER BUDGET MONITORING

Contents

Part A: Third Quarter Revenue Budget 2023/24

- A1) Revenue Budget
- A2) Significant Variances

Part B: Third Quarter Capital Budget 2023/24

- B1) Capital Budget
- B2) Significant Variances

Part A - Third Quarter Revenue Budget 2023/24

A1) Revenue Budget: Housing, Health & Environment (HHE) PAC

A2.1 The table below provides a detailed summary of the budgeted net expenditure position for the services reporting directly into HHE PAC at the end of Quarter 3. The financial figures are presented on an accruals basis (i.e. expenditure for goods and services received, but not yet paid for, is included).

The budgets used in this report are the revised estimates for 2023/24.

A2.2 This table now shows the variance split between expenditure and income to give more of an insight into the nature of the variance.

HHE Revenue Budget: NET EXPENDITURE (@ 3rd Quarter 2023/24)

Cost Centre	Approved (Revised) Budget for Year	Approved (Revised) Budget to 31 December 2023	Actual as at 31 December 2023	Variance as at 31 December 2023			Forecast March 2024	
	Net £000	Net £000	Net £000	Expenditure £000	Income £000	Net £000	Forecast Net £000	Forecast Variance £000
Lettable Halls	-4	-3	-10	6	1	7	-4	0
Community Halls	53	42	13	37	-8	30	23	30
Parks & Open Spaces	984	727	730	-28	25	-3	984	0
Playground Maintenance & Improvements	151	110	81	29	0	29	151	0
Parks Pavilions	33	24	11	13	0	13	33	0
Mote Park	337	251	238	11	2	13	337	0
Allotments	14	11	10	1	0	1	14	0
Cemetery	-21	13	29	-1	-14	-15	-21	0
National Assistance Act	-0	-0	-1	2	-1	1	-0	0
Crematorium	-963	-641	-596	-45	-0	-46	-930	-33
Community Safety	33	26	14	10	3	13	33	0
PCC Grant - Building Safer Communities	0	-8	-13	5	0	5	0	0
C C T V	38	29	43	-15	0	-15	38	0
Licences	3	4	8	-1	-3	-4	3	0
Licensing Statutory	-63	-47	-74	-2	28	27	-63	0
Licensing Non Chargeable	9	6	7	-0	0	-0	9	0
Animal Licensing	-8	-6	-6	0	1	1	-8	0
Dog Control	30	20	58	-38	0	-38	84	-54
Health Improvement Programme	6	6	0	6	0	6	6	0
Pollution Control - General	16	14	1	8	4	13	16	0
Contaminated Land	-3	-2	-2	1	-1	-1	-3	0
Waste Crime	4	3	7	12	-16	-4	4	0
Food Hygiene	10	6	-5	9	2	11	10	0
Sampling	4	3	0	2	0	2	4	0
Occupational Health & Safety	-8	-6	-8	-0	2	2	-8	0
Infectious Disease Control	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
Noise Control	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0
Pest Control	-12	-9	-2	0	-7	-7	-12	0
Public Conveniences	274	172	145	27	0	27	274	0
Licensing - Hackney & Private Hire	-67	-67	-74	-7	14	7	-67	0
Street Cleansing	1,315	986	964	5	16	21	1,315	0
Household Waste Collection	2,276	1,190	1,188	25	-23	2	2,276	0
Commercial Waste Services	-45	-35	-74	31	8	39	-105	60
Recycling Collection	1,846	667	663	55	-52	4	1,846	0

Cost Centre	Approved (Revised) Budget for Year	Approved (Revised) Budget to 31 December 2023	Actual as at 31 December 2023	Variance as at 31 December 2023			Forecast March 2024	
	Net £000	Net £000	Net £000	Expenditure £000	Income £000	Net £000	Forecast Net £000	Forecast Variance £000
Social Inclusion	0	-1	-4	20	-18	2	0	0
Public Health - Obesity	0	-134	-136	2	-0	2	0	0
Public Health - Misc Services	0	-107	-121	-4	18	14	0	0
Dwellings rents (gross) Affordable	-42	-32	0	0	-32	-32	-48	6
Insurance Costs Paid By The Landlord	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
Strategic Housing Role	12	11	5	6	0	6	12	0
Housing Register & Allocations	15	14	10	4	0	4	15	0
Private Sector Renewal	-47	-83	-88	2	3	5	-47	0
HMO Licensing	-20	-15	-36	-1	22	21	-20	0
Homeless Temporary Accommodation	910	653	1,399	-827	80	-747	1,900	-990
Homelessness Prevention	182	-271	-224	-47	0	-47	201	-19
Aylesbury House	31	27	31	5	-9	-4	31	0
Magnolia House	44	33	15	16	2	18	44	0
St Martins House	5	4	3	1	-0	1	5	0
Marsham Street	38	29	3	17	9	26	38	0
Sundry Temporary Accommodation (TA) Properties	23	17	-2	18	1	19	23	0
2 Bed Property - Temporary Accommodation	-25	-19	-22	-4	7	3	-25	0
3 Bed Property - Temporary Accommodation	-56	-42	-50	-33	41	8	-56	0
4 bed Property - Temporary Accommodation	-14	-11	-18	6	1	7	-14	0
1 Bed Property- Temporary Accommodation	17	15	24	8	-18	-10	17	0
Trinity	-12	-4	3	-2	-5	-7	-12	0
Chillington House	-2	-1	1	1	-3	-2	-2	0
276 Willington Street	10	8	1	-7	14	7	10	0
St Pauls Vicarage	4	4	7	-0	-3	-3	4	0
Marden Caravan Site (Stilebridge Lane)	-22	-15	3	-39	21	-18	-22	0
Ulcombe Caravan Site (Water Lane)	7	-0	19	-27	8	-19	7	0
Head of Environment and Public Realm	118	88	87	1	0	1	118	0
Bereavement Services Section	308	231	221	10	0	10	308	0
Community Partnerships & Resilience Section	546	410	373	37	0	37	514	32
Licensing Section	126	94	76	7	12	19	126	0
Environmental Protection Section	294	221	155	65	0	65	210	84
Food and Safety Section	288	216	232	-16	0	-16	288	0
Depot Services Section	945	710	622	81	7	88	855	90
New Business & Housing Development	203	152	149	3	0	3	203	0
Head of Housing & Community Services	116	87	86	1	0	1	116	0
Homechoice Section	239	147	147	-0	0	-0	239	0
Housing Advice Section	244	-48	-84	35	0	35	211	32
Housing Standards Team	295	196	151	46	-0	46	254	41
Housing Management	337	195	126	47	22	69	286	51
Homelessness Outreach	78	-67	-89	23	0	23	78	0
Accommodation Resource Team	42	-5	-4	-1	0	-1	42	0
Housing and Inclusion	2	-71	-104	27	6	33	1	0
Salary Slippage	-439	-329	0	-329	0	-329	-439	0
Fleet Workshop & Management	250	188	134	51	3	54	188	62
MBS Support Crew	-44	-33	-48	42	-26	15	-44	0
Totals	11,255	5,953	6,402	-595	146	-449	11,861	-606

By Cabinet Member

Cost Centre	Approved (Revised) Budget for Year	Approved (Revised) Budget to 31 December 2023	Actual as at 31 December 2023	Variance as at 31 December 2023			Forecast March 2024	
	Net £000	Net £000	Net £000	Expenditure £000	Income £000	Net £000	Forecast Net £000	Forecast Variance £000
Cabinet Member for Health & Housing								
Lettable Halls	-4	-3	-10	6	1	7	-4	0
Community Halls	53	42	13	37	-8	30	23	30
Community Safety	33	26	14	10	3	13	33	0
PCC Grant - Building Safer Communities	0	-8	-13	5	0	5	0	0
C C T V	38	29	43	-15	0	-15	38	0
Social Inclusion	0	-1	-4	20	-18	2	0	0
Public Health - Obesity	0	-134	-136	2	-0	2	0	0
Public Health - Misc Services	0	-107	-121	-4	18	14	0	0
Dwellings rents (gross) Affordable	-42	-32	0	0	-32	-32	-48	6
Insurance Costs Paid By The Landlord	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
Strategic Housing Role	12	11	5	6	0	6	12	0
Housing Register & Allocations	15	14	10	4	0	4	15	0
Private Sector Renewal	-47	-83	-88	2	3	5	-47	0
HMO Licensing	-20	-15	-36	-1	22	21	-20	0
Homeless Temporary Accommodation	910	653	1,399	-827	80	-747	1,900	-990
Homelessness Prevention	182	-271	-224	-47	0	-47	201	-19
Aylesbury House	31	27	31	5	-9	-4	31	0
Magnolia House	44	33	15	16	2	18	44	0
St Martins House	5	4	3	1	-0	1	5	0
Marsham Street	38	29	3	17	9	26	38	0
Sundry Temporary Accommod (TA) Properties	23	17	-2	18	1	19	23	0
2 Bed Property - Temporary Accommodation	-25	-19	-22	-4	7	3	-25	0
3 Bed Property - Temporary Accommodation	-56	-42	-50	-33	41	8	-56	0
4 bed Property - Temporary Accommodation	-14	-11	-18	6	1	7	-14	0
1 Bed Property- Temporary Accommodation	17	15	24	8	-18	-10	17	0
Trinity	-12	-4	3	-2	-5	-7	-12	0
Chillington House	-2	-1	1	1	-3	-2	-2	0
276 Willington Street	10	8	1	-7	14	7	10	0
St Pauls Vicarage	4	4	7	-0	-3	-3	4	0
Marden Caravan Site (Stilebridge Lane)	-22	-15	3	-39	21	-18	-22	0
Ulcombe Caravan Site (Water Lane)	7	-0	19	-27	8	-19	7	0
Community Partnerships & Resilience Section	546	410	373	37	0	37	514	32
New Business & Housing Development	203	152	149	3	0	3	203	0
Head of Housing & Community Services	116	87	86	1	0	1	116	0
Homechoice Section	239	147	147	-0	0	-0	239	0
Housing Advice Section	244	-48	-84	35	0	35	211	32
Housing Standards Team	295	196	151	46	-0	46	254	41
Housing Management	337	195	126	47	22	69	286	51
Homelessness Outreach	78	-67	-89	23	0	23	78	0
Accommodation Resource Team	42	-5	-4	-1	0	-1	42	0
Housing and Inclusion	2	-71	-104	27	6	33	1	0
Salary Slippage	-439	-329	0	-329	0	-329	-439	0
Sub-Total: Cabinet Member for Health & Housing	2,845	833	1,621	-953	166	-787	3,660	-816

Cost Centre	Approved (Revised) Budget for Year	Approved (Revised) Budget to 31 December 2023	Actual as at 31 December 2023	Variance as at 31 December 2023			Forecast March 2024	
	Net £000	Net £000	Net £000	Expenditure £000	Income £000	Net £000	Forecast Net £000	Forecast Variance £000
Cabinet Member for Environmental Services								
Parks & Open Spaces	984	727	730	-28	25	-3	984	0
Playground Maintenance & Improvements	151	110	81	29	0	29	151	0
Parks Pavilions	33	24	11	13	0	13	33	0
Mote Park	337	251	238	11	2	13	337	0
Allotments	14	11	10	1	0	1	14	0
Cemetery	-21	13	29	-1	-14	-15	-21	0
National Assistance Act	-0	-0	-1	2	-1	1	-0	0
Crematorium	-963	-641	-596	-45	-0	-46	-930	-33
Licences	3	4	8	-1	-3	-4	3	0
Licensing Statutory	-63	-47	-74	-2	28	27	-63	0
Licensing Non Chargeable	9	6	7	-0	0	-0	9	0
Animal Licensing	-8	-6	-6	0	1	1	-8	0
Dog Control	30	20	58	-38	0	-38	84	-54
Health Improvement Programme	6	6	0	6	0	6	6	0
Pollution Control - General	16	14	1	8	4	13	16	0
Contaminated Land	-3	-2	-2	1	-1	-1	-3	0
Waste Crime	4	3	7	12	-16	-4	4	0
Food Hygiene	10	6	-5	9	2	11	10	0
Sampling	4	3	0	2	0	2	4	0
Occupational Health & Safety	-8	-6	-8	-0	2	2	-8	0
Infectious Disease Control	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
Noise Control	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	0
Pest Control	-12	-9	-2	0	-7	-7	-12	0
Public Conveniences	274	172	145	27	0	27	274	0
Licensing - Hackney & Private Hire	-67	-67	-74	-7	14	7	-67	0
Street Cleansing	1,315	986	964	5	16	21	1,315	0
Household Waste Collection	2,276	1,190	1,188	25	-23	2	2,276	0
Commercial Waste Services	-45	-35	-74	31	8	39	-105	60
Recycling Collection	1,846	667	663	55	-52	4	1,846	0
Head of Environment and Public Realm	118	88	87	1	0	1	118	0
Bereavement Services Section	308	231	221	10	0	10	308	0
Licensing Section	126	94	76	7	12	19	126	0
Environmental Protection Section	294	221	155	65	0	65	210	84
Food and Safety Section	288	216	232	-16	0	-16	288	0
Depot Services Section	945	710	622	81	7	88	855	90
Fleet Workshop & Management	250	188	134	51	3	54	188	62
MBS Support Crew	-44	-33	-48	42	-26	15	-44	0
Sub-Total: Cabinet Member for Environmental Services	8,410	5,120	4,781	358	-19	338	8,201	210
Totals	11,255	5,953	6,402	-595	146	-449	11,861	-606

A2) HHE Revenue Budget: Significant Variances

- A2.1 Within the headline figures, there are a number of both adverse and favourable net expenditure variances for individual cost centres. It is important that the implications of variances are considered at an early stage, so that contingency plans can be put in place and, if necessary, be used to inform future financial planning. Variances will be reported to each of the Policy Advisory Committees on a quarterly basis throughout 2023/24.
- A2.2 The table below highlights and provides further detail on the most significant variances at the end of Quarter 3.

HHE PAC Variances (@ 3rd Quarter 2023/24)

	Positive Variance Q3	Adverse Variance Q3	Year End Forecast Variance
Housing, Health & Environment	£000		
Dog Control – The number of stray dogs that need to be dealt with continues to be a significant issue. Growth has been provided for in the budget next year.		-38	-54
Commercial Waste Services – Income from blue sacks has been higher than forecast, and there is an underspend on staffing costs.	38		60
Homeless Temporary Accommodation - This continues to be a significant issue as the demand for the service continues to be high. The cost-of-living crisis and issues with getting people out of temporary accommodation are the main challenges at present. Further properties are being acquired to help alleviate the pressure on this budget. The variance has increased from that reported last month principally because of an allowance being made against non-recovery of rent. Although the rent would normally be covered by Housing Benefit, there are occasions due to the rapid turnover in temporary accommodation that occupants fail to make or complete their claim.		-747	-990
Environmental Protection Section – Recruitment has been an issue, with a number of vacant posts in the team, which has led to an underspend.	65		84
Depot Services Section – There have been a number of vacant posts in this team during the year.	88		90
Fleet Workshop & Management – Spend has been less than forecast on vehicle maintenance and hire. The service aims to keep the fleet up to date rather than keeping vehicles on the road longer than is cost-effective.	54		62

Part B - Third Quarter Capital Budget 2023/24

B1) Capital Budget 2023/24 (@ 3rd Quarter 2023/24)

Capital Programme Heading	Revised Estimate 2023/24	Actual to December 2023	Budget Remaining	Q4 Profile	Projected Total Expenditure	Projected Slippage to 2024/25
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Housing, Health & Environment						
Private Rented Sector Housing	4,039	44	3,995	51	95	3,944
1,000 Homes Affordable Housing Programme	9,917	5,847	4,121	715	6,562	3,355
Temporary Accommodation	15,879	9,306	6,574	700	10,006	5,874
Commercial Development - Maidstone East	356		356			356
Heather House Community Centre	138		138			138
Housing - Disabled Facilities Grants Funding	1,212	892	320	320	1,212	
Acquisitions Officer - Social Housing Delivery Partnership	52	39	13		39	13
Street Scene Investment	50	49	1	1	50	
Flood Action Plan	618	6	612		6	612
Continued Improvements to Play Areas	144	7	137	50	57	87
Parks Improvements	69	75	-5		75	-5
Gypsy & Traveller Sites Refurbishment	200	197	3	3	200	
Waste Crime Team - Additional Resources	25	4	21	21	25	
Section 106 funded works - Open Spaces	517		517	517	517	
Expansion of Cemetery	80	13	67	67	80	
Expansion of Crematorium	340	13	327	50	63	277
Purchase of New Waste Collection Vehicles	5,800		5,800	5,800	5,800	
CCTV Upgrade & Relocation		80	-80		80	-80
Total	39,438	16,572	22,916	8,294	24,867	14,571

B2) Capital Budget Variances (@ 3rd Quarter 2023/24)

Housing, Health & Environment
<p>Private Sector Rented Housing/1,000 Homes Affordable Housing Programme - A number of schemes are at various stages of development at present. Some schemes will also contain elements of both private rented and affordable housing so the costs may change depending on the mix at the sites where this happens.</p> <p>The projected slippage for the Maidstone East Commercial Development and the Heather House Community Scheme reflects that the progress on the wider schemes of which they are a part has not moved on as far as the initial programme anticipated. These budgets will be slipped into 2024/25.</p>
<p>Temporary Accommodation – There have been a significant number of acquisitions to date this year, and the team continue to seek suitable properties. A small number of further acquisitions are anticipated in the final quarter.</p>
<p>Continued Improvements to Play Areas – The projected slippage is a sum set aside for the refurbishment of the Penenden Heath play area, which is scheduled to take place in the first quarter of 2024/25.</p>
<p>Flood Action Plan - 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.</p>
<p>CCTV Upgrade & Relocation – This is an unbudgeted cost relating the scheme which took place in 2020. The contractor contacted the Council and advised us that there was a final payment due. Officers reviewed the position and agreed that this was the case, and the payment was made.</p>

APPENDIX 2 – THIRD QUARTER PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Key to performance ratings

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

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

Note

Where KPIs are 'data only' PIs, the short/long term trend arrows represent whether the numbers are higher or lower than the previous comparison period.

Performance Summary

RAG Rating	Green	Amber	Red	N/A ¹	Total
KPIs	6	2	2	14	24
Direction	Up	No Change	Down	N/A	Total
Last Quarter	9	1	9	5	24
Last Year	11	0	8	5	24

- 75.0% (6 of 8) the targetable quarterly key performance indicators (KPIs) reportable to this Committee achieved their quarter 3 (Q3) target¹.
- Compared to last quarter (Q2 23/24), performance for 47.4% (9 of 19) KPIs have improved, and for 47.4% (9 of 19) KPIs have declined¹.
- Compared to last year (Q3 22/23), performance for 57.9% (11 of 19) KPIs have improved, and for 42.1% (8 of 19) KPIs have declined¹.

Housing & Health Q3 Performance

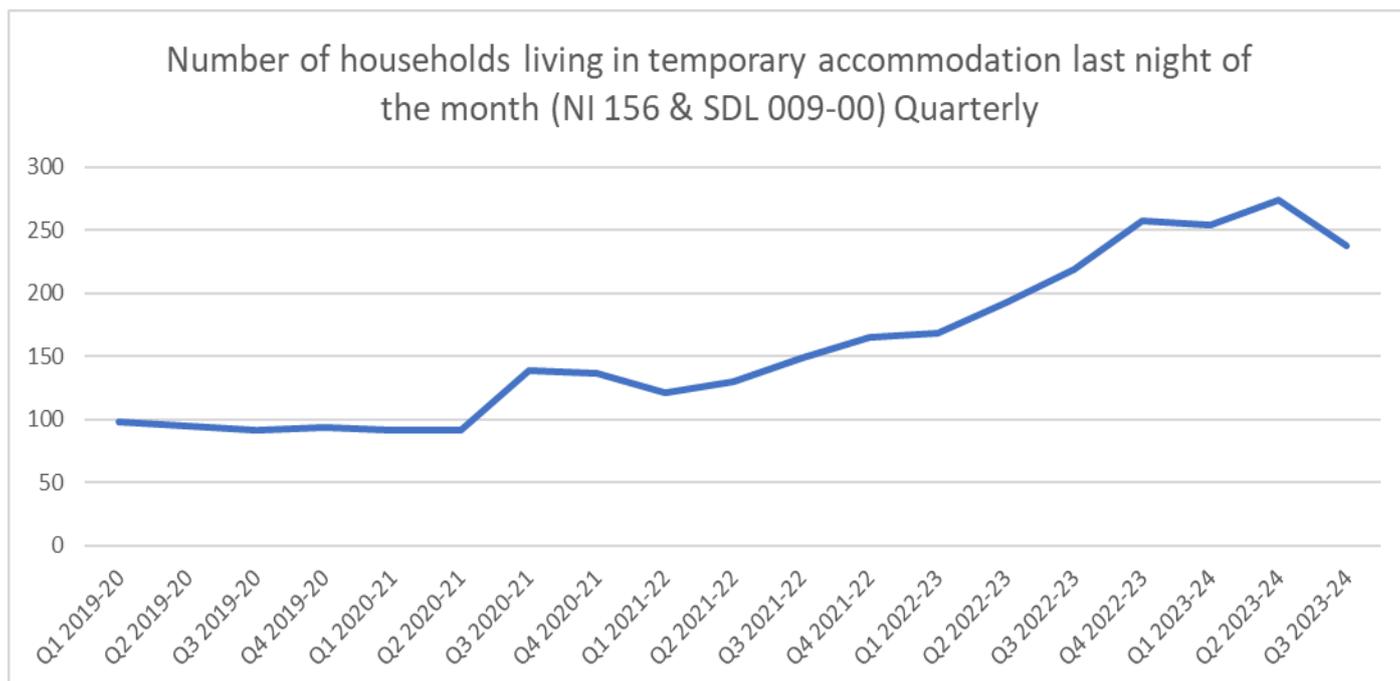
Performance Indicator	Q3 2023/24				
	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend (Last Quarter)	Long Trend (Last Year)
Housing					
Number of Rough Sleepers accommodated by the Council on the last night of the month	34				
Number of homeless cases where the cause of homelessness is domestic abuse	29				

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

Performance Indicator	Q3 2023/24				
	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend (Last Quarter)	Long Trend (Last Year)
Number of households living in temporary accommodation last night of the month (NI 156 & SDL 009-00) <i>Long trend graph shown below</i>	238				
Number of households living in nightly paid temporary accommodation last night of the month	128				
Percentage of successful Prevention Duty outcomes	63.2%	65%			
Number of households prevented or relieved from becoming homeless	153	125			
Percentage of successful Relief Duty outcomes	55.22%	40%			
Private Sector Housing					
Number of private sector homes improved (<i>through PSH interventions</i>)	66	45			
Total number of Disabled Facilities Grants processed within the period	18				
Number of completed housing assistances	Annual Indicator				
Housing Allocation & Strategy					
Number of affordable homes delivered excluding first homes (Gross)	2	50			
Affordable homes as a percentage of all new homes	Annual Indicator				
Community Safety					
Percentage of CPWs to CPNs in period (CPT/SMP)	16.7%				
Number of Community Protection Notices (CPNs) in period (CPT/SMP)	2				
Number of Community Protection Warnings (CPWs) in period (CPT/SMP)	12				
Health, Biodiversity & Climate Change					
Improvement in Air Quality	Annual Indicator				
Borough wide carbon emissions reduction (Gov Data)	Annual Indicator				

Number of households living in temporary accommodation last night of the month (NI 156 & SDL 009-00)

At quarter two's Committee, members requested trend data for this KPI. The below graph tracks this data over time to give a better contextual picture.



