

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 1 February 2022
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

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

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

AGENDA

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| 2. Notification of Substitute Members | |
| 3. Urgent Items | |
| 4. Notification of Visiting Members | |
| 5. Disclosures by Members and Officers | |
| 6. Disclosures of Lobbying | |
| 7. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information. | |
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| 9. Presentation of Petitions (if any) | |
| 10. Questions and answer session for members of the public (if any) | |
| 11. Questions from Members to the Chairman (if any) | |
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Issued on Monday 24 January 2022

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

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19. Review of the efficiency and effectiveness of the community safety unit	64 - 72

PUBLIC SPEAKING AND ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

In order to ask a question at this meeting in person or by remote means, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Friday 28 January 2022). You will need to provide the full text in writing. If your question is accepted, you will be provided with instructions as to how you can access the meeting.

In order to make a statement in relation to an item on the agenda, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Friday 28 January 2022). You will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on.

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

Should you wish to refer any decisions contained in these minutes to the **Policy and Resources Committee**, please submit a Decision Referral Form, signed by **three** Councillors, to the **Head of Policy, Communications and Governance** by: **15 December 2021**

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 30 NOVEMBER 2021

Present: Councillors Bartlett, Joy, McKenna, Mortimer, Newton, Parfitt-Reid, Purle (Chairman), M Rose and S Webb

Also Present: Councillors English and Naghi

106. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Young.

107. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Councillor Parfitt-Reid was present as a Substitute Member for Councillor Young.

108. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

109. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

Councillors English and Naghi were present as Visiting Members for the following Items:

- 17 – Future Use of Community Grants;
- 18 – Development of the Maidstone Town Centre Strategy; and
- 20 – Brenchley Gardens – Follow-up Report

Councillor English was also present as a Visiting Member for Item 19 – Parks Delivery Plan for Biodiversity.

110. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

Councillor Rose disclosed an Other Significant Interest with regards to Item 17 – Future Use of Community Grants, as the Vice-Chair of Maidstone Mediation, and would therefore leave the meeting during the debate and vote.

111. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

112. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

113. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2 NOVEMBER 2021

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed.

114. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

115. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

116. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There was one question from a Member to the Chairman.

Councillor Russell asked the following question to the Chairman of Communities, Housing and Environment:

'One family in my ward in Nettlestead live in a Golding house, pay rent and have disabilities. Their wet room was not working which given their disabilities was a major issue. The issue began in August and as at this date we are still not at a point where it has been fully resolved. There have been a catalogue of issues with communication between my residents, Golding and their subcontractors Betaco which I won't go into, but these culminated in my residents being moved into a hotel for a week. They got no allowance, got turfed out to roam the streets during the day and finally got checked out on a Friday to finally arrive home where they found the wet room had been ripped out and not re-fitted and they didn't even have a functioning toilet. Late into the evening on a Friday night I was repeatedly contacting both Golding on their emergency line and my residents to get the issue temporarily resolved. This should never have been allowed to happen and was purely down to poor communication. My question to this committee is what new communication or work checking procedures (or similar) can the CHE committee put in place with Golding to make sure that a situation such as this never happens again?'

The Chairman responded to the question.

Councillor Russell asked the following supplementary question to the Chairman of Communities, Housing and Environment:

'If you have a future meeting where Golding attends, would you mention the issue to them so that it keeps it on their radar?'

The Chairman responded to the question.

The full responses were recorded on the webcast and made available to view on the Maidstone Borough Council website. To access the webcast recording, please use the link below:

[Communities, Housing and Environment Committee - 30 November 2021](#)

117. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair informed the Committee that a reference had been received from the Policy and Resources Committee for the review of the temporary property portfolio regarding the management of problems identified. Additionally, a presentation from a social housing provider would be arranged.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

118. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports of Outside Bodies.