Housing & Health Comments (where targets have been missed)

Housing

The KPI tracking the "Percentage of successful Prevention Duty outcomes" missed its target slightly, achieving 63.2% against a target of 65.0%. Homelessness prevention is a priority for the Council and close monitoring is taking place of this data. Analysis of the results for quarter three show:

- 13 individuals had their duty ended because of the statutory 56-day period expiring and no engagement taking place.
- 33 households became homeless after having approached at threat of homelessness stage.
- 15 households lost their accommodation because of the end of their private rented tenancy.
- 8 households lost their accommodation because of familial/friend evictions.
- 4 households were evicted from supporting accommodation.

The number of approaches at "threat of homeless" stage has been increasing slowly for several months. One of the reasons for this could be our focus on moving individuals out of interim accommodation, leading to a reduction in resources to prevent homelessness. In addition, due to the volume of accommodation allocated for direct lets, there is a reduced opportunity for rehousing via the Housing Register at the preventative stage. We have also seen significant challenges in accessing private rented accommodation due to the affordability of the sector.

Finally, with the closure of the Kent Homelessness Connect supported accommodation service and decant of the YPSAFs service, we have seen fewer supported accommodation options become available as well as a higher number of evictions (and therefore homelessness) from those services. Of the 33 individuals who became homeless, 16 entered temporary accommodation under Part 7 Housing Act 1996, with a further 3 entering under RSI provisions.

Housing Allocation and Strategy

The KPI tracking the "**Number of affordable homes delivered excluding first homes (Gross)**" missed its target by over 10%. This is largely outside of the Council's control in the Housing sector, as it directly correlates with the volume of new development projects within the borough. The team are aware that across the sector there are factors that are reducing the amount of affordable housing being delivered. This is a result of developers claiming that increased costs are reducing the amount of affordable housing being provided on each site, and housing association partners reviewing their development portfolio in the light of increased pressure to invest in their existing housing stock.

As a result, the overall delivery of affordable housing for this financial year is significantly down compared to previous few years. On a positive note, there should be a considerably higher figure for Quarter 4 delivery, as the team are aware of a large new development being completed before year-end.

Environmental Services Q3 Performance

Performance Indicator	Q3 2023/24				
	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend (Last Quarter)	Long Trend (Last Year)
Public Realm					
The percentage of relevant land and highways that is assessed as having acceptable levels of litter	97.00%	98.00%			
The percentage of relevant land and highways that is assessed as having acceptable levels of detritus	96.11%	95.00%			
Waste Services					
Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	43.56%	53.00%			
Contaminated tonnage (rejected) as a percentage of tonnage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting	4.21%	6.00%			
Tonnage of household waste produced per household	0.177t				
Missed bins per 100,000 collections	23.9	40.0			
Biodiversity & Climate Change					
Number of trees planted/size of area rewilded	Annual Indicator				

Environmental Services Comments (*where targets have been missed*)

Public Realm

The KPI tracking "**The percentage of relevant land and highways that is assessed as having acceptable levels of litter**" missed its target slightly by 1.0%, achieving 97.00%. Due to seasonal die-back of roadside vegetation a greater amount of litter has become exposed. Over the next two months the scheduled litter picking will be undertaken by the team, and they are confident that this will reduce the problem.

Waste Services

The KPI monitoring the “**Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting**” missed its target, achieving 43.56% against a target of 53.0%. The quarter three outcome is the lowest experienced for this KPI in several years. The reduction in the rate is usual for this quarter, due to garden waste suspension over the Christmas period. However, there has also been a notable reduction in the dry, mixed recycling (DMR) tonnage, which the team are asking Kent County Council to review (as the providers of the data). Should the data need correcting, an update will be provided at the next Committee.

UKSPF 2023/4 Quarter 3 Update:

In December 2023 the Department for Levelling up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) confirmed that the Year 2 six-month progress report was approved and are happy with our approach to spending this year. Officers are continuing to work and complete projects for year 2, with new project leads identified for year 3 expenditure, which included a largest proportion of our UKSPF allocation.

Rural Fund: Following the allocation of £184,370 towards four successful bids for rural funding in 2023/24 a further 21 submissions have been received for funding in 2024/25. The panel conducted a review of submissions in February and awarded the remaining £359,920 to 12 bids from across the borough. These projects will commence in April 2024 with progress closely monitored by officers to ensure all are completed by March 2025.

Year 2 projects and an update:

Intervention	Project	Detail	2023/24 budget	Amount spent:	£ Committed	Q3 Update:
E6: Local arts, cultural, heritage & creative activities	Project A - Building Pride in Place through promotion of the Town Centre and Events.	Creative communities fund for local organisations and groups to support events	£35,830	£23,000	£6,500	Applications for Round 4 closed in November 2023. We received 17 applications and made 8 awards.
		Literature Festival	£15,000	£16,077	£0	The event was successfully held in October and saw large audiences of all ages coming along to enjoy the wide variety of authors and workshops using town centre venues including Maidstone Museum, Archbishops' Palace and All Saints Church. The overspend has been funded from the advertising budget
		Iggy Sculpture Trail	£60,000	£35,910	£25,100	The trail will be supported by a digital trail app which is being populated with information, this is expected to launch from April 2024
		Equipment purchases to support events	£2,751	£3083	£0	Purchases of a set of temporary exhibition walls, and 2 microphones have been completed. An underspend in Year 1 has been carried over for purchases this year

		Arts Carnival	£20,000	£20,000	£0	The Arts Carnival, which was rearranged due to adverse weather, took place on Saturday 9 th September 2023. The next Carnival will take place in 2025.
		Partner for Elmer 2	£40,000	£40,000	£0	Contract has been signed with the launch expected Summer 2024.
	Project C- A Community Arts Hub & Maker Space	Feasibility Study	£5,000	£5,000	£0	The final amended feasibility report was received in August with an MBC working group set up to action the results of the report. A separate report dealing with the outcome is on this agenda.
E8: Campaigns to encourage visits and exploring of local area	Project A - Building Pride in Place through promotion of the Town Centre and Events.	Advertising budget to promote events across all channels	£15,000	£8,440	£1,012	Advertising budget has been used to promote events throughout the autumn and will be used further with the Lunar events in the new year.
		Borough Insight Events and Town centre focussed	£30,000	£30,000	£0	This was spent on the Autumn edition of the magazine which was delivered to residents from October 2023.
		Promotional video for business and events in TC	£5,000	£5,000	£0	This video promoted the use of UKSPF funds to support the Town Centre over the first two years of funding and is now available online
E9: Impactful Volunteering and/or Social action Projects	Project B- A Safe and Attractive Town Centre achieved through Greening and Lighting	An externally commissioned green Volunteering Project to Improve Town Centre Green Spaces, Increase Volunteering and Improve Wellbeing.	£60,000	£45,000	£15,000	Five sites have been worked with throughout 2023/24 with 25 volunteers involved at 59 events. The sites are Maidstone Community Support Centre, Trinity House, Brenchley Gardens, Fairmeadow and planters in the Town Centre.
Management Overheads			£9,897	£7,423	£2,474	
Total:			£298,478	£238,933	£50,086	
				£289,019		

Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee

12 March 2024

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee	12 th March 2024
Cabinet	20 th March 2024

Will this be a Key Decision?	Yes
Urgency	Not Applicable
Final Decision-Maker	Cabinet
Lead Head of Service	John Littlemore
Lead Officer and Report Author	Hannah Gaston
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

The Housing Act 1996 requires that each local housing authority carries out an assessment of homeless need in their locality and adopts a Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy setting out how they will meet those needs. The current Strategy is due to expire this year and the new Strategy explains the current environment and the priorities for the next 5 years.

Purpose of Report

To review the draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029 and make recommendation to the Cabinet for adoption.

This report asks the Committee to consider the following recommendation to the Cabinet;

1. That the new Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy attached to this report in Appendix B, be adopted.

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve Homes and Communities.</p>	Head of Housing & Regulatory Services
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected. <p>The report recommendation supports the achievement of the Health Inequalities is addressed and reduced, and Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved cross cutting objectives.</p>	Head of Housing & Regulatory Services
Risk Management	Covered in the risk section of the report	Head of Housing & Regulatory Services
Financial	Housing is one of the Council's core services and as such funding arrangements for housing form a key part of the annual budget process and the regular annual update of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Head of Housing & Regulatory Services

Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under the Homelessness Act 2022, local housing authorities have a duty to review homelessness in their area and formulate and publish a strategy based on the results of the review. The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 requires that local housing authorities must take reasonable steps to either maintain or secure accommodation for eligible applicants threatened with homelessness. Local authorities are also bound to have regard to the Secretary of State’s Homelessness Code of Guidance. • Accepting the recommendations will fulfil the Council’s statutory duties under the above legislation. Failure to accept the recommendations without agreeing suitable alternatives may place the Council in breach of Homelessness Act 2022 and leave the Council open to legal challenge when carrying out its functions in relation to tackling homelessness 	Lawyer (Contentious)
Information Governance	The recommendations are likely to impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council processes. The Information Governance Team will review the processing of personal data affected and the associated documentation will be updated accordingly, including a data protection impact assessment.	Information Governance Team
Equalities	We recognise the recommendations may have varying impacts on different communities within Maidstone. Therefore we have completed a separate equalities impact assessment.	Equalities and Communities Officer.
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals.	Head of Housing & Regulatory Services
Crime and Disorder	There could be positive implications on reducing crime and disorder as street homelessness can provide the environment for anti-social behaviour to occur.	Head of Housing & Regulatory Services

Procurement	Not applicable	Head of Housing & Regulatory Services
Biodiversity and Climate Change	There are no implications on biodiversity and climate change.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 Since the enactment of the Homelessness Act 2002, Local Housing Authorities have been required to carry out a strategic assessment of homelessness in their area and publish a homelessness strategy outlining their intentions and vision for preventing and supporting those who face homelessness. In 2018 the Government published their national rough sleeping strategy which obligated local authorities to include a special focus on Rough Sleeping and this is our second combined Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

2.2 The preceding years have presented many challenges for us as a local housing authority these include the pandemic which hugely altered the way services could be delivered, and how staff worked; world events such as the war in Ukraine and the turmoil of withdrawing from Afghanistan; and the current cost of living crisis and associated demand for housing has caused homelessness to surge. All of these have presenting extreme challenges to our housing and homeless teams but alongside these, we have had many opportunities to tailor the manner in which we work and provide services to our local community.

2.3 Maidstone Borough Council continues its commitment to providing a robust and effective housing and homelessness service to the local community. The provision of these services is a key borough priority and is reflected through our strategic plan under Homes and Communities banner, with the commitment to preventing homelessness and rough sleeping by 2045. This strategy sets out our aims for the coming five years (2024-2029) to support our priority of breaking the cycle of homelessness.

2.4 The strategic review of the outgoing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024 was undertaken in the latter part of 2023, and included the achievements of the Council over the preceding five years, as well as the environmental changes faced when delivering services. A briefing and the full review can be found in Appendix A.

2.5 96% of respondents to the Consultation felt the previous priorities created in our 2019 Strategy were felt to still be relevant for the new strategy.

The four priorities are:

Homeless Prevention – supporting households to sustain and maintain their current accommodation, reducing the demand for temporary accommodation and the need for crisis interventions.

Accommodation – provision of good quality housing and housing options

Support vulnerable people and households – this includes domestic abuse survivors.

Target and alleviate rough sleeping within our borough.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 Option 1 – adopt the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy 2024-2029 and the priorities as set out in the document attached as Appendix 2
- 3.2 Option 2 – to not do anything, however this is not recommended as the local housing authority’s Homelessness Strategies are often cited during legal challenges to decisions made by officers and not having an up to date Strategy would increase the risk of legal challenge, as having a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy is a statutory requirement.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Option 1 is our preferred option. We would wish this strategy to be endorsed to cover off both the Councils statutory requirement and set the vision for the delivery of homelessness and rough sleeping services.
-

5. RISK

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

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 There is a statutory requirement for a consultation and strategic review to take place when creating a homelessness and rough sleeping strategy.
- 6.2 Consultation took place with service users, stakeholders, Officers, and Members as well as review of the homelessness and rough sleeping services over the past five years. We engaged in number of mechanisms including:

- 1) Online consultation
- 2) Staff and stakeholder feedback sessions
- 3) Engagement with service users at Trinity
- 4) Meeting with Members and senior colleagues

This is an important process to ensure we are meeting the needs of our communities. During these sessions and events, 96% of individuals felt the above priorities were still relevant.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 Once the strategy has been agreed, the council will upload the strategy on to the website and complete relevant press release and communications to partners. We will then start to develop the action plan over the coming first few months.
-

8. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix A: Strategic review and briefing note
 - Appendix B: Draft Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy
-

Background

Our last Homeless and Rough Sleeper Strategy was developed in 2019 to encompass years 2019-2024. This is now coming to an end and a revised strategy is under development, in line with the Homeless Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 which requires a local housing authorities to undertake a review of homelessness in their area before commencing their new strategy.

Our new strategy will be informed by the strategic review and the consultation undertaken with stakeholders, staff and members of the public. The new strategy will be for years 2024-29.

Headlines findings

1. The total number of households in Maidstone increased by 12.23% from 63,447 to 71,208 between 2011 to 2021 with a calculated local housing need of 1,214 homes per year. In addition, home ownership has decreased, while private renting has increased.
2. Since 2019 there has been as a steady increase in homeless approaches, which would correspond to the increase of households in Maidstone. However, from October 2022 to October 2023 the increase has been exponentially high at 44%. This is a common theme across England.
3. There's an increasing trend in homelessness cases where someone is a victim of domestic abuse, suggesting a strong link between personal safety and housing stability. Also, the new Domestic Abuse legislation which was enacted in 2021 has a very low threshold for a local housing authority (LHA) to provide Temporary Accommodation and support to those approaching.
4. Domestic abuse and family support issues, including households no longer willing or able to accommodate, are the leading causes for loss of housing.
5. There has been an increasing trend in the number of households in temporary accommodation year on year. This peaked in September 2022 at nearly 300. TA numbers have decreased since then and remain steady at c. 250 every month.
6. Household composition of those approaching is dominated by three groups i) single males 28% ii) single parents with dependent children (25%) iii) single females (21%). This is strongly aligned with the composition of those TA.
7. 25% of those approaching are unemployed and 17% are not working due to long term illness. Surprisingly those in full timework make up the third largest cohort at 15%. This could suggest that those working in lower paid jobs, are struggling to find affordable accommodation, without seeking support from MBC.
8. The main reasons households are approaching for homeless interventions is i) Domestic Abuse and ii) family and friends no longer or willing to accommodate. See page 17 of the report.
9. Maidstone outperforms all other Kent districts and CIPHA family neighbours in all comparisons, aside from Prevention duty ended positively in which MBC is second compared to Swale.

Development of new Strategy 2024-2029

- Priorities should remain the same i) **Homeless prevention** ii) **Accommodation** iii) **Support vulnerable people** iv) **Alleviate rough sleeping**. The strategy document will be updated to reflect the current environment.

- The new strategy will respond to the finding of the strategic review as well as current environmental factors, including limited TA and affordable housing, finally aligning these with last year's Housing Strategy which was agreed by Cabinet.

Maidstone Borough Council

Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Review November 2023



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1. What is a homelessness review?

The Homeless Act 2002 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 place a requirement on the local housing authorities to undertake a review of homelessness in their area, which will inform and lead to their Homelessness Strategy. The review results must be published within a period of 5 years beginning with the day on which their last homelessness strategy was published.

The Homelessness Code of Guidance 2018 gives clear guidance of what should be considered in the Homelessness Review and included within the Strategy. In particular, the Code of Guidance states that a Homelessness Review should set out:

- The extent and risk of homelessness, now and in the future
- What is being done, by whom
- What resources are available for homelessness prevention & relief

This Homelessness Review has been undertaken in 2023 to inform the focus of Maidstone Borough Council's Homelessness Strategy 2024.

2. Headline Results

The total number of households in Maidstone increased by 12.23% from 2011 to 2021, from 63,447 to 71,208 with a calculated local housing need of 1,214 homes per year. Homeownership has decreased, while private renting has increased.

There has been a 44% increase in new homelessness cases from October 2022 to October 2023. Prior to that there was steady rise but in the last year this has exponentially increased.

There's an increasing trend in homelessness cases where someone is a victim of domestic abuse, suggesting a strong link between personal safety and housing stability. In addition, with the enactment of the Domestic Abuse Act in 2021 there is a low threshold for a local housing authority to offer advice, guidance and temporary accommodation.

Domestic abuse and family support issues, including households no longer willing or able to accommodate are the leading causes for loss of housing.

There has been an increasing trend in the number of households in temporary accommodation year on year.

3. Definition of Homelessness

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 significantly reformed England's homelessness legislation by placing duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas. It also requires housing authorities to provide homelessness services to all those affected, not just those who have 'priority need'. These include:

- a. An enhanced prevention duty extending the period a household is threatened with homelessness from 28 days to 56 days, meaning that housing authorities are required to work with people to prevent homelessness at an earlier stage; and
- b. A new duty for those who are already homeless so that housing authorities will support households for 56 days to relieve their homelessness by helping them to secure accommodation.

Housing authorities have a duty to carry out an assessment in all cases where an eligible applicant is homeless or threatened with homelessness. This will identify what has caused the homelessness or threat of homelessness, the housing needs of the applicant and any support they need to be able to secure and retain accommodation. Following this assessment, the housing authority must work with the person to develop a personalised housing plan which will include actions (or 'reasonable steps') to be taken by the authority and the applicant to try and prevent or relieve homelessness.

3.1 Prevention Duty

Housing authorities have a duty to take reasonable steps to help prevent any eligible person (regardless of priority need status, intentionality and whether they have a local connection) who is threatened with

homelessness from becoming homeless. This means either helping them to stay in their current accommodation or helping them to find a new place to live before they become actually homeless. The prevention duty continues for 56 days unless it is brought to an end by an event such as accommodation being secured for the person, or by them becoming homeless

3.2 Relief Duty

If the applicant is already homeless, or becomes homeless despite activity during the prevention stage, the reasonable steps will be focused on helping the applicant to secure accommodation. This relief duty lasts for 56 days unless ended in another way. If the housing authority has reason to believe a homeless applicant may be eligible for assistance, and have a priority need, they must be provided with interim accommodation.

The priority need categories are set out in Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 and these are:

- Pregnant women
- Households with dependent children
- 16- and 17-year-olds
- Care leavers aged 18,19 or 20
- People made homeless by an emergency
- People vulnerable as a result of old age, mental illness or physical disability, having been in care, having served in the armed forces, having been in custody, having to leave accommodation because of violence or abuse or vulnerable for some other special reason

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 amends Part 7 of the 1996 Act to strengthen the support available to victims of domestic abuse. The Act extends priority need to all eligible victims of domestic abuse who are homeless as a result of being a victim of domestic abuse. The 2021 Act brings in a new definition of domestic abuse which housing authorities must follow to assess whether an applicant is homeless as a result of being a victim of domestic abuse.

National guidance on homelessness is set out in the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-localauthorities/overview-of-the-homelessness-legislation>.

4. The Review Process

Alongside a data-gathering exercise, the Council undertook a programme of consultation and engagement activities to inform the review of the current Strategy. This included:

- A survey, seeking feedback on the Council's Homelessness & Rough Sleepers Strategy. This was launched on 29 September 2023. It was open for eight weeks, closing on 26 November. It was promoted widely with key stakeholders, residents, Parish Councils and groups and organisations across the Voluntary and Community Sector in Maidstone who play a significant role in supporting the most vulnerable in the community. The consultation received 156 responses.
- Four stakeholder engagement sessions were delivered providing a forum for wider discussion alongside activities mirroring the survey questions.
 - Staff – 17/10/2023
 - Managers – 17/10/2023
 - Service Users (Cost-of living event at Trinity House) – 19/10/2023
 - Stakeholders – Homelessness Prevention Forum – 25/10/2023

5. National Context

A range of national policies and priorities, alongside legislation, have influenced and helped to shape the direction of the Council's Homelessness Strategy. Ending rough sleeping, reducing overall levels of homelessness and the eliminating the use of unsuitable emergency accommodation are national priorities. These are also linked to other strategies and initiatives relating to: reducing substance misuse, supporting victims of domestic abuse, reducing delayed hospital discharges, supporting looked after children and vulnerable families, supporting care leavers, and helping to rehabilitate those within the criminal justice system.

Key pieces of legislation and national policies include:

- The Criminal Justice Act 2003
- The Mental Health Act 2007
- The Health and Social Care Act 2012
- The Care Act 2014
- The Children and Families Act 2014
- HM Government Care Leavers Strategy 2014
- The Localism Act 2011
- The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- The Homelessness Code Of Guidance for Local Authorities 2018
- The Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018
- The Domestic Abuse Act 2021

Prior to the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, national levels of homelessness, rough sleeping and placements into temporary accommodation, including bed and breakfast style accommodation, had risen year on year over the last decade.

Thanks to temporary protective measures, particularly income protection programmes and eviction moratoria, the Covid-19 pandemic triggered no overall increase in homeless applications nationally. Temporary accommodation placements surged however, particularly of single homeless people, as the result of the emergency measures to protect those at risk of rough sleeping (Everyone In) during the pandemic.

The pandemic has also further exposed England's severe shortage of affordable homes. Access to long-term housing was the capacity challenge most widely seen as having been posed by the pandemic by local authorities according to research conducted by Crisis, a homelessness charity. A majority of councils surveyed said it had become harder to place homeless households in both social rented and private rented sector housing during the pandemic. (Crisis homelessness monitor 2021)

Since the pandemic and more recently in the last year, the rise in interest rates and the cost-of-living crisis has had a significantly increased the demand for more affordable housing. However, as interest rates rise many landlords are selling their properties on or increasing the rental charge to sums which households can no longer afford.

Local Context

At a district level, the key strategic plans linked to this strategy are:

- Housing Strategy 2022
- Strategic Plan 2019 – 2045
- Housing Allocation Policy 2022
- Economic Development Strategy 2022?
- Local Plan 2011 - 2031
- Maidstone Community Safety Partnership Plan 2022 - 2025

Maidstone being the County town of Kent, with a large general population, has a long history of having a significant homelessness population which straddles both those at risk of rough sleeping e.g. sofa surfing, and those living on the streets, rough sleepers. In 2018 Maidstone had a street population of 48, this has declined considerably, since then, but the Council still faces a huge flow of homeless households seeking help who are not in stable accommodation.

In 2022 Maidstone Borough Council opened the Community Hub, Trinity, to provide a direct front facing supportive response for those in the district facing homelessness and housing issues. The ethos of Trinity is to provide an exceptional service which households can easily access to receive advice, guidance and support in relation to their housing [and often wider] issues. Trinity has created a pinnacle for homelessness and housing

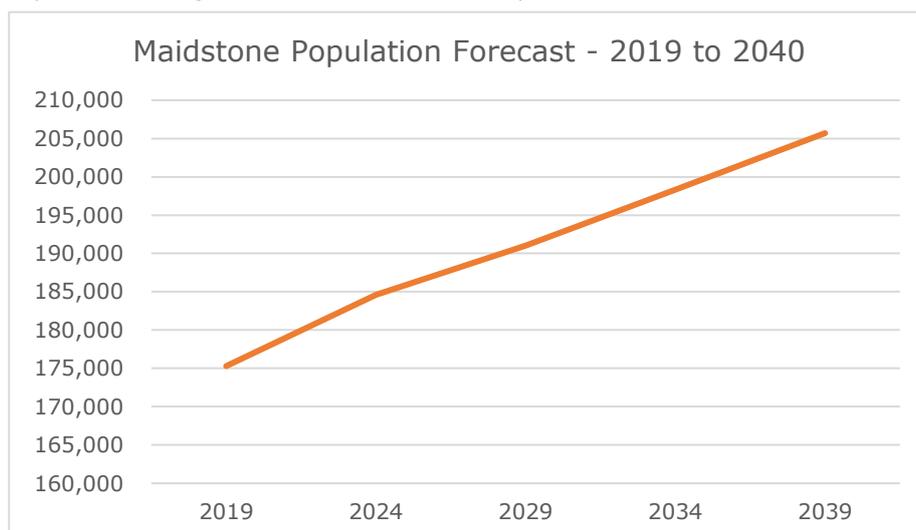
support, there is no other service alike across the whole of Kent, whereby a multidisciplinary team work together for the benefit of the local community in such an open and transparent manner.

6. Profile of Maidstone

7.1 Population

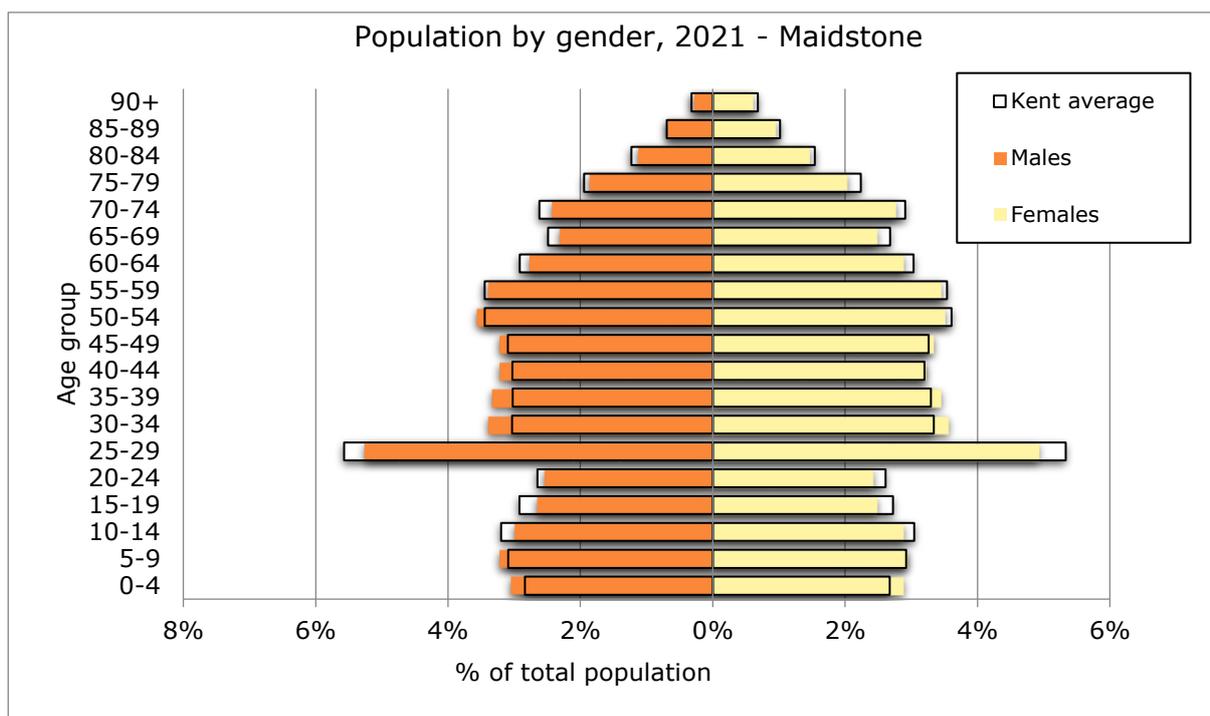
Maidstone is the largest local authority in the county of Kent and covers approximately 40,000 hectares, with 75% of its 176,700-population living within the urban area of the borough. The population at the 2021 Census was 13% higher than at the previous and is forecasted to reach over 205,000 by the year 2039.

Source: Kent County Council Housing Led Forecasts (2021), Kent Analytics



As of 2021, there is a density of 4.49 persons per hectare in the borough, which makes Maidstone the 7th least populated district in Kent, with Ashford ranking the least populated, at 2.29 persons per hectare, and Dartford ranking the most, with 16.06 persons per hectare.

The average age of a person living in Maidstone is 41 years old, with females averaging 41.9 years and males averaging 40.1 years. The most populous age 5-year bracket in Maidstone is aged 25 – 29 years old, accounting for 10.1% of the total population. The age distribution of residents is equally split between children and pensioners, with 19% in each of these categories.



Source: ONS Mid-Year Estimates

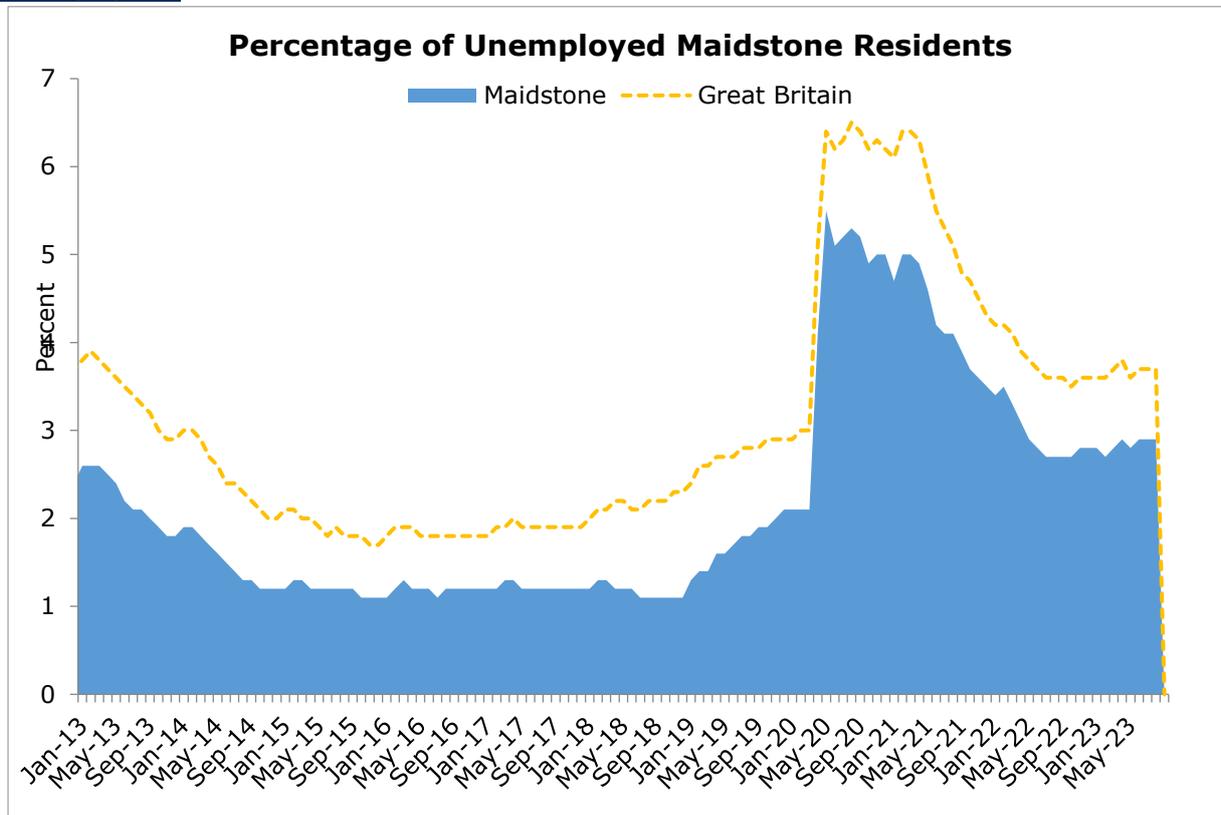
The Maidstone Borough is split geographically into 26 electoral wards. The most populous ward is High Street ward, with 6.8% of the Maidstone population residing here. The least populous ward is Barming and Teston, with just 1.4% of the population living here.

Ward	Population	% of total population
High Street (Maidstone)	11917	6.78%
Fant	10398	5.92%
North (Maidstone)	10285	5.85%
South (Maidstone)	10260	5.84%
Marden and Yalding	9494	5.40%
Park Wood	9399	5.35%
Shepway North	9227	5.25%
East (Maidstone)	8971	5.10%
Boxley	8734	4.97%
Bearsted	8352	4.75%
Coxheath and Hunton	8243	4.69%
Allington	7900	4.49%
Heath (Maidstone)	7443	4.23%
Harrietsham and Lenham	7087	4.03%
Bridge (Maidstone)	6714	3.82%
Staplehurst	6693	3.81%
Headcorn	6072	3.45%
Shepway South	5897	3.35%
Downswood and Otham	3364	1.91%
Detling and Thurnham	3249	1.85%
Sutton Valence and Langley	3111	1.77%
Boughton Monchelsea and Chart Sutton	2910	1.66%
North Downs	2677	1.52%
Loose	2575	1.46%
Leeds	2422	1.38%
Barming and Teston	2389	1.36%

7.2 Households & Housing Needs

The number of households in Maidstone has increased from 63,447 households in 2011 to 71,208 households in 2021, an increase of 12.23%. The Maidstone Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2019) states that households in Maidstone will grow to 79,736 by 2029, a change of 855 households per annum. The strategy calculates that there is a local housing need of 1,214 homes per year.

7.3 Unemployment



Source: Kent Analytics

The pandemic significantly impacted the rate of unemployment across the Country, with Maidstone following that trend. Ten years ago, unemployment in Maidstone stood at 2.5% of the working-age population, however this declined over the decade down to around 1.2% and remained steady until 2019.

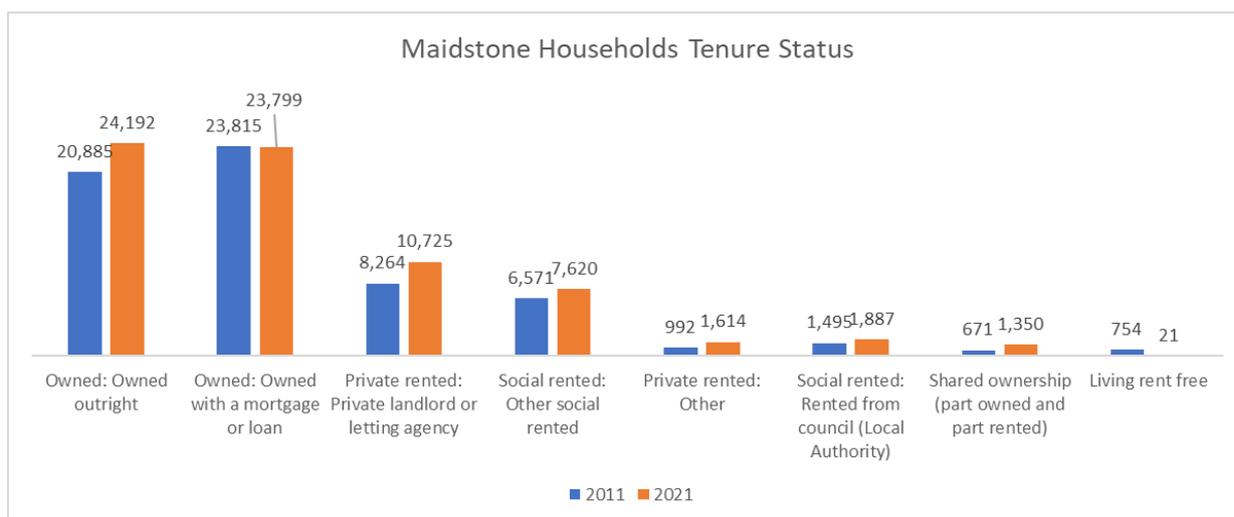
The rate then spiked at the beginning of the pandemic (May 2020) to 5.5% and since then has fallen down to around 2.8% since mid-2022. The rate has plateaued, and mirrored the rate seen Nationally, whilst remaining lower.

In August 2023, when comparing Maidstone to other district authorities in Kent, it ranks 9th out of 12 for unemployment rates. The highest level of unemployment is in Thanet (5.5%) and the lowest is in Sevenoaks (1.9%).

In August 2023, more males were unemployed than females, 1,745 compared to 1,435 respectively. The most unemployed age band was 50-64 years old, where 5.6% of the population were unemployed. The 25-49 years old age band has an unemployment rate of 3.3%.

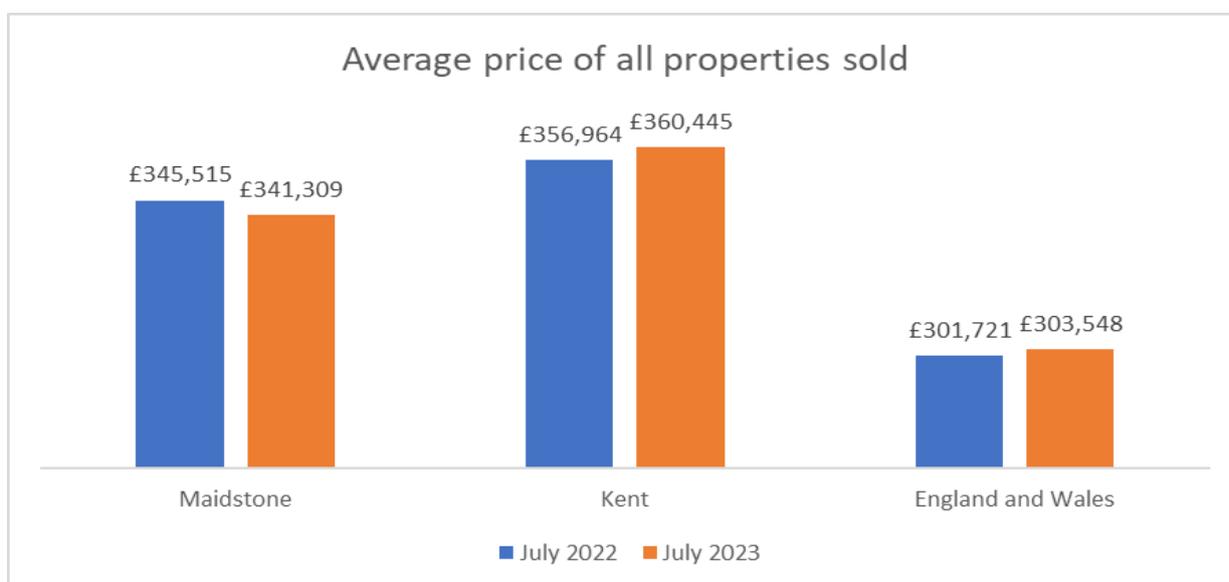
7.4 Housing Tenure

The proportion of households who own their home, whether mortgaged or owned outright, was 67.4% at the 2021 Census. This decreased from 70.4% in 2011. The proportion of households renting privately in 2021 was 15.1% (10,725 households), an increase from 13% in 2011.



Source: ONS Census 2021

7.5 Market Housing Costs



Source: Land Registry House Price Index

The average Maidstone house price in July 2023 was £341,309, which was a decrease of 1.2% from the same period in 2022. Compared to the average house prices in Kent, for the same period, Maidstone house prices are lower, with the average Kent house sale price being £360,445 in July 2023. However, Maidstone house prices are considerably higher than the average in England and Wales (£303,548 in July 2023).

The table below provides a summary of the median monthly rents in the private rental market in Maidstone compared to Kent and England, between March 2022 and April 2023.