119. 2ND QUARTER FINANCIAL UPDATE & PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Head of Finance introduced the report and explained that an underspend was forecast against the revenue budget for the Committee. This was largely due to grant funding received for environmental health services and underspends within homelessness services, combined with an income surplus at the crematorium. At least £16.7 million slippage was predicted on the capital programme, principally as a consequence of delays to the private rented sector housing programme, and £10 million expenditure was forecast for the year.

The Senior Business Analyst introduced the performance monitoring report and explained that one of the targetable quarterly key performance indicators (KPIs) had achieved its target, and two had missed their target within 10%. A significant improvement was noted however for the percentage of successful Relief Duty outcomes compared to the last quarter and was above the national average.

In response to questions, the Senior Business Analyst explained that housing targets had been set and agreed by the Committee in February 2021, however prevention of relief duty was set before national data was available, and a more appropriate target would be set for this KPI in the future.

RESOLVED: That

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

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

120. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Head of Finance introduced the report for the Committee's consideration and comment. It was highlighted that the Strategic Plan was still considered to be relevant, although emerging priorities had been identified including the Town Centre Strategy and the proposals for 1000 additional affordable homes. Key assumptions included a council tax increase of 2% and inflation of 2%, with some higher inflation assumptions for items such as energy costs. A further £500,000 had been allocated to cover any unforeseen pressures caused by high inflation.

In response to questions, the Head of Finance confirmed that the council tax revenue projection was different to the 2% council tax base increase assumption. There was a reasonable level of confidence in the next year's growth and although there was less certainty beyond that, the strategy would be revisited every year which allowed fluctuations to be corrected.

RESOLVED: That the Committee's comments on the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy be noted.

121. FEES AND CHARGES 2022-23

The Head of Finance introduced the report and explained that this would contribute to the setting of the following year's budget. There was a requirement for charges to be reviewed annually, and information around income budgets had been included for context. Key points were highlighted within the charges for parks and open spaces, bereavement services, recycling and refuse collection and commercial waste.

The Committee felt that it was unreasonable to increase the Gypsy and Traveller Site Fees due to the refurbishment works required to bring the sites to a modern standard.

In response to questions, the Head of Environment and Public Realm clarified that whilst there was no current pressure on the supply of burial plots, it would be prudent to further consider their provision in the long term. Non-residents paid increased burial fees but there was the potential for this to be written into policy.

RESOLVED: That

1. The fees and charges set out in Appendix 1 to the report be agreed, with the exception of the increase in gypsy and traveller site plot fee which should not be increased for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023; and

2. The expected statutory fees and charges, set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be noted.

122. CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

Item 20 – Brenchley Gardens – Follow-up Report would be taken before Item 17 – Future Use of Community Grants.

123. BRENCHLEY GARDENS- FOLLOW-UP REPORT

The Community Protection Manager introduced the report which had been requested by the Committee. The potential actions were outlined, including improvements of the CCTV in Brenchley Gardens, which could be undertaken under the existing budget. The planned structural works which would take place over the next year could include the reinstallation of the bandstand frill. Motion alarms could be installed to identify when people were in the park at night, and lighting could be improved although this would be subject to planning permission.

The Committee's request to close the park at night presented challenges and would not prevent antisocial behaviour and crime. Recently reported incidents had happened in daylight and therefore the night time closure of the park would not have had an impact. Securing access to the park would be straight-forward on three sides, but where there was vehicular access at Faith Street significant engineering works would be required, costing over £54,000. In addition, closing the park at night would initially require trained security personnel.

It had been reported that the recent PCSO taskforce had reduced incidents in the park, however issues were then displaced to areas including Trinity Park and Whatman Park, where no CCTV was installed. Ambassadors working in the town centre were successful in reducing the escalation of incidents starting in the High Street, actively engaging with young people and were able to provide intelligence to other agencies.

Several Committee Members felt that action needed to be taken swiftly, and should go further than the recommendations proposed. The safety of residents needed to be prioritised and safeguarding responsibilities towards vulnerable groups was acknowledged.

The Head of Housing and Community Services acknowledged the desire to act quickly but cautioned that the allocation of additional budget for the works may take time to secure.