Area	Room	Studio	One Bedroom	Two Bedrooms	Three Bedrooms	Four or more Bedrooms	All categories
England	£460	£625	£725	£800	£900	£1,500	£825
Kent	£450	£650	£725	£940	£1,175	£1,600	£900
Maidstone	£525	£650	£775	£950	£1,244	£1,600	£900

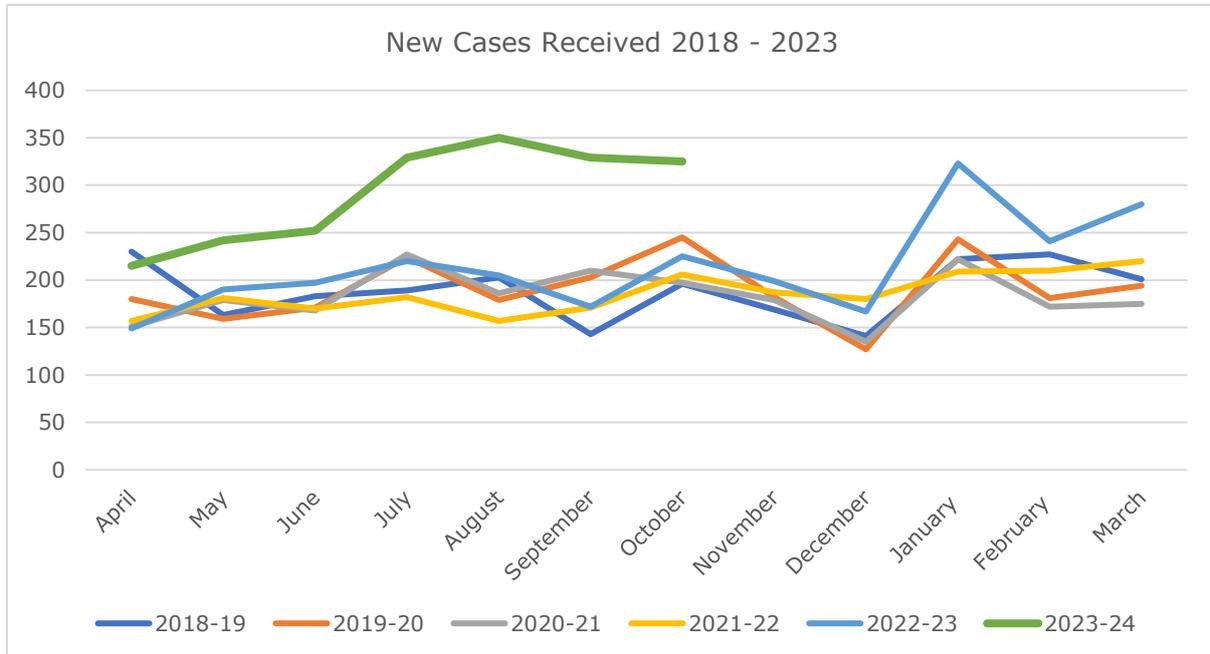
Source: ONS Private rental market summary

The median rental cost in the private sector is £900 per-month, which was an increase of £25 from the previous reporting period. It is generally more expensive to rent in Maidstone than it is in Kent, with the biggest variance seen in three-bedroom properties.

7. Homelessness in Maidstone

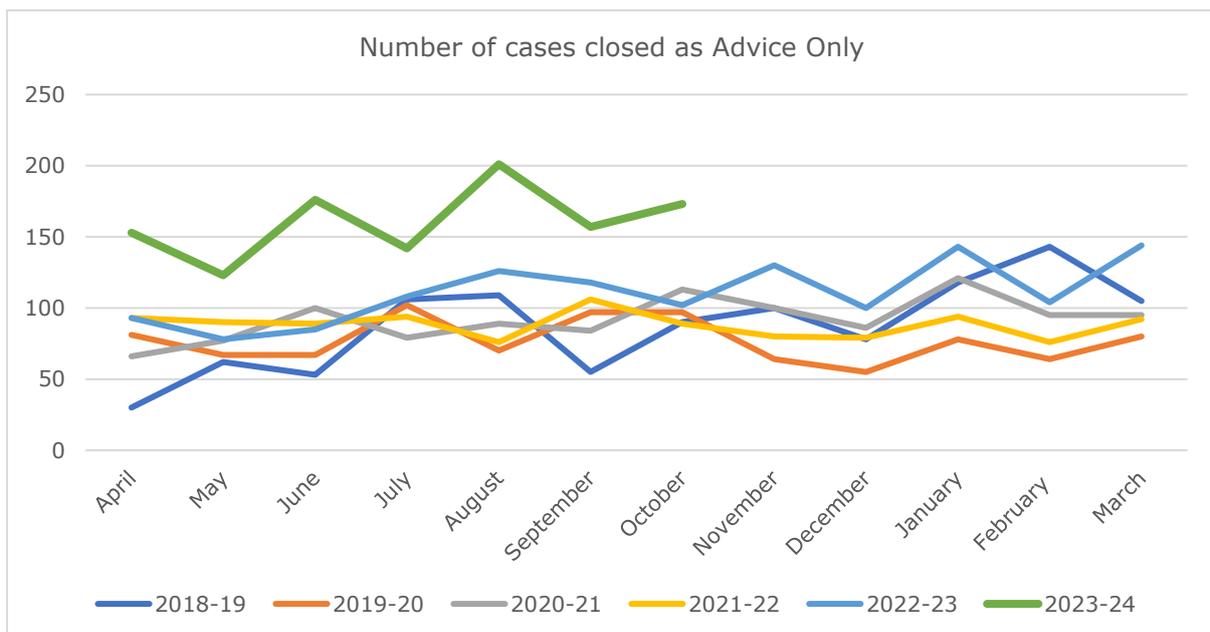
8.1 Key Homelessness Statistics for Maidstone

Since 2018 there has been a steady number of new homelessness cases received for the Authority. However, in the last twelve months, there has been an unprecedented growth in applications received. Comparing October 2022 to October 2023 we have seen a 44% increase in new cases.

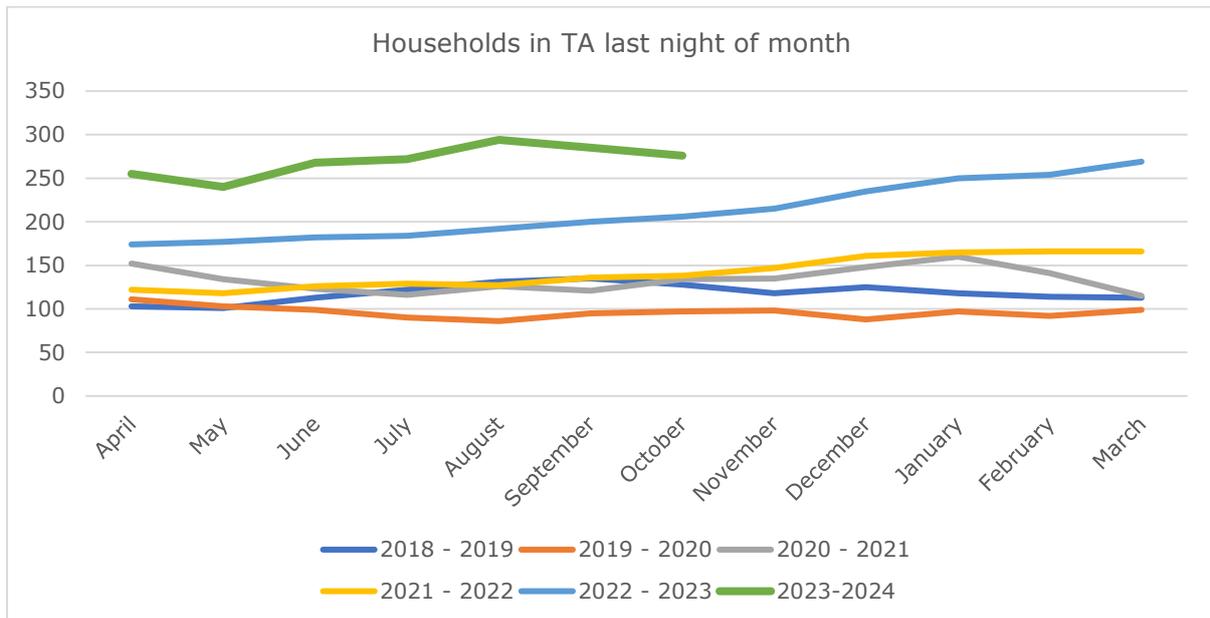


The chart below shows the number of cases received by the Housing Advice team that were closed due to being *advice only*. 'Advice only' is when a full homeless application is not taken, as an individual may not be homeless, or threatened with homeless, in 56 days but advice and assistance are offered.

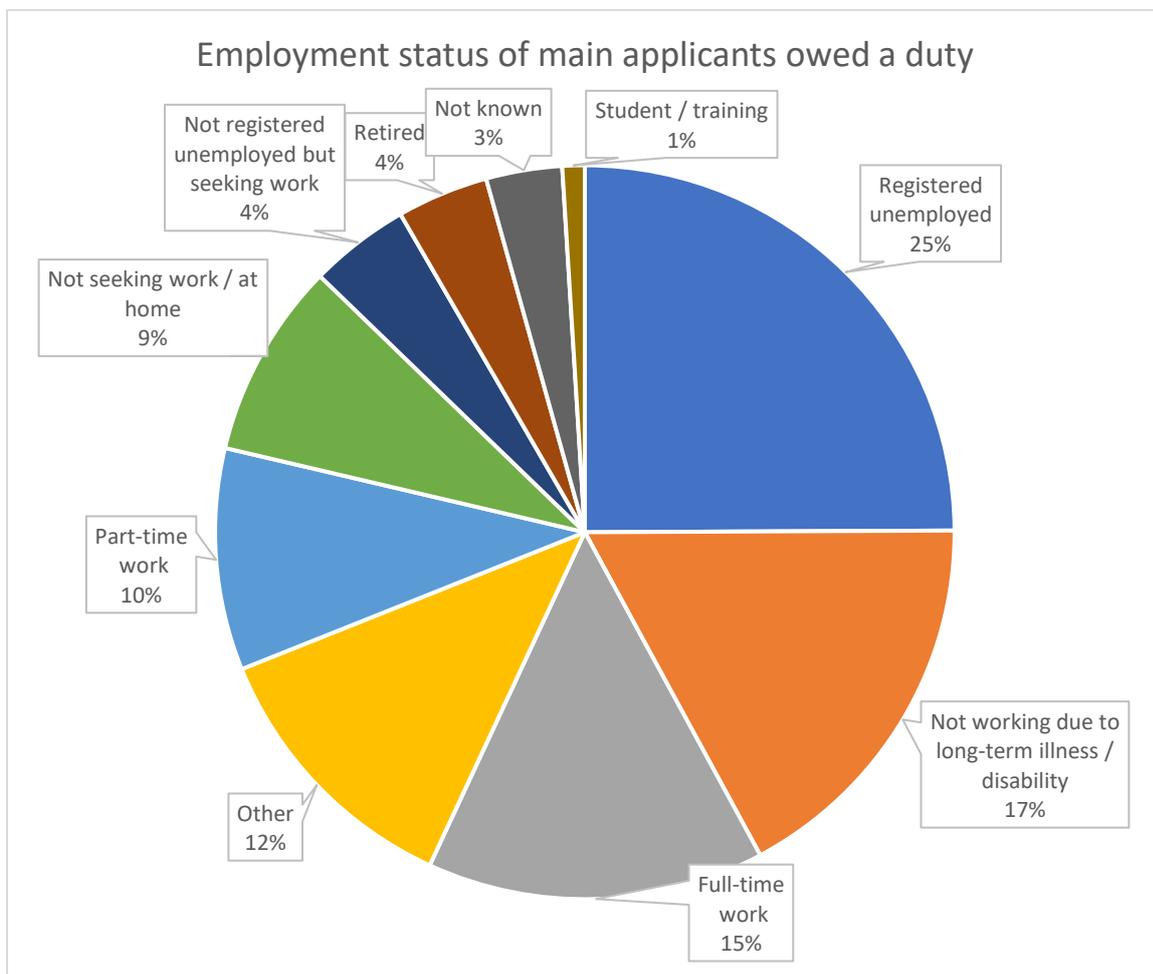
In line with the total number of cases received, *advice only* cases have also significantly increased since the end of 2022/23. Currently, only 7 months into the FY 2023/24, we have seen more cases than we did in total in the financial years leading up to 22/23.



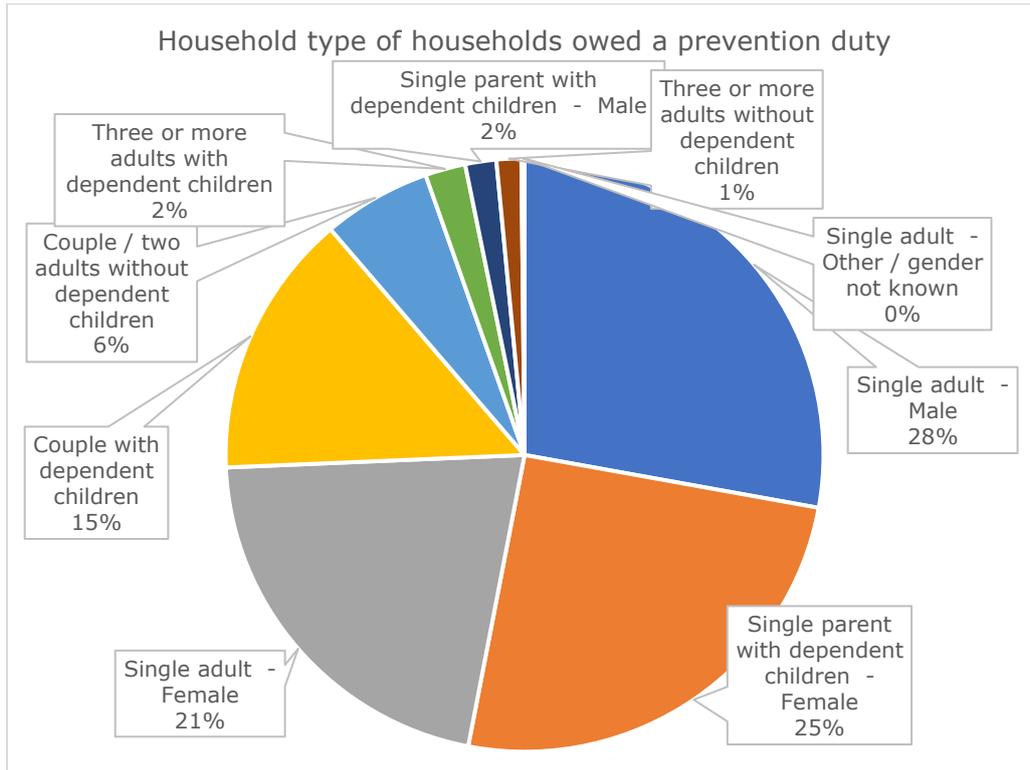
As the approaches and caseload numbers continue to rise, so has the number of households in Temporary Accommodation (as of the last night of the month) (TA). There is a clear increasing trend in the number of households in TA since March 2021, which looks to be steady in September/October 2023.



The chart below shows the economic status of applicants who came to the service in 2022-23 and were owed a duty. Most applicants were not working for various reasons, with 1 in 4 of the applicants being registered unemployed. 1 in 4 applicants were also working: 15% working full-time and 10% working part-time.



The chart below shows the household demographics of households who were owed a prevention duty.



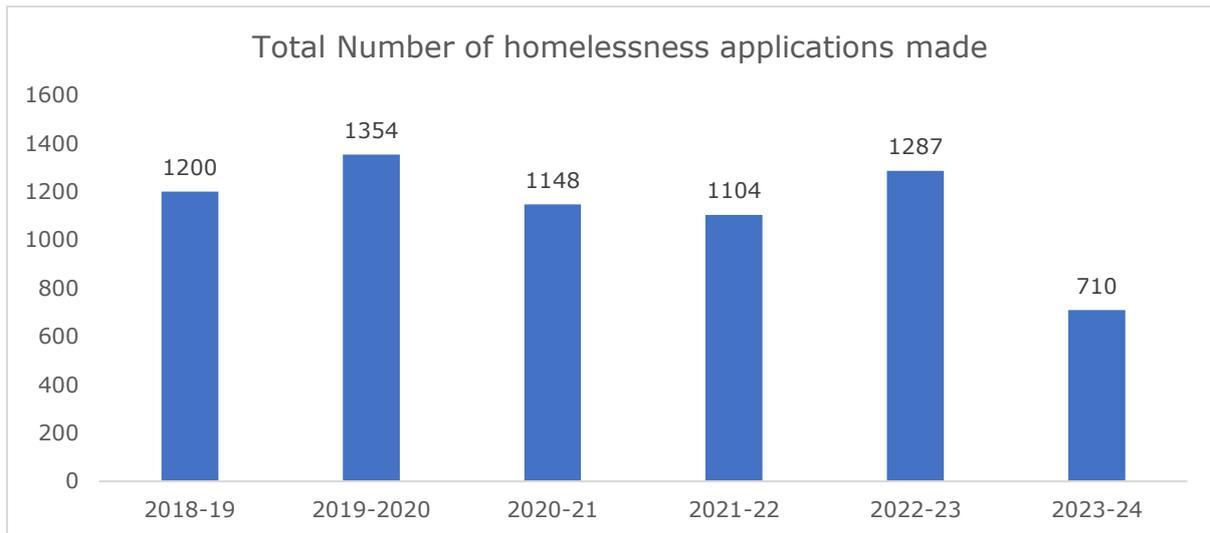
Over 1 in 4 households were single adult males, which was 166 in 2022/23. The second highest group was single parents (with dependent children) where the parent was female, which was 150 households.

This figure changes drastically when you look at the demographics of households that were owed a Relief Duty. Single adult males account for 49.88% (213 of 427) of those owed relief duty, suggesting that single males wait longer in their homeless journey to approach as homeless.

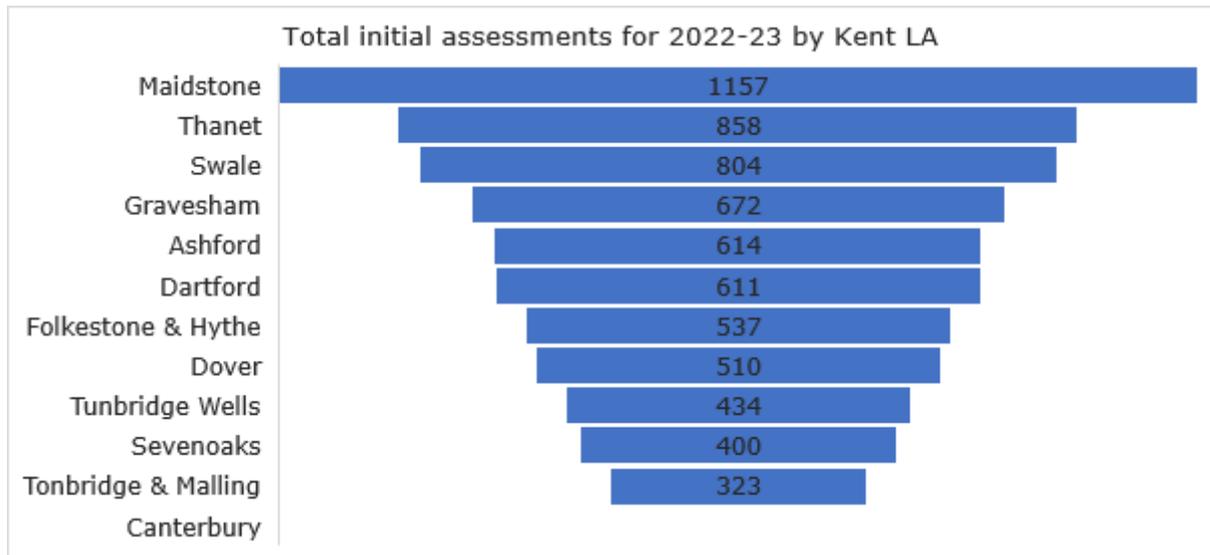
8.2 Homeless applications

The number of homelessness applications that have been made so far this financial year is on par with the number made by the same point last year (22/23). Note that the graph below shows 2023-24 data covering April to October.

Numbers have fluctuated since 2018/19 with the highest average figure being 112.9 applications per month in 2018/19. Currently average monthly applications this year are 101.4.

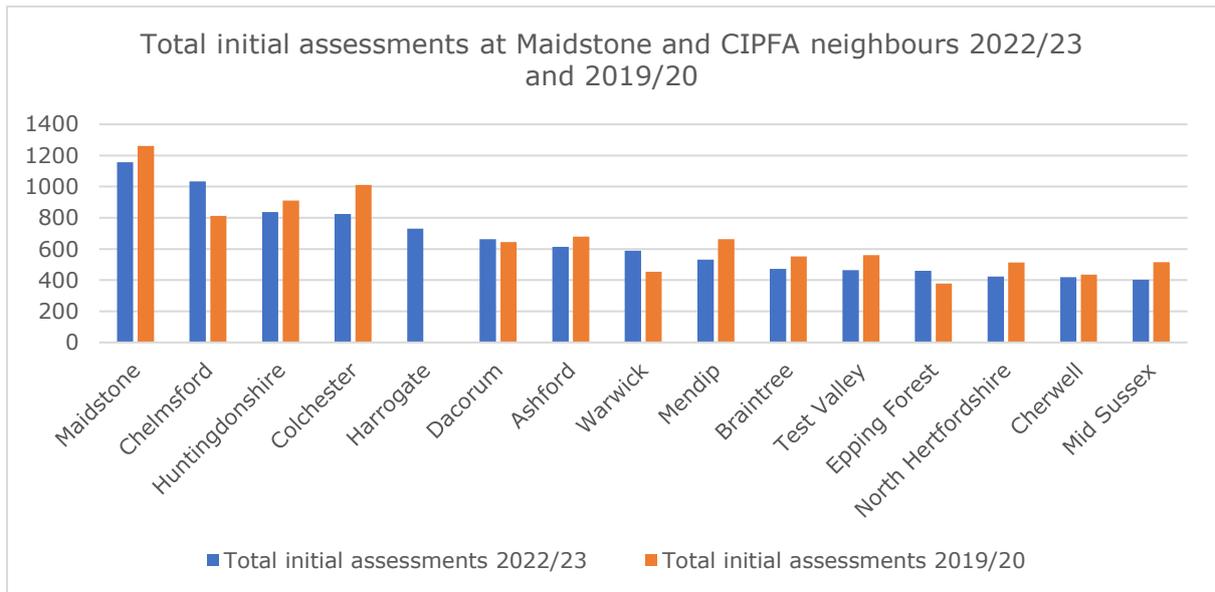


The graph below shows how we compared last year across the other Kent authorities. Note that data has not been provided for Canterbury City Council, who are anecdotally known to have a high level of homeless applications. Maidstone has the highest number of assessments, although it also has the greatest population.



Source: DLUHC statutory homelessness data

Due to the disparity in populations amongst the Kent authorities, it is important to understand how we compare to our statistically 'nearest neighbours' as proposed by CIPFA. The graph below provides a comparison of levels of assessments in 2019/20 with assessment levels in 2022/23 for Maidstone and its CIPHA nearest neighbours

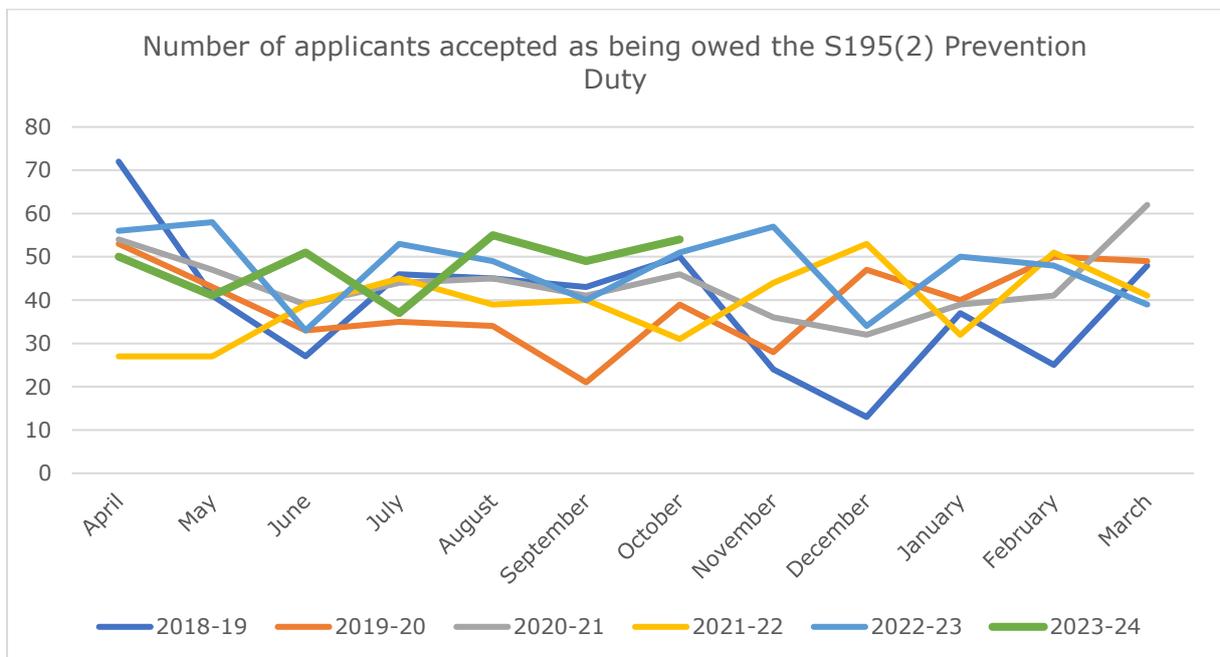


Source: DLUHC statutory homelessness data

Data shows that Maidstone received the highest number of assessments (homeless approaches) in both 2019/20 and 2022/23. Across the majority of the authorities, there was a decrease in the number of assessments from 2019/20 to 2022/23, with the exception in Chelmsford, Dacorum, Warwick and Epping Forest.

8.3 Prevention Duty

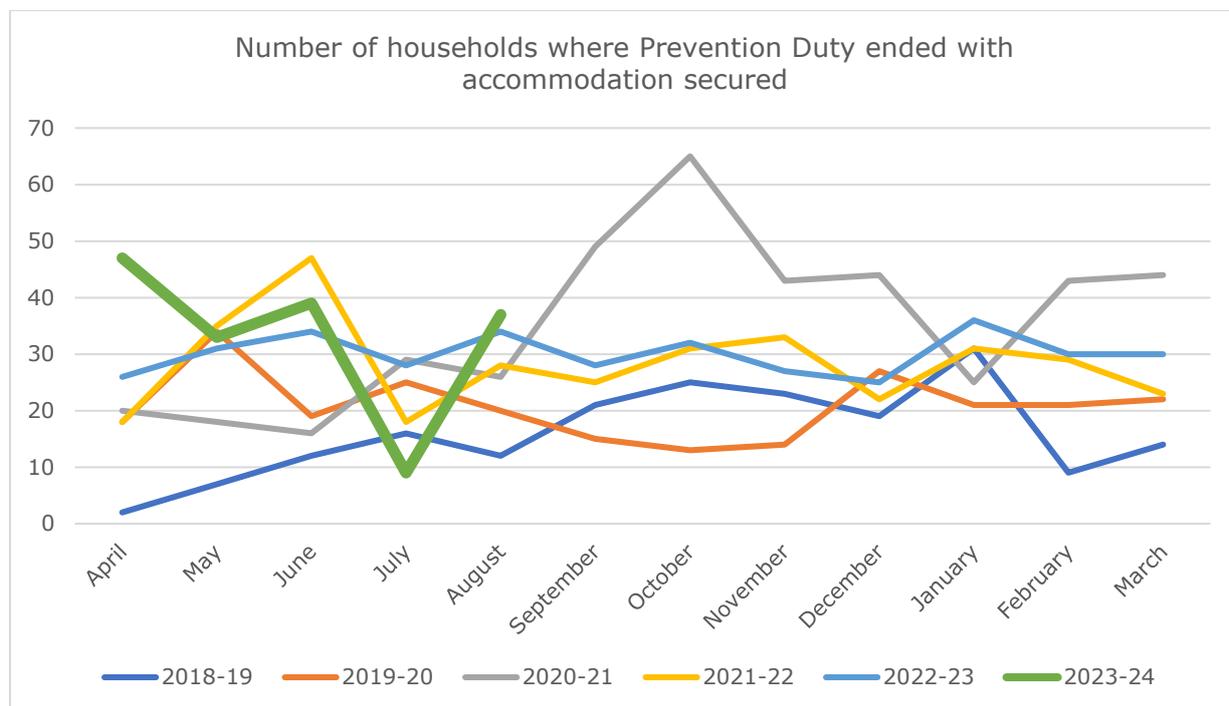
The Homelessness Reduction Act (HRA) came into effect from April 2018 and put the focus on local authorities to prevent homelessness or those who are at risk of losing their home in the next 56-days. The data below shows where Maidstone has accepted approaches from people under the prevention duty in the HRA act.



The data (above) does not identify trends or peaks in the the number of applicants accepted as being owed a prevention duty, however, there has been a general increase in the yearly totals, with 471 in 2018/19, rising to 568 in 2022/23.

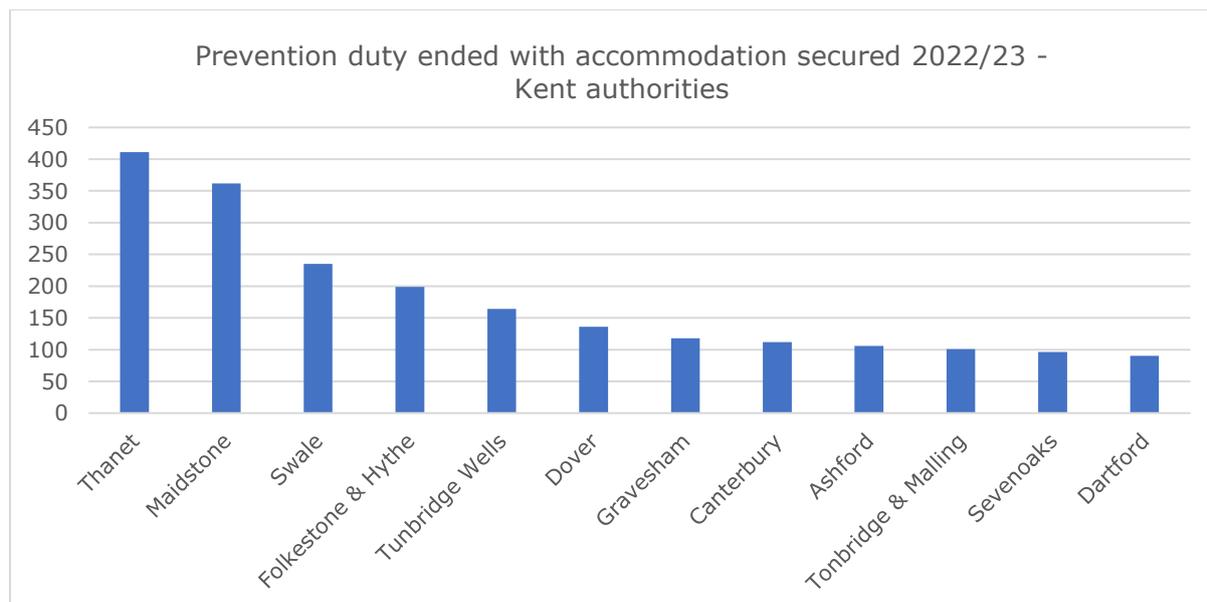
July to October 2023 the highest levels of applicants since the start of the Act, which is in line with the increase seen across all areas of the sector.

The graph below shows the number of applicants who had prevention duty successfully ended as a result of securing suitable accommodation for at least six months.



Once again, there has been an overall increase in the total yearly numbers of applicants, rising from 191 in 2018/19 to 361 in 2022/23. 2020/21 had a significant peak in October, likely due to Covid-19 impacts following the first national lockdown.

The graph below shows how Maidstone’s successful prevention duty outcomes compare to other Kent authorities. Maidstone has the second highest number of households, coming second to Thanet. Both Thanet and Maidstone have significantly higher numbers than the other authorities in Kent.

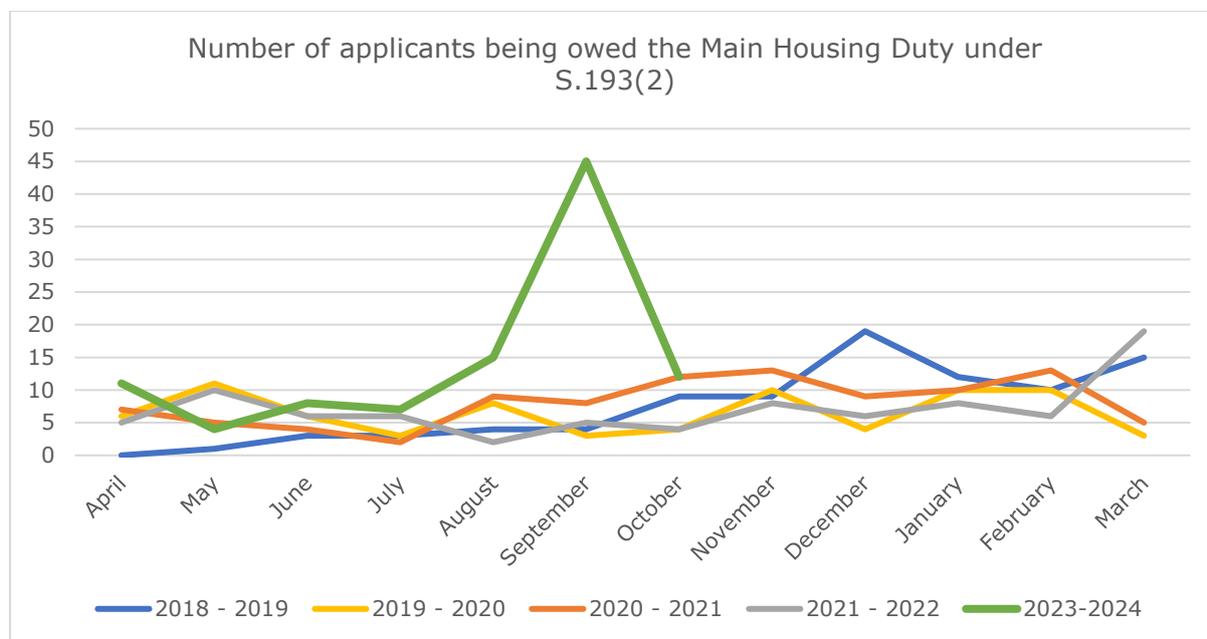


Source: DLUHC statutory homelessness data

The Graph included in section 8.4 (below) shows the different household types that were owed a prevention duty in Maidstone in 2022/23.

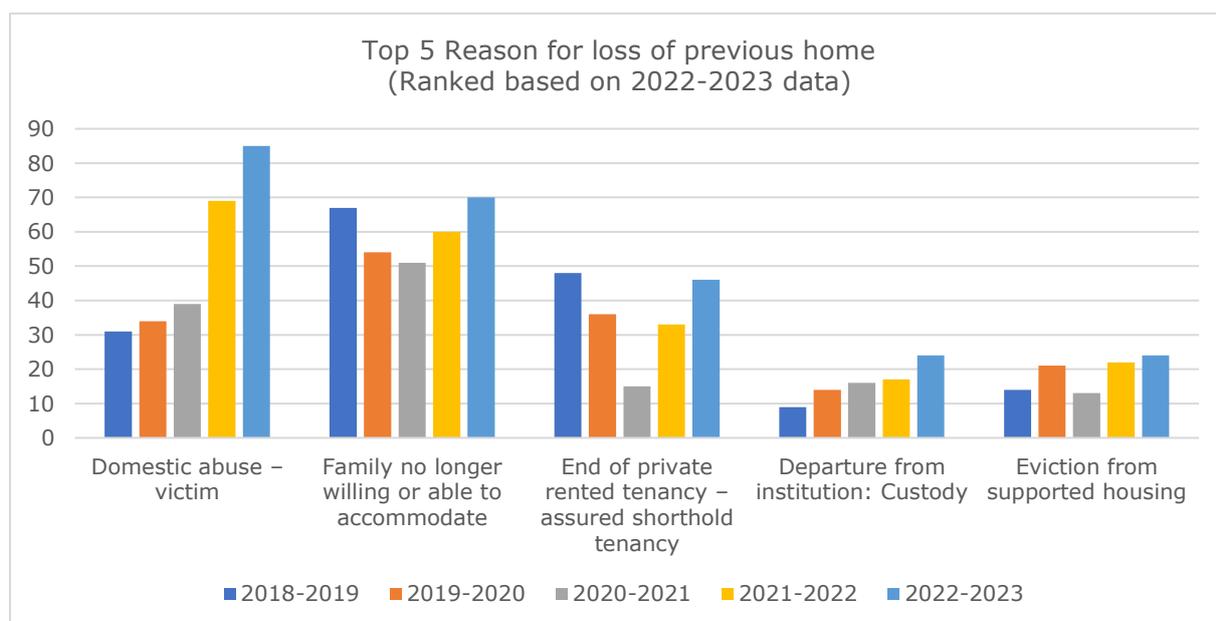
8.4 Duty Owed

The number of applicants being owed the *Main* housing duty (under s.193) has remained low since the introduction of the prevention act. Numbers have decreased slightly over the years, but with a notable spike in September 2023, which was owing to the introduction of a new system, meaning that cases were not closed.



8.5 Reason for Homelessness

The graph below shows the top five reasons people were becoming homeless in 2022-23, compared to the previous five years.



There is a significant increase in Domestic Abuse Cases; figures have more than doubled, rising from 31 in 2018-19 to 85 in 2022-23.

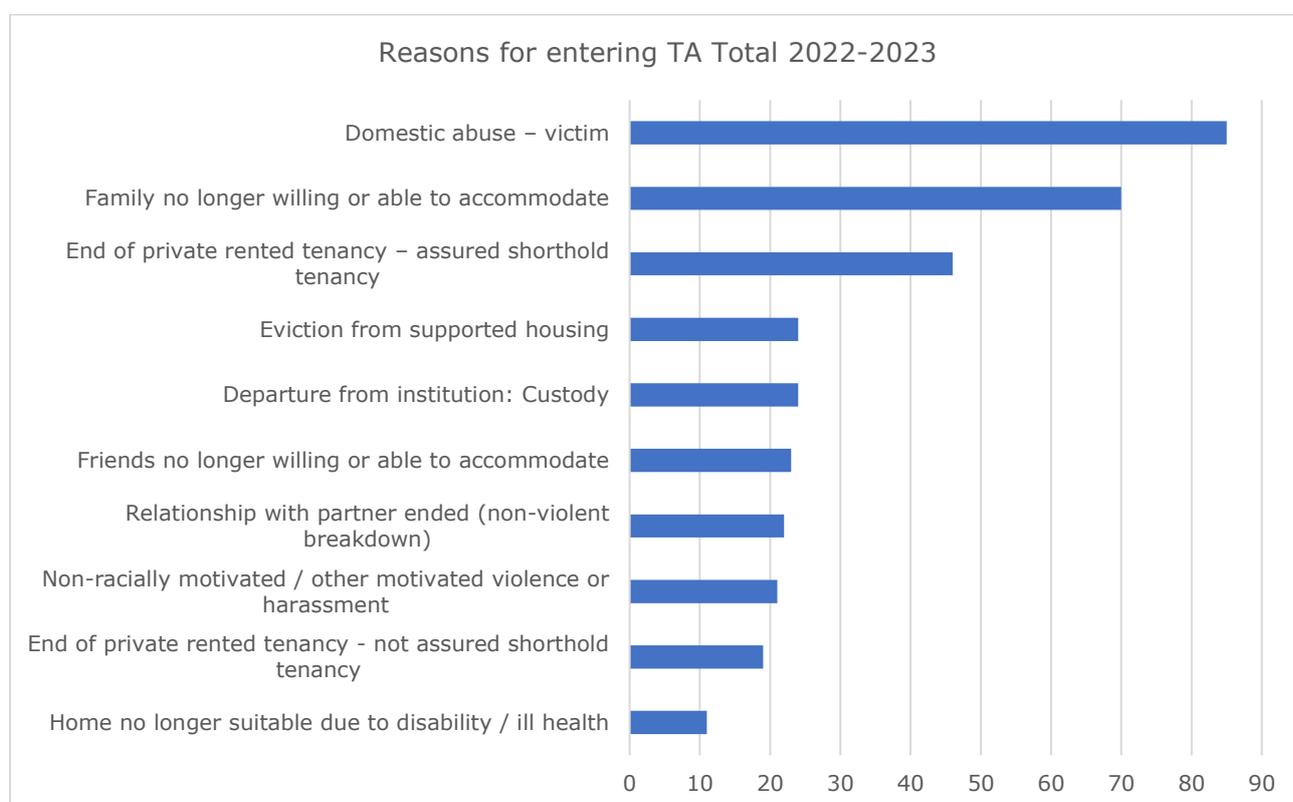
The second most common reason is that family are no longer being willing, or able, to accommodate the person/household. Although there was a decrease from 2018-2019 to 2020-2021, there has since been an increase in the last two years. The same pattern is also seen in those who were homeless due to the end of their privately rented home. However, the dip in figures in 2020-21 is skewed by the Covid-19 lockdown rules were evictions were placed on hold by the government.

Departure from institutions, such as custody, shows a consistent upward trend, although the numbers are relatively small compared to other categories.

Evictions from Supported Housing: Evictions from supported housing remained relatively stable, with a slight increase over the five-year period. There was a minor drop in 2020-2021 but the numbers have since risen to their highest point in 2022-2023, tying with departures from custody.

Overall, the data indicates that domestic abuse and the inability of families to accommodate relatives are the leading causes of homelessness in Maidstone, with both showing worrying increasing trends.

The graph below shows the full list of reasons a person/household entered into Temporary Accommodation in 2022-23.

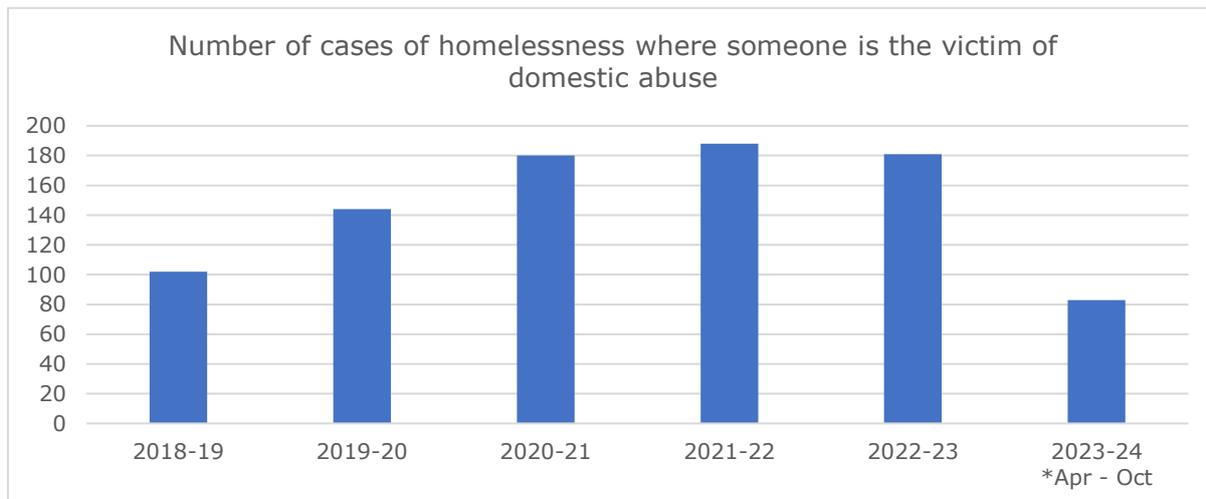


As before, Domestic Abuse is the predominant reason. The inability of family and friends to provide accommodation is the next most significant factor. Tenancy issues, including the end of both assured and non-assured shorthold tenancies, are major contributors, reflecting broader housing market and socioeconomic challenges. Institutional transitions from custody and hospitals also lead to housing loss, pointing to the need for better support structures for vulnerable populations.