RESOLVED: That the Committee

1. Ask Officers to pursue with added vigour measures to close and secure Brenchley Gardens at night through locked gates and additional fencing, including doing whatever it takes to secure the necessary variation of budgets, overcome planning control issues et cetera;

2. Accept the recommendations for reinstating the bandstand frill and upgrading the CCTV coverage for the park;
3. Ask that plans and designs for the bandstand frill, the fencing and new gates are circulated to Committee Members as soon as they become available; and
4. Ask that the Council's Community Protection Team as a priority commence frequent visible foot patrols of the Brenchley Gardens and North Week Street Area, making active use of the Council's statutory powers for tackling anti-social behaviour, with Officers to seek sources of funding to increase the team's resourcing as necessary.

124. FUTURE USE OF COMMUNITY GRANTS

The Head of Housing and Community Services introduced the report and explained that a significant budget was retained by the council and had been utilised to fund community groups which provided services to local residents. A variety of services were provided as listed in the report, and the grant amount varied per provider.

In response to questions, the Head of Housing and Community Services explained that the grants were being utilised to procure a service and would therefore need to comply with the council's procurement guidelines. Under these guidelines the mediation and community links services would require three quotes to be obtained, while the advice service would require a formal tender process.

Members felt that it was important to recognise the value of the three organisations that currently delivered the services to Maidstone residents, and that it would be preferable to retain the services of Maidstone Mediation, Citizens Advice Bureau and Involve due to the high quality of services they provide.

RESOLVED: That

1. A three-year grant be provided without reducing the overall budget, thereby supplying the same level of funding for the supplier; and
2. The provision of voluntary sector services continue to be funded for mediation, advice and community links.

Note: Councillor Rose left the meeting between 8.19pm and 8.28pm during the debate and vote.

125. DEVELOPMENT OF THE MAIDSTONE TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

The Interim Director for the Local Plan Review introduced the report and outlined the impact of changes in demand on the town centre and other town centres around the country. The development of the Town Centre Strategy was an opportunity to address these pressures and challenges

and also to make the town centre more environmentally attractive while ensuring the town centre space was used effectively.

The Committee provided feedback on the strategy and emphasised the importance of community events including local markets, concerts and increasing the capacity of the theatre. The river could play a larger role in the identity of the town centre, and community engagement was vital.

RESOLVED: That the feedback be used to inform a further report to the Policy and Resources Committee with a more specific proposal on the scope and timing of the Town Centre Strategy.

126. PARKS DELIVERY PLAN FOR BIODIVERSITY

The Parks and Open Spaces Manager introduced the report and gave an outline of the actions proposed to enhance biodiversity in the Council's parks and open spaces. This had been developed following the adoption of the Biodiversity and Climate Change Strategy in 2020, with which it would run in conjunction. The eight sections of the action plan were outlined and the Nature Pledge was read to the Committee.

In response to questions, the Head of Environment and Public Realm explained that community engagement work sat under the wider strategy, and the team were working with the Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager to develop a collective educational role spanning multiple environmental issues.

The Parks and Open Spaces Manager confirmed that issues with the 'No Mow May' scheme had been explored, and it was found that they did not relate to the Council's land.

RESOLVED: That the Parks and Open Spaces Delivery Plan for Biodiversity 2021-26, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be adopted.

127. CONTRACTING OUT OF HOMELESSNESS REVIEWS FUNCTION

The Head of Housing and Community Services introduced the report and explained that applicants had the right to request a review of certain homelessness decisions. Authority to contract out the function of carrying out reviews of homelessness decisions was permitted under the Local Authorities (Contracting Out of Allocation of Housing and Homelessness Functions) Order 1996, and the council had therefore contracted out this function under the delegated authority of the Head of Housing and Community Services. The benefits of this approach were outlined, including efficiency of specialist organisations, and the review being conducted independently of the council.