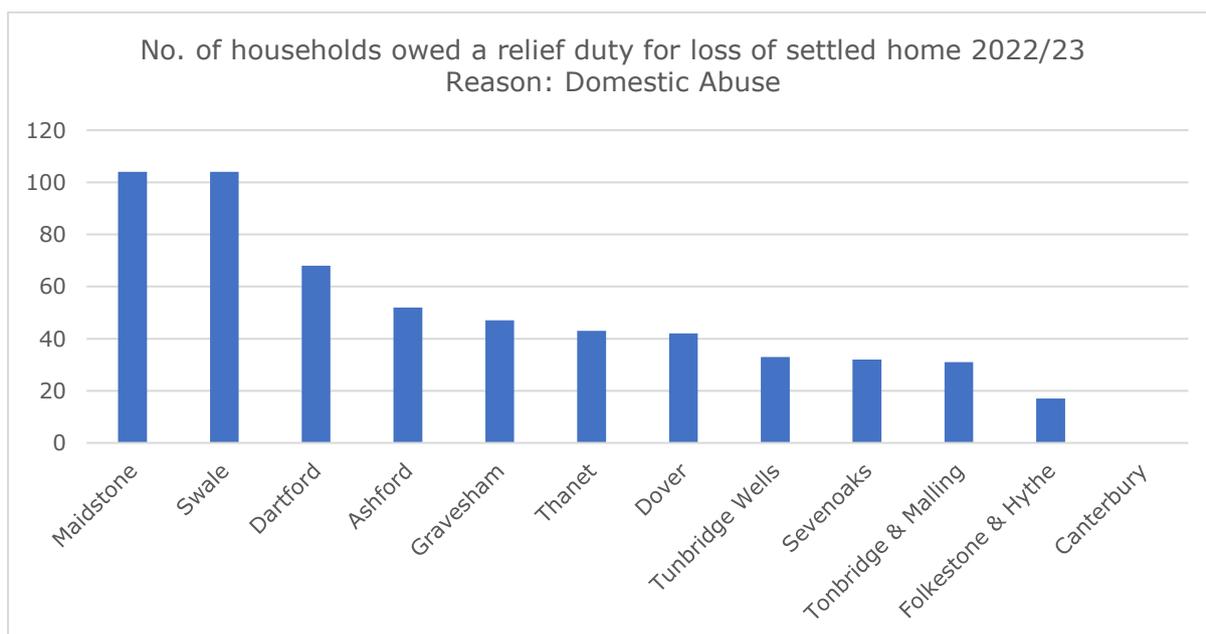
8.6 Domestic Abuse

The graph below shows the number of households that have approached as homeless because they have been a victim of domestic abuse. The total numbers each year have slowly increased, rising from 102 in 2018/19 to 181 in 2022/23.

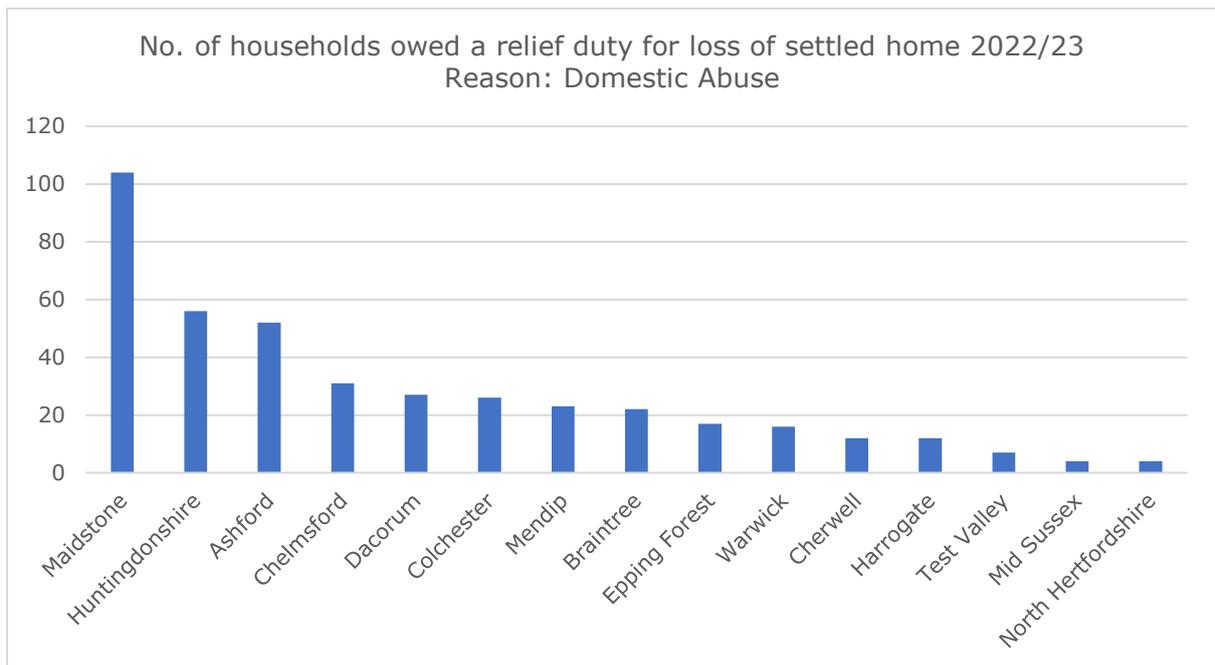
There appears to be a seasonal pattern when numbers are generally higher in January and March months, which suggests that there could be seasonal factors affecting the incidence of homelessness linked to domestic abuse.



The graph below shows the number of households across all the Kent authorities who have been owed a relief duty for loss (or threat of loss) of their last settled home, solely for the reason of domestic abuse. Data was not available for Canterbury City Council.



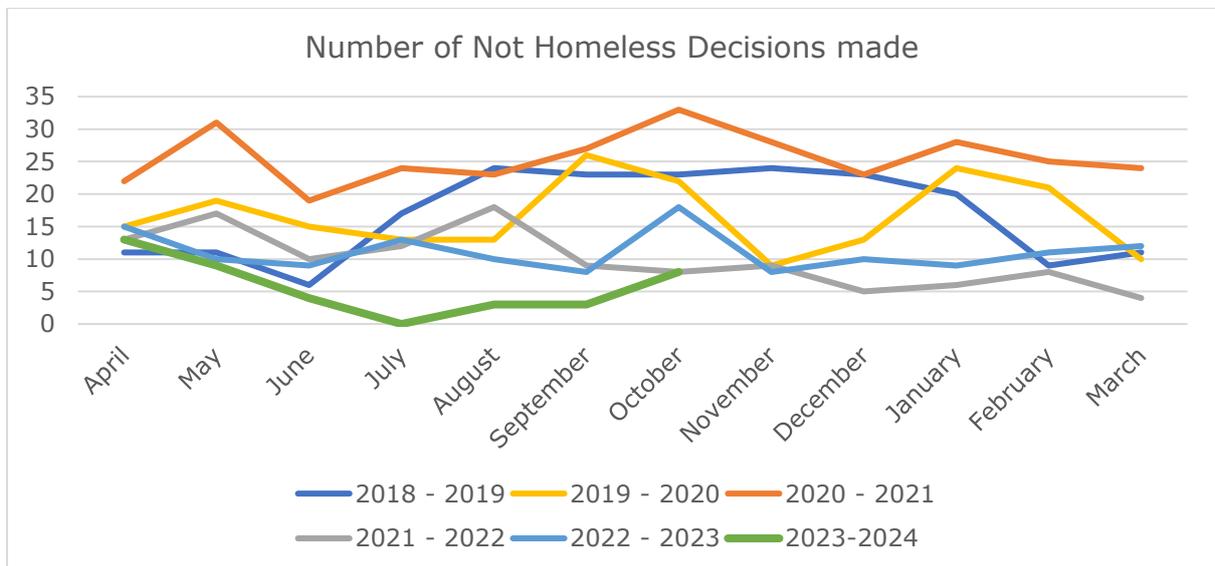
Maidstone is joint top for total households in the period 2022/23; over 50% more households than in Dartford, the next highest. To provide a fairer geographical comparison, the same comparison is provided below, this time comparison to our CIPFA nearest neighbours.



Once again, Maidstone has a significantly higher number than the comparing Local authorities, over 85% higher than the next highest (Huntingdonshire). This suggests that Domestic Abuse is higher in Maidstone, or that people travel to Maidstone to flee domestic abuse, more so than other authorities in our area and of a similar 'statistical' size.

8.7 Not Homeless Decisions

The graph below shows how many decisions of 'not homeless' were made by the Housing Advice team. Numbers in 2023-24 are so far, much lower than the previous years looked at. The peak of these decisions was throughout 2020-21.



8.8 Rough sleepers

The number of rough sleepers over the past few years suggests a consistently low trend, as detailed below in the annual street count figures. The street count is conducted annually, in November each year:

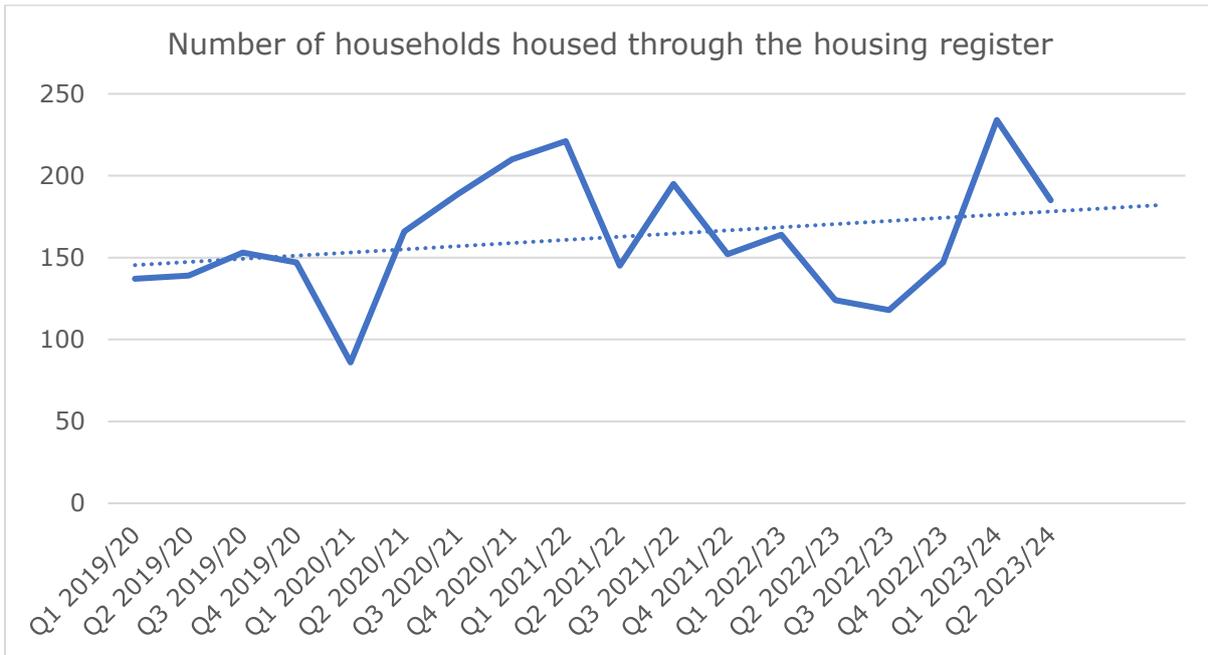
- In 2019, there were three individuals reported as rough sleepers.
- The count decreased to two in 2020.
- It slightly increased to three in 2021.

- Remarkably, there were no reported cases of rough sleeping in 2022.
- However, in 2023, this has increased to six which correspond with a much greater demand on our accommodation resources and the decommissioning of KCC homeless services.

8.8 Housing Register

Alongside the Council’s Housing Advice service is Maidstone’s Housing Options team. The team assist people with accessing the Housing Register, and social housing through the choice-based lettings scheme.

The below graph shows the number of households that were housed through the housing register.

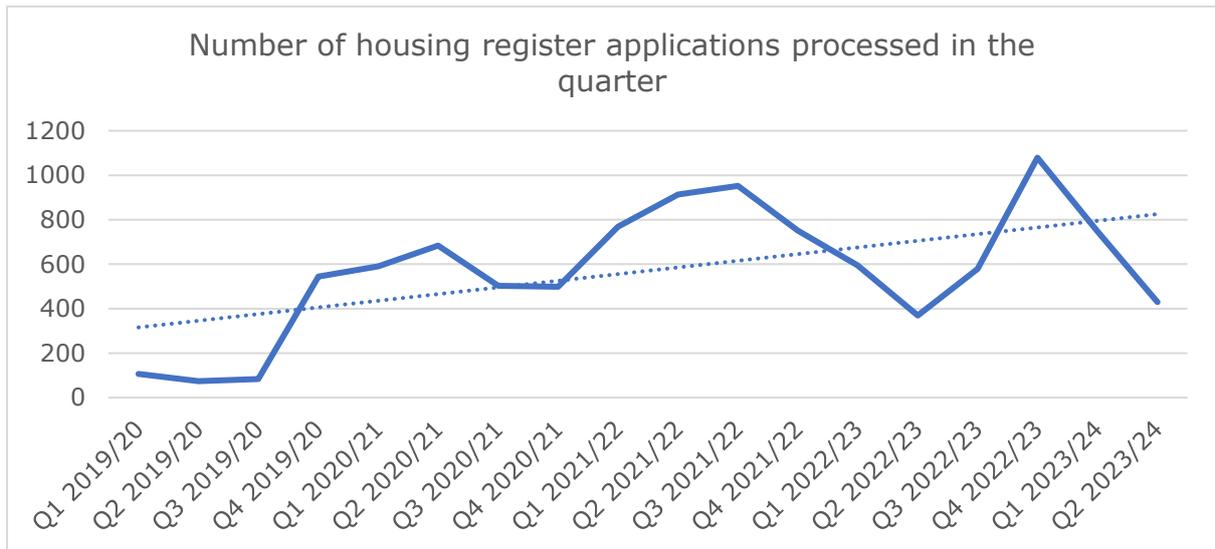


There was a noticeable dip in Q1 2020/21, where the number dropped significantly to 86, which is the lowest value across all quarters, however this would have been the impact of the first national covid-19 lockdown.

The following quarters saw a steady increase, peaking in Q4 2020/21 and continuing to rise until Q1 2021/22, which had the highest value until then at 221 households.

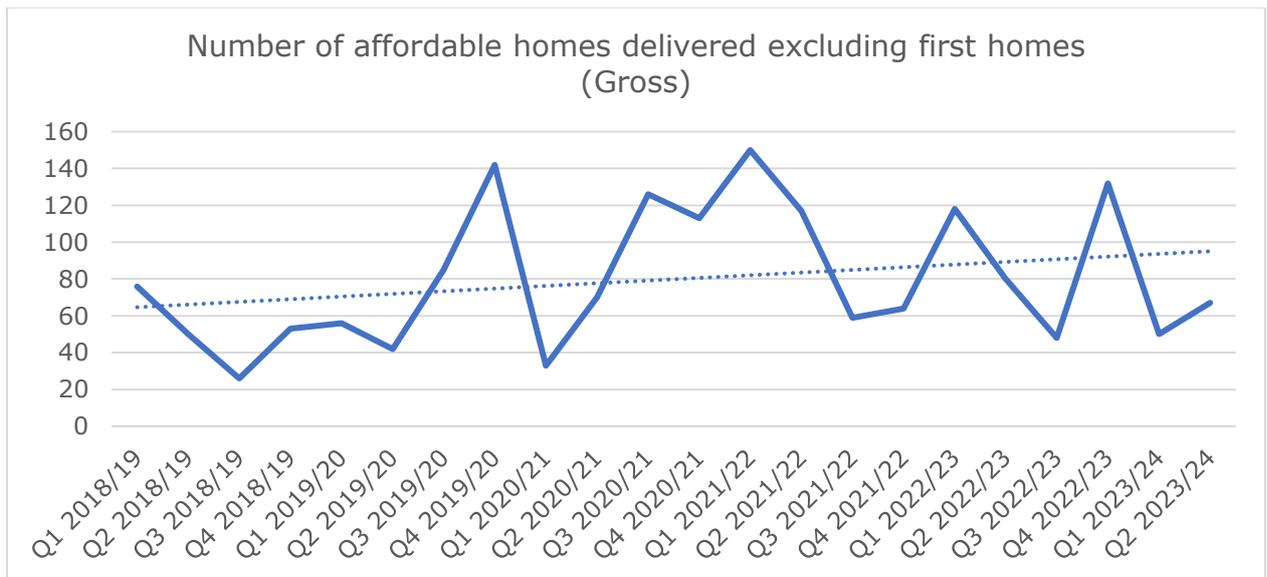
The highest number of households housed was in Q1 2023/24 with 234, showing a significant increase compared to previous years.

The below graph shows how many applications the team are receiving each quarter for people to join the Housing Register. As the trend line shows, this number is increasing substantially year on year. This indicates an increasing demand for housing this period.



8.9 Affordable homes

The graph below shows the number of affordable homes that have been delivered in the borough. There is a slight upward trend over the years, however this does not seem to continue in 2022/23. There is also a seasonal trend with peaks in numbers occurring in quarter four each year.



8. Conclusions

It is difficult to determine or predict with accuracy the future levels of homeless, given the factors that lead to homelessness, such as economic climate, welfare reforms and political appetite. However, based on the data within this review, it is clear that trends are growing and the need for the continued support operated from Trinity is growing also.

Reviewing the data above, especially in relation to the comparison information, we can see that Maidstone is exceeding all other Kent districts, and our CIPHA nearest neighbours, in relation to homelessness statistics and data markers. This may be perceived as negative by other authorities but in Maidstone, we pride ourselves on reaching the widest population as possible, to ensure our constituents are receiving an excellent and robust service. We do not shy away from the challenges that homelessness brings, but embrace those with innovation and passion, bringing a service which support all within Maidstone.

At Maidstone Borough Council we will continue offering an exceptional service from Trinity and from across the wider organisational realm, which meets the need of our local population. As this report clearly demonstrates the ever-growing demand on all our housing teams, it is suggested our next strategy will continue in the vein of the four priorities as listed below.

- Homeless Prevention
- Providing affordable and decent accommodation
- Support vulnerable households
- Alleviate rough sleeping in the district

This is a challenging time for housing departments across the country, but at Maidstone we are exceptionally well placed to work effectively to manage those challenges.



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Maidstone Borough Council

Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy 2024 - 2029

Breaking the cycle of homelessness

www.maidstone.gov.uk



Foreword - Chair of Communities, Housing & Environment Committee

Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) has always prided itself on making housing a clear priority and understands the fundamental role that good housing has in contributing to lifetime opportunities for so many people.

Homelessness, in all its forms, has the potential to have a significant and negative impact on the lives of individuals and families. For those reasons, Maidstone Borough Council supported the principles that motivated Parliament to enact the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017).

The statute represents a major change in housing legislation and rather than waiting for April 2019 before responding to the requirements, Maidstone Borough Council took the decision to implement changes to our service delivery and the resources available in 2018. This early adoption of the new statute provided us with valuable experience that has been put into good practice by the Council and colleagues working alongside in the voluntary sector.

Whilst we do not underestimate the challenge that the current housing market presents, the Council does believe that it is well placed and determined to provide residents with the best possible solutions that help prevent homelessness wherever possible.



- Cllr Lottie Parfitt-Reid

1. Introduction

Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) continues its commitment to providing a robust and effective Housing and Homelessness Service to the local community. The provision of these services is a key priority for the Council and is reflected through the Strategic Plan (under Homes and Communities banner, with the commitment to preventing homelessness and rough sleeping by 2045).

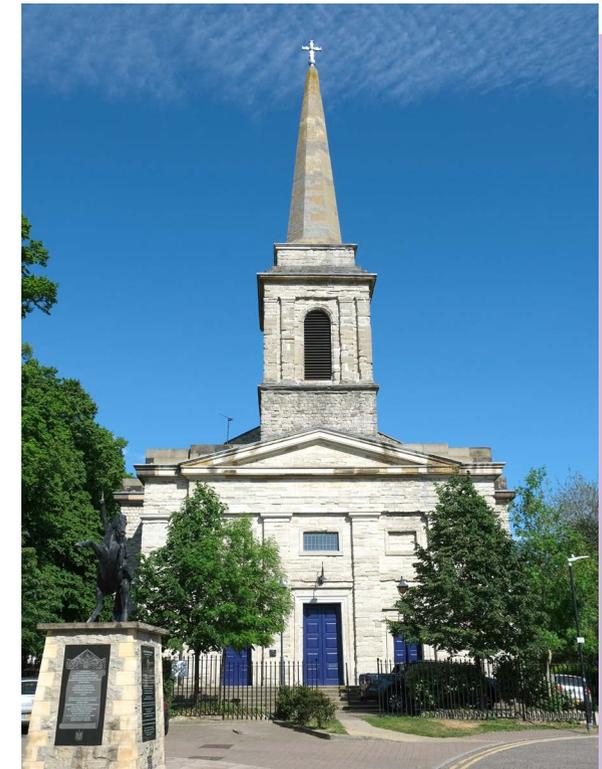
Since 2002, local authorities have been required to publish a homelessness strategy outlining their intentions and vision for supporting those who face homelessness. In 2018, the Government published a National Rough Sleeping Strategy which obligated local authorities to include a special focus on rough sleeping. This is the second MBC combined Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.

The preceding years have presented many challenges for the Council as a local housing authority these include the pandemic which hugely altered the way services could be delivered, and how staff worked. In addition, world events such as the war in Ukraine and the turmoil of withdrawing from Afghanistan,

along with the current cost of living crisis and associated demand for housing has caused homelessness to surge. All of these have presented extreme challenges to the MBC Housing and Homeless Teams. However, alongside the challenges we have had numerous opportunities to tailor the way we work and provide services to the local community.

Even though the recent years have been challenging, there are many areas to be celebrated for the borough of Maidstone including the acquisition and purchase of Trinity our Community Hub. A key landmark in Maidstone, Trinity offers a direct front-door service for all housing and homelessness issues; the commitment to return the Council to being a stock holding authority with the development of a 1,000 affordable homes; the continued purchase of temporary accommodation (TA) which enables the Council to provide good quality TA that is financially viable; the reduction in the street population activity including rough sleeping and the increase in support provision across the borough.

The new and emerging challenges are matters that will be addressed throughout this Strategy. However, we cannot work in isolation and we will have a special focus on partnerships to ensure a fully rounded and holistic approach is taken to this very challenging situation.



Trinity, Maidstone

Our four key priorities:

In light of the new Strategy, MBC undertook a six week public consultation in 2023. This was in relation to the previous Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2024, and the response strongly supported continuing our four key priorities:

This document sets out the MBC vision for our community over the coming five years, and how this complements the Council's Strategic Plan and Housing Strategy which was endorsed by the Council in 2023.

As part of the Conclusion of this document we aim to attach the action plan on how we will achieve these strategic objectives.

- 1 Homeless Prevention
- 2 Provide accommodation
- 3 Support vulnerable people and households
- 4 Work specifically to target and alleviate rough sleeping within the borough



The progress of the strategy will be monitored by the Council and reported regularly to the Cabinet Member responsible for Housing and Health and the relevant Policy Advisory Committee.

2. National Context

To include:

- **National statistics about the increase in homelessness**
- **Latest government position on homelessness and rough sleeping**
- **National influences such as the Asylum Dispersal Programme**
- **Renters Reform Bill**

3. Review of Homelessness Strategy

As part of the development of the new MBC Homeless Strategy we have undertaken a review of the previous document reflecting back over five years - since 2019. This review can be found on the Council's website: www.maidstone.gov.uk

3.1.Key findings

During the course of the previous Homelessness Strategy (2019-2024), there have been a significant increase in the levels of homelessness across the borough. This includes the number of people approaching MBC housing advice service asking for support and guidance.

Financial Year	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 (up to end of Jan 24)
New homeless cases approaching	2267	2288	2201	2230	2568	2915
Homeless Applications made	1200	1354	1148	1104	1287	988

There has been a large increase in the number of households accessing temporary accommodation (TA), in Maidstone; this has seen a sharp rise from 113 in March 2019, to 283 in December 2023; of these 244 are placed under a Part 7 Housing Act 1996 (as amended) S.189 or 193 duty and the remaining 39 under a discretionary power to accommodate (these households are those most at risk of rough sleeping).

Alongside the general increases in demand, Council services have felt the consequence of the Domestic Abuse Act 2020 which sought to make it easier for victims to seek housing and support. However, this has again increased the use of TA as demonstrated in the table below:

Financial Year	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 (up to Jan 24)
DA cases in TA	33(12%)	34 (23%)	64 (29%)	83 (27%)	50 (25%)
Family no longer willing or able to accommodate	47 (18%)	34 (23%)	43 (30%)	52 (17%)	37 (19%)
End of private rented tenancy – assured shorthold tenancy	36 (14%)	11 (7%)	22 (10%)	36 (12%)	36 (18%)
Total of all placements in TA	116	79	129	171	123
Total Placements	266	150	217	307	198

As per our previous review, family and friends who are no longer able or willing to accommodate and the ending of private rented tenancies are also significant factors for households having to enter the temporary accommodation provision. However, during the pandemic we saw the end of private rented tenancy significantly reduce and the increase came from family and friends no longer willing to accommodate. This supports our own knowledge of how the market and demand changed in line with the Government's call for "Everyone In" during Covid 19. The ending of the moratorium on possession orders being granted in 2022/2023, (after the pandemic), has also seen a rise in the number of households losing their accommodation through landlords seeking 'no fault evictions.'



3. Review of Homelessness Strategy

The table below illustrates the breakdown of the high-level demographics of the homeless applicants since 2019. It clearly shows the large number of single and childless couples approaching MBC services requiring one bedroom accommodation. (This will form part of the Strategy in future sections.) This is reflected in the TA statistics which illustrate up to 50% of people needing a one-bedroom property.

Financial Year Total applicants	2019-20 1327	2020-21 1175	2021-22 1150	2022-23 1383
Males	639	561	556	670
Females	682	608	592	701
Singles/childless couples	853 (64%)	769 (65%)	722 (62%)	852 (61%)
Households with children	474 (34%)	406 (35%)	428 (38%)	531 (39%)

Over the last four years the diversity of those approaching MBC has increased, whilst the data confirm that the percentage of applicants of white origin has decreased from 84% to 74%. (This is not reflective of the borough of Maidstone’s ethnic breakdown with 89% of the local population from the 2021 Census who identified themselves as white.) This change indicates that the non-white populations are overrepresented in homelessness services, and we need to ensure that the Council services investigate and address any inequalities facing those from minority backgrounds.



This has also required the housing department at times, to work in an inclusion manner, ensuring cultural awareness and access language translation services.

One great success of the previous five years is the significant reduction in rough sleepers across Maidstone; in 2018 the street count was 48 and this has reduced through the years and even went down to zero in 2022. However, it did rise slightly to six in Autumn 2023 when the annual statutory street count took part.

3. Review of Homelessness Strategy

Other headline findings of the Strategic Report:

- 1** The total number of households in Maidstone increased by 12.23% from 63,447 to 71,208 between 2011 to 2021 with a calculated local housing need of 1,214 homes per year. In addition, home ownership has decreased, whilst private renting has increased.
- 2** Since 2019 there has been as a steady increase in homeless approaches, which corresponds to the increase of households across the borough. However, between October 2022 - October 2023 the increase has been exponentially high at 44%. It should be noted that this is a common theme across England.
- 3** There's an increasing trend in homelessness cases where someone is a victim of domestic abuse, suggesting a strong link between personal safety and housing stability. Also, the new Domestic Abuse Legislation (which was enacted in 2021), has a very low threshold for a local housing authority (LHA) to provide temporary accommodation and support to those in need.

- 4** Household composition of those approaching the Council is dominated by three groups:
 - i) single males 28%
 - ii) single parents with dependent children (25%)
 - iii) single females (21%)This is strongly aligned with the composition of those in Temporary Accommodation.
- 5** 25% of those approaching MBC services for homeless support are unemployed and 17% are not working due to long term illness. Surprisingly those in fulltime work make up the third largest cohort at 15%. This could suggest that those working in lower paid jobs, are struggling to find affordable accommodation in Maidstone.



4. Priorities and Objectives

Maidstone Borough Council's Strategic Plan 2019-2045 sets the direction for Maidstone's long-term future. Our core vision is supported by four priorities, one of which is Homes and Communities.

Strategic Plan 2019-2045 - Vision and Priorities

We want to have a place that people love to be and where they can afford to live. This means ensuring that there is a good balance of different types of homes, including affordable and supported housing.

The Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy is one of the key strategic documents that will support and enable the Council to achieve its vision for the borough and complements the Strategic Plan.

Between 2023-28 we will place particular importance on:

- Continuing our holistic and innovative approach to reduce rough sleeping in Maidstone
- Increasing the supply of temporary accommodation to reduce cost, whilst working towards long-term housing solutions
- Urgently identify and deliver 1,000 affordable homes to ensure availability of good quality housing that's sustainable in both financial and ecological terms reduce health inequalities in the borough
- Improving the quality of housing through the consistent use of our statutory powers to promote good health and wellbeing

This Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy is underpinned by four further priority areas that have been continued from our 2019-2024 strategy.

During a wider consultation with a range of groups, staff, service users and stakeholders, 94 % of respondents felt these four priorities were still relevant for our borough and communities. Throughout the consultation we sought ideas and feedback and aimed to incorporate these throughout the strategy to give us the greatest chance of meeting the needs of those in our community. This Strategy aims to set out the trajectory for the next five years seeking to eliminate long term homelessness and break the cycle of homelessness in Maidstone.



4. Priorities and Objectives

Our Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy Priorities

1 To Prevent Homelessness - we want to stop people from becoming homeless.

We will achieve this by...

- Continuing and improving our data analysis One View system - exploring better ways in which to focus on specific characteristics of households more likely to be at risk of homelessness
- Early intervention and prevention support for residents at risk of losing their home offered both from the Trinity Community Hub and within the community itself
- Work in partnership with the private, voluntary and public sectors including health providers ensuring a complete range of support and advice is accessible
- Joined up working with others to ensure we respond to safeguarding and community safety issues promptly
- Explore the use of incentives in order to prevent households becoming homeless

2 To Provide Accommodation - to those experiencing or facing homelessness.

We will achieve this by...

- Offering affordable accommodation in Maidstone or as close as possible in order to discharge our statutory duties
- Developing our own 1,000 affordable homes to rent on lifetime tenancies and let through the Housing Register
- Working in partnership with housing associations to make the best use of existing resources
- Working with landlords to find more homes through different arrangements including Private Sector Leasing
- Ensuring good standards of property management and conditions within the private rented sector
- Leading by example and developing more housing projects through the Council's own property company and assets
- Ensuring 'needs specific' accommodation is provided in response to increasing demand



4. Priorities and Objectives

Our Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy Priorities

3 To work alongside **vulnerable people** - support those experiencing the crisis of homelessness to regain their independence and access the support they need.

We will achieve this by...

- Offering a low threshold service to support households including families and single people
- Ensuring we maximise our funding opportunities in order to operate to continue our robust support team
- Specific work with domestic abuse survivors linked to the new Kent Domestic Abuse strategy
- Assisting key partners and other agencies in removing barriers to employment through training and education
- Ensuring our hospital discharge programme continues to develop and grow
- Looking to embed primary and mental health care into our daily operations

4 To support **rough sleepers** away from the streets, bring a sense of hope and ensuring Maidstone's voice is heard as part of a national response to the challenges of housing shortage, instability and homelessness.

We will achieve this by...

- Continuing our effective 'off the street' accommodation pathway for people facing rough sleeping
- Developing a sustainable approach to ensure the continuation of services implemented under the Rough Sleeper Initiative
- Continuing to advocate changes to the wider system including government policy



1

Priority 1 - Prevention

The Council's motivation has always been to prevent homelessness, as this is the best outcome for the household causing less stress and anxiety and reduce the financial burden for MBC. Before the introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017, when it became a statutory requirement to work with prevention cases, we prioritised and understood the importance of the model with the introduction of the Prevention Officer role and the Single Homeless Case Officer in the mid 2010's.

Over time the prevention demand has grown and all the teams within the MBC housing department have touch points to prevent homelessness; whether it is the Housing Advisors carrying out their duties under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended); or Homeless Support Officers offering a floating support service to people in their own homes to maintain their tenancy successfully; Helping you Home Hospital Discharge Programme supporting people to return own home and not have to seek alternative accommodation; the Housing Standards Team which ensures decent housing standards are maintained in the private rented market and households don't need to approach the Council for support.

The importance of prevention was also echoed in the consultation for this new strategy in which all groups consulted felt that ranked the highest of the four priorities.

Our successful prevention outcomes over the previous five years demonstrate the importance of this. The table below shows the actual number of households which have been prevented from becoming homeless, avoiding the need for them to come into interim or TA. As well as this being the preferred outcome for the household (reduction of stress and upset), it also has a significant financial benefit for the Council with those households not needing to access temporary accommodation.



Financial Year	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24 (up to Dec 23)
Positive prevention outcomes in %	62%	74%	70%	70%	63%
Positive prevention outcomes in household numbers	249	354	341	361	264
Indicative cost saving*	£1,012,500	£1,433,700	£1,385,100	£1,466,100	£1,069,200

* The indicative cost saving is based on 50% of those positive prevention cases converting to needing interim accommodation based on an average cost of £45 per night for a nightly paid cost for 180 days – which is the average length of stay in temporary accommodation

Priority 1 - Prevention

In the coming life span of this Strategy, we will be seeking new ways to expand our prevention brief. This will enable us to explore dynamic and innovative ways to prevent homelessness, reducing the trauma of homelessness and cost avoidance to the Council by preventing people needing to access interim or temporary accommodation.



We will seek to carry out the following measures to support our growth and meet the demand of preventing homelessness:

- 1 We will expand our predictive analytics model to create a broader product with the ability to capture a wider data set providing a greater reach for preventing homelessness and the need to access TA
- 2 We will explore incentives for preventing homelessness including family and friends' evictions via a financial remuneration or other mechanism, reviewing under and over occupancy and align the Discretionary Housing Payments System with the housing teams

- 3 Early intervention and prevention support for residents at risk of losing their home offered both from Trinity Community Hub, and across the community



- 4 Work in partnership with the private, voluntary and public sectors including health providers so that a complete range of support and advice is accessible and ensure those from minorities are not disproportionately affected
- 5 Joined up working with others to ensure we respond to safeguarding and community safety issues promptly
- 6 Housing Service; review the structure to ensure we are getting best value for money and the most effective service delivery

Priority 1 - Prevention

Predictive Analytics

During the last five years, our work on the Xantura predicative analytics model has flourished with the first iteration focussing on unmanaged debt and non-payment of essential priority items, such as Council Tax and rent. The model allows for alerts to be generated for early identification and intervention where, through the use of predictive analytics, households most at risk of facing homelessness are identified.

This process has proven the concept and to date of those MBC has engaged with, homelessness was prevented in 98% of cases. For those who approach us directly outside of early intervention, this figure is closer to 70%. For the counterfactuals who we didn't manage to engage with, 76% became homeless.

Our aspiration is to expand this alert service for those in other cohorts, such as domestic abuse, young people and care leavers, those with offending history and those who come into contact with the criminal justice system.

Through analysis of the data it should also be possible to identify where the demands on the Housing Advice Service is coming from, providing detailed reports to help understand where to consider focussing greater resource and inform strategic decisions.

Incentives

In recent years, we have used the incentive provision within our resources, only to support people accessing accommodation such as the private rented market. We have not used incentives in a planned manner to prevent homelessness nor to support households expanding space within their current home (for example to increase the number of bedrooms).

We are seeking to review these kinds of incentives to see if we can utilise resources in an imaginative way to stem the flow of households into temporary accommodation over the coming months. This would reduce the stress of moving into TA for the households, and the cost burden to the Council.



Early Intervention

Our prevention model takes various forms. One of the most effective is the early intervention with direct support to those facing homelessness. We operate an open-door policy at Trinity, whereby anyone can attend to seek housing and homeless related support without appointment to have access to various duty officers.

We also have our own Homeless Support Service, which provides a floating support offer to those who need a little extra to maintain their tenancy. This service was formerly known as the Outreach Team and is funded via the Rough Sleeper Initiative in central government. The team works with a diverse range of local people who have complex on-going support needs.

We plan to continue to provide this intense and robust support, as the cost saving is significant in cost avoidance for temporary accommodation. This team is currently funded until March 2025. However, we hope that after that time the funding stream will continue from government.

Priority 1 - Prevention

Partnerships

Throughout all our work, we endeavour to have robust and supportive partnerships, to ensure the most successful provision of support is provided in a holistic manner to maintain accommodation and prevent homelessness. These include a wide and diverse range of agencies offering front-line direct access to support, including:

- Primary and mental health provision from clinical providers Kent and Medway Mental Health Partnership Trust and Kent Community Health Care Partnership
- One Stop Shop – domestic abuse victims can get support from a range of support providers and legal and housing experts weekly
- Citizens Advice Bureau - offering debt advice in Trinity every week
- BEAM - access to employment and resettlement support for homeless people
- Community Larders - offering affordable foods for those most affected by the cost-of-living crisis
- Social Care Team - case panels for those shared clients

We intend to continue these partnerships and seek to develop further relationships with other agencies.

Safeguarding and Community Safety

Since the previous strategy we have developed a new role which coordinates our one Council approach and relevant responses to Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding. This role has enabled us to develop clear policies and procedures on working in the community and with households and individuals who face these challenging circumstances.

In our experience this role, has enabled us to provide a framework to support households facing homelessness who also have other complex needs. This often means that households avoid accessing TA which is a cost saving to the Council. This role will continue for the coming years and aligns with government best-practice advice:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/adult-safeguarding-and-homelessness-experience-informed-practice>

Housing Service

We will continue to review the resources that we have at our disposal to ensure that our Housing Advice Service and other housing teams remain the most effective at meeting the current flow and demand of homelessness. The changes in demand and needs may mean that the service needs to be nuanced to be more effective as preventing homeless.



2

Priority 2 - Accommodation

New housing delivery not only provides opportunities for Maidstone residents to access high quality homes to rent or to buy, but also supports our local economy through job creation and the use of small businesses as part of the supply chain.

Over the next five years, the need for housing developers 'get to grips' with reducing carbon emissions and ensuring that new homes meet net zero by 2025, will support our economic ambitions around a green recovery agenda and develop local expertise in low carbon technology.

However, the demand from those facing homelessness including those we are unable to prevent from becoming homeless e.g. those fleeing from domestic abuse or the issuing of a Section 21 "no fault" eviction notice, is still significant and concerning. In these instances, we must seek alternative housing solutions, which can involve placing households into TA whilst we work to secure long term appropriate accommodation.

Since our last strategy we have faced unprecedented demand for all aspects of accommodation, including temporary, supported (with the decommissioning of KCC supported housing), and longer-term affordable housing including the private rented market. Our use of temporary accommodation has increased drastically for those we have a duty to accommodate under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended), with numbers increasing by 130% from 113 households accommodated in March 2018, to the recent total of 262 in January 2024. This is not a challenge solely being faced by Maidstone, but also throughout the country with Local Housing Authorities struggling to meet this demand and the budgetary ramifications.

Even with the most robust approach we take to resettling applicants, we still struggle to find enough suitable and affordable accommodation within the borough of Maidstone. At times we may have to place people outside of the borough to meet our duties under the Housing Act. This will be considered in line with relevant case law and the statute and will be reflected in our placement policy.

An area we have continued to expand since the last strategy is the purchase and management of our own temporary accommodation stock, which now stands at approximately 110 units. This ensures as an authority we are not solely reliant on private providers of nightly paid accommodation and that our placed households are in good quality and safe units. Even with our continued programme of purchasing TA units we still cannot meet the demand for temporary accommodation and are working with third party providers. This is a major financial concern for the Council, and as such we are constantly reviewing the TA placement programme to ensure we are effectively managing it.



Priority 2 - Accommodation

Maidstone has a small amount of subsidized housing (also known as social housing stock), within the borough which makes up approximately 600 lettings every year from those on the Housing Register. As of the 1 January 2024 the demand for social housing was at an all-time high.

Please see table below:

Date	Number on the register
1 Jan 2020	840
1 Jan 2021	949
1 Jan 2022	812
1 Jan 2023	1003
1 Jan 2024	1226

This increase has had an impact on waiting times and the ability for households to move via the register has reduced.

We will seek to carry out the following measures to support our growth and meet the demand for accommodation by:

- 1 Continuing to grow our own portfolio of accommodation - including temporary, private, and affordable/social rented accommodation
- 2 Developing our own Private Lettings scheme - to meet the demand for housing
- 3 Reviewing our supported housing provision - ensuring this meets the need for housing for those most in need and vulnerable within the community

Accommodation

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

Over the coming years, we have ambitious targets to bring online 1,000 affordable and socially rented properties. We will also be seeking to increase the number of private rented stock our property company manage, and the continuous programme of purchasing temporary accommodation.

Whilst we don't anticipate the demand slowing for good quality accommodation, we will be seeking new ways and partnerships to manage those demands which could include:

- 1 Looking for an increase in specialist units for survivors of domestic abuse
- 2 Seeking to build and expand current homes, to meet the bedroom need of that household e.g. roof conversion or extensions
- 3 A modern view on higher density housing such a micro-apartments or POD type accommodation for younger single people struggling to access the housing market

We are also looking to decrease our reliance on nightly paid private TA and grow our own pool of resources with a bigger capital purchase programme underway to meet demand.

Priority 2 - Accommodation

Private Sector Leasing Scheme

The above scheme was approved for mobilisation in November 2023, to seek out private landlords. Through this we can offer to manage properties on behalf of landlords and will use these properties to place those with a temporary accommodation need. If this programme is successful, we would look to review and expand the offer to a wider pool of households such as those threatened with homelessness rather than just those in TA.



Supported Housing

Supported housing is a key intervention for those most vulnerable in our community to ensure adequate housing provision and stability. Housing is a most basic need. If this is not met, the wider ramifications on the community are significant including people living on the streets, associated anti-social behaviour, greater demands on the public purse and the impact on the street scene and business community.