RESOLVED: That

1. The contracting out of the Council's homelessness review function under the delegated authority of the Head of Housing and Community Services be noted; and
2. Specific delegation to the Head of Housing and Community Services to contract out homelessness review functions under Section 202 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) be added to the Constitution.

128. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30pm to 9.21pm.

Note: The Committee adjourned between 7.55pm and 8.05pm.

2021/22 WORK PROGRAMME

	Committee	Month	Origin	CLT to clear	Lead	Report Author
Reference from P&R - Management of Temporary Accommodation Portfolio	CHE	01-Mar-22	Officer Update	No	Oliviya Parfitt	Oliviya Parfitt
Housing Strategy Consultation Review	CHE	01-Mar-22	Officer Update		John Littlemore	John Littlemore
Len River Nature Reserve	CHE	01-Mar-22	Cllr Request		William Cornall	Jen Stevens
Ensuring Fire Safety in Apartment Blocks	CHE	01-Mar-22	Officer Update	Yes	William Cornall	Nigel Bucklow / John Littlemore
Review of the Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy Action Plan, and Intentional Homelessness Pilot (decision)	CHE	01-Mar-22	Officer Update		William Cornall	John Littlemore
Annual Review of Rules and Protocols - Crime and Disorder Committee	CHE	01-Mar-22	Cllr Request		John Littlemore	John Littlemore
Community Safety Plan and Strategic Assessment - Crime and Disorder Committee	CHE	01-Mar-22	Officer Update		John Littlemore	Martyn Jeynes
Affordable Housing Delivery by the Council	CHE	TBC	Officer Update	Yes	William Cornall	William Cornall
Possible Provision of further Council owned G&T Sites	CHE	TBC	Cllr Request		William Cornall	William Cornall
Options on Tightening the Approach to Littering, Graffiti and Waste Crime (to incorporate Street Cleansing Monitoring)	CHE	TBC	Cllr Request		John Edwards	John Edwards

Agenda Item 14

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

1 FEBRUARY 2022

REFERENCE FROM COUNCIL

MOTION – GARDEN WASTE BIN SERVICE

The following motion was moved by Councillor Harper, seconded by Councillor M Rose, at the ordinary meeting of the Council held on 8 December 2021:

The Garden Bin waste service is a popular one with residents, with a large number of Maidstone residents subscribing to this paid Maidstone Borough Council service. However, as a result of Covid-19 and Brexit, the service is not being delivered as contracted with customers.

Residents pay for a fortnightly collection and this is supported by a yearly payment currently of £45. The two weekly collection is clearly stated in the terms and conditions on the Council website.

Different residents are getting different messages. Some have been individually notified by text as to the state of the service, other residents have negotiated for their contract payment to cover a period of 13 or more months, and others have had no contact from the Council as is evidenced by the level of complaints coming through.

The service is not running as it was until the middle of the year. This is not good enough, a large number of people do not have space at home to compost garden waste, which will frequently include weeds etc.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- 1. Make it clear to residents that the service is sporadic at the moment and the frequency will most likely be monthly.*
- 2. Receive a full report on what actions can be done to get the service back to the fortnightly collection which the Council contracts to deliver.*

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 18.5, the motion, having been moved and seconded, was referred to the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee.

A copy of the briefing note which was prepared to assist Members in their consideration of the motion is attached as Appendix A.

RECOMMENDED: That the Committee consider the motion relating to the Garden Waste Bin Service.

Ordinary Meeting of the Council – 8 December 2021

Notice of Motion – Garden Bin Service

Notice of the following motion has been given by Councillors Harper (the mover), M Rose and Coates:

The Garden Bin waste service is a popular one with residents, with a large number of Maidstone residents subscribing to this paid Maidstone Borough Council service. However, as a result of Covid-19 and Brexit, the service is not being delivered as contracted with customers.

Residents pay for a fortnightly collection and this is supported by a yearly payment currently of £45. The two weekly collection is clearly stated in the terms and conditions on the Council website.

Different residents are getting different messages. Some have been individually notified by text as to the state of the service, other residents have negotiated for their contract payment to cover a period of 13 or more months, and others have had no contact from the Council as is evidenced by the level of complaints coming through.

The service is not running as it was until the middle of the year. This is not good enough, a large number of people do not have space at home to compost garden waste, which will frequently include weeds etc.

This Council therefore resolves to:

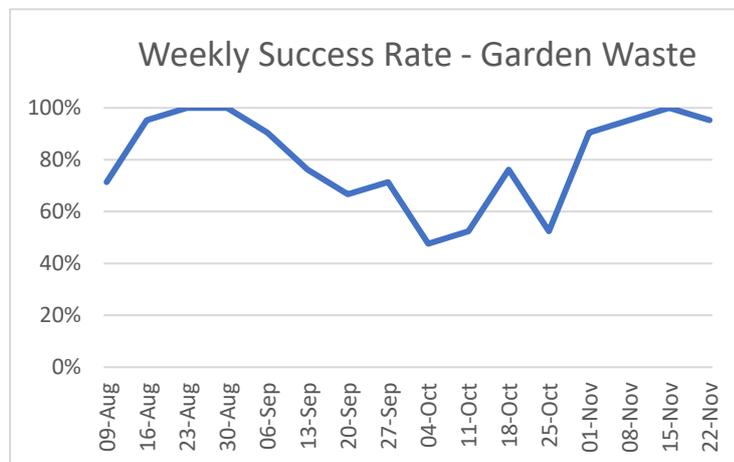
- 1. Make it clear to residents that the service is sporadic at the moment and the frequency will most likely be monthly.*
- 2. Receive a full report on what actions can be done to get the service back to the fortnightly collection which the Council contracts to deliver.*

The garden waste collection service is provided to over 32,500 residents in the Borough on a fortnightly basis. There is a £45 annual charge for the service which includes the provision of a bin and collection of the waste. The terms and conditions of the service specifically advise customers that we are unable to guarantee the number of collections per year as the service may be suspended in exceptional circumstances.

Since August 2021, the Council's waste collection contractor has experienced difficulties recruiting and retaining HGV drivers due to a national shortage of over 100,000 drivers in the UK. The shortage has been attributed to EU drivers returning home during lockdown, uncertainty of the EU exit and loss of over 30,000 HGV test slots during the pandemic. During September and October, the contractor had 11 HGV driver vacancies and was only able to fill 5 of these with agency staff. With the added pressures of staff sickness and annual leave, this meant on some days there were not enough drivers to provide all services.

Whilst it is recognised that the garden waste service is important to many residents, it is considered a lower priority than the refuse and recycling services. This is because less than half of Maidstone households subscribe to the service

and there are alternative options to dispose of the waste including home composting. Therefore, in line with the Council’s business continuity plan, daily decisions have been taken to partially suspend the garden waste service to protect the other services. At no point since August has the whole garden waste service been suspended.



The graph below shows the weekly success rate for delivering the garden waste service.

The service has stabilized since the end of October 2021, with 92% of garden collections in November completed successfully.

The Waste Contractor has already invested considerably in their contract with Maidstone Borough Council to maintain services this year including retention bonuses, enhanced agency pay rates and training packages. Corporately, Biffa have also invested in accelerated driver training programs, including professional apprenticeships, and have developed more attractive recruitment packages and policies, including flexible working, and promoting “Women in Waste”.

The current improvements in service delivery are largely due to a new 2-year pay agreement, increased reliability with agency employees, reduced sickness levels and fewer staff on annual leave. There are now 10 vacancies covered by 9 temporary staff and two further agency staff are being inducted this week. Five employees are also due to start HGV driver training once they receive their provisional licences from the DVLA.