We also need to review the cohorts who require specialist supported housing including survivors of domestic abuse, young people leaving home or care and individuals suffering with mental health conditions.

Prior to the Rough Sleeper Initiative funding in 2018, Maidstone had 48 people sleeping and living on the streets. The impact on the community was significant and business leaders were dissatisfied by our management of those individuals. Since that time with the development of MBC teams and accommodation provision that number has significantly fallen, which can only be a benefit to both the rough sleeper and the community.



3

Priority 3 - Support for Vulnerable People

Whilst housing need and homelessness underpin the core of our work and statutory requirements, it would be short-sighted to look at these in isolation, as so many households facing helplessness and rough sleeping have additional complex needs. If we provide support in a trauma informed approach, or work with partners to do so, tenancy sustainment has a much greater success and reduce the cycle of homelessness and the cost burden on the public purse.

Over the past 20 years, Kent County Council (KCC), as the upper tier Council, has funded a supporting housing scheme and a wide range of services for vulnerable cohorts via the now defunct Supporting People Grant from central government. Due to financial constraints and with the removal of government ring-fenced funding, KCC has all but ceased supported accommodation apart from the provision of Safe Accommodation under the Domestic Abuse Act 2020 which is a statutory requirement.

The decision to decommission essential supported housing services by KCC has left all district Councils in Kent, including Maidstone, with an even greater demand on housing

provision but with no additional funding from central government. This will likely mean the increase in homeless numbers across the county and the rise in rough sleeping. In the future, MBC anticipates that homeless households will cause a greater financial burden on public services including Kent County Council's own social care.

Maidstone has a long history of working in an innovative and proactive manner. Since the announcement of the decommissioning of services by KCC in 2018/9, we have been developing our own supported housing portfolio as well as commencing commissioning partner agencies to deliver required services.

In recent years we have noticed the change in complexity of those approaching MBC for housing and homeless support, many more have additional needs such as complex mental health concerns, fleeing domestic abuse and on-going required support interventions to access and retain accommodation. Even though our statutory duty falls only into the provision of housing, with the reduction of other service provision by other statutory agencies, we have felt the need to expand our remit in order to

respond with a trauma informed approach, to meet this demand and reduce the cycle of homelessness, which has a significant financial burden on the wider public purse including community safety and policing teams.

Through our Community Hub, Trinity, we have developed an effective and immediate response service for those in need, with support staff on site during opening times. Staff are well trained in trauma awareness and safeguarding to ensure the wider needs of those in our community are met.

We also have partner agencies working within Trinity providing a range of services including the Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop, Mental and Physical Health interventions and support, Community Larder, Social Care case work meeting and Citizens Advice Bureau offering debt management help.

Priority 3 - Support for Vulnerable People

We will seek to carry out the following measures to support our continued success of supporting those from our communities:

- 1 All MBC housing staff will be trauma informed and undertake on-going training to understand the needs and challenges of working with those presenting for support
- 2 We will continue to develop our own supported housing portfolio and include specialist services such as a specific domestic abuse project
- 3 Continue commissioning effective services to support our aspirations including provision for homeless individuals
- 4 Continue to develop and retain essential partnerships with health providers to ensure a holistic approach to those facing homelessness including the provision of mental health services

3.1 Trauma Informed Services

Contained within our Housing Strategy Action Plan 2023, we have made the commitment to work in a trauma informed way, whereby we seek to understand the underlying causations of behaviour which present in homeless households. We have committed to ensuring all housing staff undertake mandatory training for being trauma informed, creating an easy access 'front door' for support. This is the Trinity Community Hub with staff on site during opening hours, and the continuation of partnerships with statutory health providers that help navigate the challenges of working with this complex group.

Our development and continued improvement of this trauma informed approach will support households sustaining and managing future accommodation options.



3.2 Supported Housing Portfolio

Since the previous strategy we have been working hard to diversify our accommodation offer for those with support needs, we have a number of our own supported housing projects including units at Trinity. This was using the Next Steps Funding from central government providing two homes in multiple occupation for former rough sleepers, both of which can accommodate 12 people, and a female only project for those fleeing domestic abuse or require more support than being in self-contained.

Our vision for the future is to develop relations with landlords and registered providers to offer specialist units for differing cohorts of need. We are looking to provide a self-contained block of flats for those fleeing domestic abuse. Many survivors of abuse cannot access refuges for a variety of reasons including gender specific, no local beds spaces, the needs are too high for the refuge to manage but still need supported housing to help overcome the trauma of the previous relationship. Those approaching MBC for homeless advice after fleeing domestic abuse, constitutes the biggest demand for temporary accommodation with the figures fluctuating between 20-25% of all placements.

Priority 3 - Support for Vulnerable People

3.3 Commissioning

Since KCC decommissioning programme commenced five years ago, we have positioned the Council into more of a commissioning role, with a number of supported housing projects being funded from our Homeless Prevention Grant and Rough Sleeper Initiative Grant. These projects are very supportive of our aim to end the cycle of homelessness in Maidstone, and work with a variety of client needs including ex-offender, young people, homeless females and those with mental health concerns. However, our grant awards are only annual so this can leave longer term commissioning challenges for both the Council and the contractor. We continue to lobby the Government on longer term grant awards, but so far it hasn't been successful but we will continue to do so.

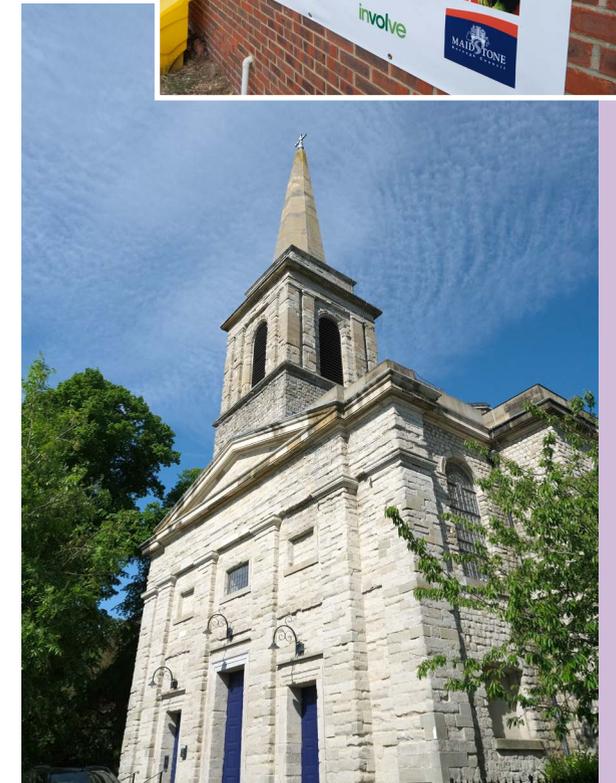
We are an active member of the Kent Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board and engage with colleagues to in commissioning services with KCC for the provision of domestic abuse services across Kent. A key objective within the Board's Partnership Strategy is the Domestic Abuse Housing Accreditation, and finding ways to resolve the lack of accommodation that meets the Government's safe accommodation criteria.

3.4 Partnerships

Alongside providing bricks and mortar it is imperative we work in partnership to ensure that the ongoing offer of support for vulnerable people is robust and reduce the chances of tenancy failure. We have developed a number of partnerships that work well to enhance our service including:

- Physical and mental health support into people's homes by clinical specialists
- Community larders to offer food in these times of the cost-of-living crisis
- Targeted key working approach to those on the periphery of accessing treatment and not accommodated
- Helping you Home - Hospital Discharge Programme to support those at risk returning to their own home safely
- Community safety and domestic abuse - joined up approach to working with council colleagues to reduce the impact of antisocial behaviour and domestic abuse across the district

We anticipate continuing these very successful partnerships and developing more as and when needs are identified through our front door services at Trinity.



4

Priority 4 - Rough Sleepers

Since the inception of our Rough Sleeper Initiative funded team in 2018, and the development of those services in the past five years, we have achieved some incredible outcomes for the hardest to reach and generally most complex individuals in our communities.

Ending Rough Sleeping was a government manifesto pledge which has ensured generous funding grants are awarded to local authorities across the country. Maidstone was one of the initial pilot programmes to be mobilised in Kent.

Since then, the funding has continued annually enabling us to develop a robust service meeting the needs of very complex and chaotic individuals who are generally marginalised from mainstream services. This can be due to their prevailing needs including mental and physical health concerns, substance abuse, no stable accommodation or support network and on-going issues with good decision making.

To demonstrate our success our annual street count numbers in Maidstone have significantly fallen since the peak in 2018 of 48, to zero in the 2022 and six in 2023. The team has worked with approximately 700 individuals since 2018 and have moved 440 into longer term accommodation.

Given our success we are concerned about the future of the funding, as the Rough Sleeper Initiative programme is planned to end in March 2025. Of course, there will be an election prior to that time, so there is uncertainty about the future of this funding stream. However, given the current market conditions and the increase of homeless cases across the country we are hopeful that no successive government would end this critical funding stream.



Due to our rough sleeper numbers reducing so significantly, the MBC Rough Sleeper Outreach team has altered its primary focus and is now working within the prevention agenda to ensure those at risk of losing their tenancy are supported to remain within their accommodation, via a floating support model. The golden thread of prevention cuts across many of the Housing Team's functions and demonstrates the importance of us supporting people to remain in their own home, before the crises of homelessness and rough sleeping which not only impacts on the individuals but also the wider community.



Priority 4 - Rough Sleepers

Through the Rough Sleeper Initiative funding stream, we have developed a number of strategies which have supported rough sleepers and those at risk of rough sleeping away from the streets including:

- Recruitment and continuation of the Homeless Support Services (previously known as the Outreach Services). This team works with households in various tenures to prevent any breakdown or loss of tenancy/accommodation
- Accommodation available at short notice throughout the year to deal with emergency situations such as Severe Weather Emergencies - which ensures those most at risk of rough sleeping can be picked up quickly and placed - similar to a "No first night out" model
- Developing our own supported housing and funding of partners to provide good quality housing for those we don't have a duty to accommodate under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended)
- The provision of personal budgets for service users to purchase small items, especially for those moving into their own properties

- Funding for arrears clearance and rent in advance, which helps individuals move on from temporary accommodation into longer term or social lettings
- Working in partnership with stakeholders including health to give an holistic support approach to those most in need, this includes working alongside primary care and mental health practitioners

We will seek to carry out the following measures to support our continued success of managing the threat of rough sleeping for those in our community by:

- 1 Developing a sustainable approach through grants and new concepts to ensure the continuation of the priority support services implemented under the Rough Sleeper Initiative
- 2 Continuing our effective 'immediate off the street' dynamic support and accommodation pathway for people facing rough sleeping or at risk of homelessness
- 3 Continuing to advocate for changes to the wider system including government policy to enable individuals to access the appropriate services and housing



Priority 4 - Rough Sleepers

Sustainability

Our primary focus must be on the continuation of this essential service. Over the coming 12 months until March 2025, we will be reviewing the resources available and looking at how the service delivery can be modelled to ensure maximum outcomes achieved against differing funding structures.

We also intend to step up lobbying the government seeking reassurances from the Rough Sleeper Initiative. This will be challenging given the current uncertainty around the next general election which is due this year.

Finally, we also need to review our grant streams and the base budget for the wider housing team, to see if remodelling can be undertaken to support the continuation of this service.



Support and Accommodation Pathway

Since 2018 we have developed a dynamic and responsive support and accommodation pathway, which has culminated in a well-structured and functioning team, embedded alongside the Housing Advice service at the Trinity Community Hub. This team offers dynamic support to those most vulnerable in the community as and when they require it and includes access to emergency accommodation options.

We have also created a wide range of supported accommodation options for those facing homelessness who are at risk of rough sleeping including Trinity self-contained flats, a number of homes in multiple occupation and commissioning third parties to provide supported housing.

We intend to continue these arrangements by using our own housing stock as the demand ebbs and flows and fund these 'in-house' via the enhanced housing benefit model which enables staff to offer intensive housing management.

System Change

Through the rough sleeper programme so far, our achievements in terms of partnership working and system change are excellent examples of multi-disciplinary teams working. At our Trinity site we host a number of partners including health colleagues, the Citizens Advice Bureau and the Domestic Abuse One Stop Shop. All of which work together for the benefit of our communities. This is a small example of how teams across the country should be operating and supporting each other.

These relationships also help in the management of safeguarding which is becoming an ever-increasing concern for us.



Maidstone Borough Council Housing Strategy 2024 - 2029: For further information visit: maidstone.gov.uk



**HOUSING, HEALTH
& ENVIRONMENT POLICY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

12th March 2024

**Demolition Contract – Approval to demolish Former Royal
Mail Sorting Office buildings and Cantium House**

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Housing Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee	12 th March 2024
Cabinet	20 th March 2024

Will this be a Key Decision?	Yes
Urgency	Not Applicable
Final Decision-Maker	Cabinet
Lead Head of Service	Philip Morris, Head of New Business & Housing Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Philip Morris, Head of New Business & Housing Development
Classification	<p>Private – The information contained within the Appendix has been considered exempt under the following paragraph of part 1 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> <p>Public Interest Test</p> <p>It is in the public interest that the Appendix be taken in private because it relates to commercially sensitive information and releasing the information could jeopardise the financial position of the Council and third parties.</p>
Wards affected	North

Executive Summary

In 2021, the Policy & Resources Committee approved the acquisition of KCC's 50% share in the Former Royal Mail Sorting office and the purchase of Cantium House, with the intention of pursuing a comprehensive redevelopment of the site, these transactions are now complete. In order to assist the delivery of the site during increased inflationary pressure on build costs, an application was made to the Brownfield Land Release Fund (BLRF) in 2023 with £2.1m being awarded to Maidstone Borough Council (MBC). Part of the funding requirements was for MBC to be in contract for those demolition works in which the BLRF relate to, prior to the 31st of March 2024.

A planning application for the comprehensive redevelopment of the site was submitted in October 2023. Due to the timings of the proposed planning committee for this application and the deadline for entering into the contract for demolition works, in order to secure the BLRF monies, being very close to one another, a separate prior approval application has been submitted to the LPA for the demolition of the existing buildings only. This went to planning committee on the 15th of February and has been approved.

Officers are therefore seeking approval to demolish the existing buildings, following receipt of vacant possession, scheduled for the 22nd of March, and to enter in contract for these works.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report asks the Committee to consider the recommendation to the Cabinet:

1. That the Committee approve the demolition of the existing buildings at the Former Royal Mail Sorting Office and Cantium House site taking note of the contents of this report and tender information in Appendix 1.
2. That the Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement, be given delegated authority, to appoint the preferred demolition contractor to carry out the necessary works as per the recommended tender price, inclusive of contingency, stated in the exempt appendix.
3. That the Head of Mid Kent Legal Services, in consultation with the Lead Member, be authorised to negotiate and complete all necessary demolition contracts, deeds and agreements arising from or ancillary to the demolition application.

1,000 Homes Programme – Individual Scheme Updates

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure; • Homes and Communities. 	William Cornall- Director of Regeneration & Place
Cross Cutting Objectives	The project will support the cross-cutting objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected. 	William Cornall- Director of Regeneration & Place
Risk Management	Already covered in the risk section	William Cornall- Director of Regeneration & Place
Financial	Funding for this project is included within the capital programme.	Mark Green- Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement
Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing within the New Business & Development Team and Mid-Kent Legal Services.	William Cornall- Director of Regeneration & Place
Legal	Under s1 of the Localism Act 2011 the Council has a general power of competence which enables it to do anything that individuals generally may do. Under section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 the Council has power to do anything (whether or not involving the	Robin Harris- Team Leader (Contentious and Corporate Governance

	<p>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.</p> <p>The Council has the power to acquire properties by agreement under the Local Government Act 1972, section 120.</p>	
Information Governance	The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council processes.	Lauren McNicol and Georgia Harvey-Information Governance Team
Equalities	We recognise the recommendations may have varying impacts on different communities within Maidstone. Therefore, we have completed an Equalities Impact Assessment responding to the needs of the community.	Nicola Toulson-Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	No implications	Shafiqullah Hemat-Senior Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	No implications	Philip Morris, Head of New Business & Housing Development
Procurement	On accepting the recommendations, the Council will then follow a standard procurement & appointment exercise. We will complete that exercise in line with financial procedure rules.	Philip Morris, Head of New Business & Housing Development
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and will impact Action 7.1 "Deliver Maidstone Borough Council 2030 Net Zero Commitment" by increasing the Council's carbon footprint. Ensuring development is aligned with the	James Wilderspin-Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

	Future Homes Standard with 75-80% less carbon emissions, efficiency measures, reuse waste material where possible, and on-site renewables will reduce the impact of the five schemes.	
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This report relates to the demolition of the properties known as the Former Royal Mail Sorting office and Cantium House sites, that will eventually be redeveloped to form part of the 1000 affordable homes programme.
- 2.3 Cabinet approval is required to demolish the existing buildings and to enter into a demolition contract before the 31st of March 2024. These demolition works will form the initial stages of the redevelopment however, it is the intention that following demolition, officers will carry out a tender exercise for the works contract and will ultimately return to cabinet to seek approval for these works cost as well as the overall business case for the redevelopment project.
- 2.4 Officers have already served notices on the existing tenants, currently in occupation, in preparation for the demolition of the site. These notices were served, and the units will be vacated on or before the 22nd of March 2024.
- 2.5 A planning application for the redevelopment of the site to provide 217 units and 1863 sq m of commercial floor space, as well as extensive landscaping and public realm enhancements, was submitted in October 2023 and is currently due to be determined.
- 2.6 Due to the timings a separate prior approval application, just for the demolition works, was also submitted in January 2024 to enable the demolition of the site independently of the wider application. This approach was taken should there be any delays in a decision to the wider application past the 31st of March deadline date which formed part of the BLRF requirements. This demolition prior approval application was approved at planning committee on the 15th of February 2024.
- 2.7 The site is currently occupied by tenants but are all due to vacate the premises on the 22nd of March 2024 allowing MBC to take possession of the site and hand it over to the selected demolition contractor at the appropriate time. One of the existing uses is pay and display car parking provided by the Council, so this too will cease prior to demolition getting underway. As the site, whilst in occupation, had incurred considerable security expenditure, net revenues were negligible.
- 2.8 It should be noted however that due to the increase in construction cost and general inflationary pressures, the rough order of cost estimates for the redevelopment of the scheme has projected a build cost in excess of levels previously assumed. This has put significant pressure on the viability of the comprehensive redevelopment project although definitive costs will

not be known until a full tender exercise has been carried out following receipt of planning permission and demolition of the site.

- 2.9 Officers will continue to monitor viability, to include the availability of further grant funding from the likes of Homes England, possible joint venture arrangements, and more generally explore ways to deliver the scheme within the required financial metrics. Officers want to highlight though that should cabinet be minded to agree to proceed with the demolition the site may lay vacant while works tender costs are sought and any viability issues addressed. Officers will return to cabinet to seek approval to enter into a works contract to deliver the 217 units and commercial space at a later date.
 - 2.10 A procurement exercise has been undertaken to source a contractor to undertake the demolition works required to secure the BLRF monies. The exempt Appendix 1 sets out the preferred contractors tendered sum.
 - 2.11 The preferred contractor submitted a build programme estimating start on site in April 2024, with completion of the demolition works targeted for September 2024 Officers are now in a position to appoint the selected contractor subject to cabinet approval for the demolition of the site.
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3 AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 **Option 1:** the preferred option, to agree to demolish the buildings and to approve that the director of Finance and Business Improvement be granted the delegated authority to enter into the demolition contract for the sum stated in exempt Appendix 1.
- 3.2 **Option 2:** Do nothing, leave the buildings vacant with the security in place and return the BLRF monies. This is not recommended as there would continue to be uncertainty as to the future of the buildings and site and MBC would continue to incur significant security costs.
- 3.3 If Cabinet were minded to pursue option 2, then officers could re bid for BLRF monies in the next funding round early 2025 although there is no guarantee the same level of funding would be received. This would also delay any potential works associated with the wider planning application past March 2025 due to funding requirements.

4 PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The preferred option is Option 1, outlined above in paragraph 3.1 This is because:-
 - a. MBC have secured BLRF monies to cover the cost of demolition which would need to be returned should MBC fail to enter into the demolition contract prior to the 31st of March 2024
 - b. Notices have been served on the tenants in order to allow MBC to enter into a demolition contract.

- c. Demolition of the site would save on utilities and security cost as well as limit anti-social behaviour which has been ongoing for many years, leading to many management issues.
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5 RISK

- 5.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per the Policy. The most significant risk with the recommended approach is that the Council would let the demolition contract to remove the buildings currently on the site, prior to securing planning permission for the redevelopment project, should there be any delay in determination currently targeted for the middle of March.
 - 5.2 Following demolition, the hoarded site may sit empty for a period of time, while the main works package is tendered, which could be subject to graffiti and other anti-social behaviour. This will however be monitored and the necessary steps taken to deal with any issues that may arise.
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6 NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 Informed by the Housing, Health & Environment Policy Advisory Committee consideration of this report, the Executive will make the final decision regarding the recommendations.
 - 6.2 The approval of the recommendations will enable the project team to appoint the contractor to commence demolition works.
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7 REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Exempt Appendix 1: Tender return cost
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8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Agenda Item 14

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

Document is Restricted