Residents have been encouraged to sign up to the Council’s text alert system which enables them to receive specific updates about their collection. This is proving particularly popular with over 32,000 residents signed up. Registration is available through the daily update page on the Council’s website which also provides specific information about services:

<https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/bins-and-recycling/primary-areas/bin-collection-updates>

Where residents have experienced severe disruption to their service and remain dissatisfied, the waste team are working with the customers directly to address their concerns and where appropriate have extended the subscription period by one month. However, official complaints have remained relatively low considering the number of customers affected by service suspensions, less than 0.5% of garden waste customers. In addition, email and telephone calls to the customer services team, as well as reported missed collections, remain lower than the previous year.

Alternative options to manage the disruption have been considered including implementing a monthly garden waste service. Whilst this provides greater

predictability of collections, it is evident that more residents would be impacted. On average customers have experienced 1.75 suspended collections in the past 4 months, with 33% of customers only missing one collection during that time.

The stability of the service continues to be monitored daily and the team are working closely with the contractor at all levels to ensure every effort is made to limit disruption to services. However, the longer-term impacts of the national HGV driver shortage remain unknown and so whilst the service has stabilised, the crisis continues within the industry.

Communities, Housing and Environment Committee

1 February 2022

Garden Waste Service

Final Decision-Maker	Communities, Housing and Environment Committee
Lead Head of Service	William Cornall, Director of Regeneration and Place
Lead Officer and Report Author	Jennifer Stevens, Head of Environment and Public Realm
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

Following a Motion raised at Full Council on 8 December 2021, this report outlines the disruption experienced to the garden waste service during the Autumn and the actions taken that have now stabilised the service.

Purpose of Report

Noting

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the current performance of the garden waste service and actions taken to mitigate the HGV driver shortages are noted.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Communities, Housing and Environment Committee	1 February 2022

Garden Waste Service

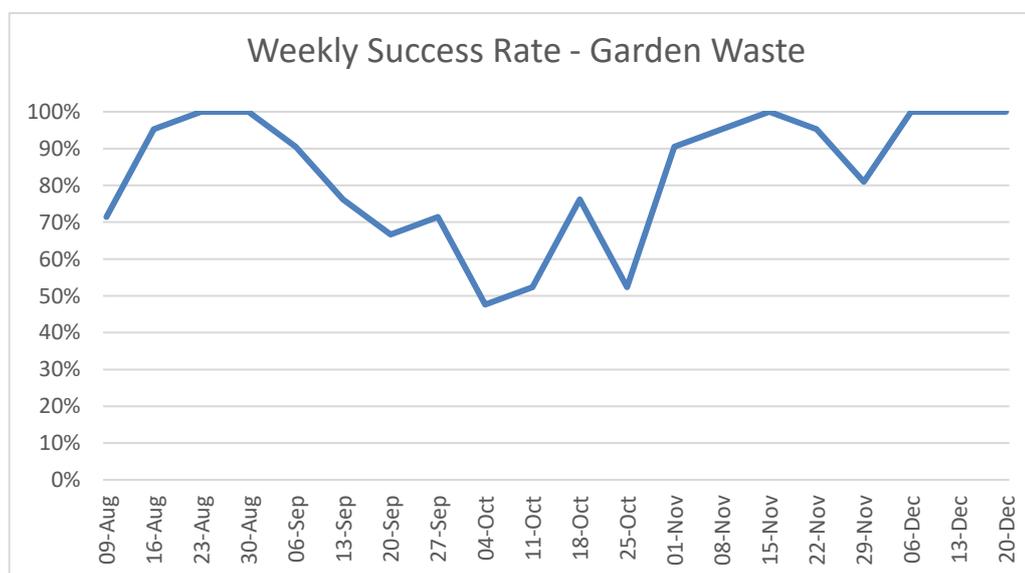
1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
<p>Impact on Corporate Priorities</p>	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>The garden waste service contributes to the Council's objective of a <i>Safe, Clean and Green Borough</i> for our residents and visitors. This is a valuable service that enables residents to compost their garden waste. The report notes that the disruption to the garden waste service did not impact the tonnage of garden waste collected and therefore did not impact delivery of the objectives.</p>	<p>Head of Environment and Public Realm</p>
<p>Cross Cutting Objectives</p>	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report does not impact the achievement of these cross-cutting objectives.</p>	<p>Head of Environment and Public Realm</p>
<p>Risk Management</p>	<p>The report outlines the risks associated with the national HGV driver shortage on Maidstone's waste and recycling collections. The service's business continuity plan (BCP) was enacted to ensure that the disruption was limited to the garden waste service to protect the refuse and mixed recycling collections. The report also identifies that actions taken to alleviate the impact the national crisis had on Maidstone's services.</p>	<p>Head of Environment and Public Realm</p>

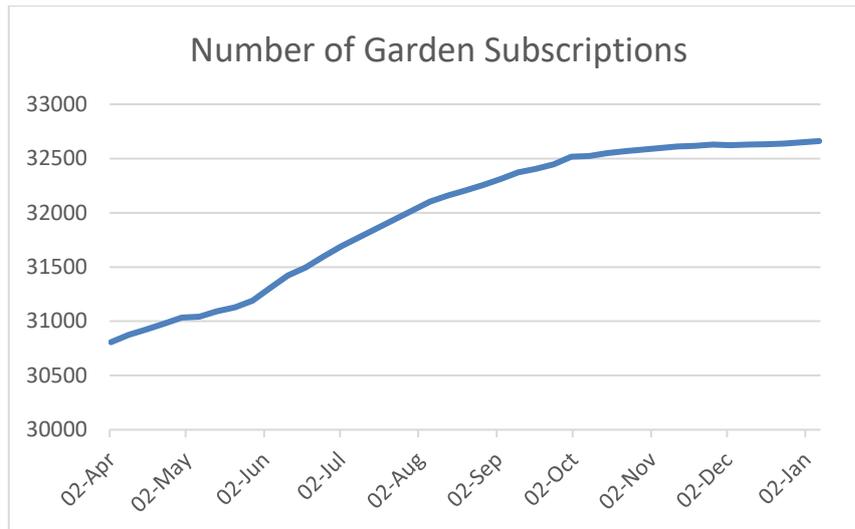
Financial	The report is for noting.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	The management of the waste collection contract has been delivered with existing staff resources. However the impact of the challenges has been felt within the Customer Services Team who have experienced staffing vacancies.	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Legal	The report is for noting only.	Interim Team Leader (Contentious and Corporate Governance)
Privacy and Data Protection	The report is for noting only.	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	The report is for noting only.	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	Prioritisation of the refuse and food waste collections is to prevent waste accumulations that could pose a public health risk if left uncollected.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	No implications	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Procurement	No implications	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and one minor implication has been identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With loss, reduction, or sporadic garden waste collection services, residents may use cars to transport garden waste to local tips and marginally increase Boroughwide CO2e from car use. However tonnages have remained consistent suggesting the majority of garden waste is still being captured through the service. 	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The garden waste collection service is provided to over 32,500 residents in the Borough on a fortnightly basis. There is a £45 annual charge for the service which includes the provision of a bin and collection of the waste. The terms and conditions of the service specifically advise customers that we are unable to guarantee the number of collections per year as the service may be suspended in exceptional circumstances.
- 2.2 Since August 2021, the Council's waste collection contractor has experienced difficulties recruiting and retaining HGV drivers due to a national shortage of over 100,000 drivers in the UK. The shortage has been attributed to EU drivers returning home during lockdown, uncertainty of the EU exit and loss of over 30,000 HGV test slots during the pandemic. During September and October, the contractor had 11 HGV driver vacancies and was only able to fill 5 of these with agency staff. With the added pressures of staff sickness and annual leave, this meant on some days there were not enough drivers to provide all services.
- 2.3 Whilst it is recognised that the garden waste service is important to many residents, it is considered a lower priority than the refuse and recycling services. This is because less than half of Maidstone households subscribe to the service and there are alternative options to dispose of the waste including home composting. Therefore, in line with the Council's business continuity plan, daily decisions have been taken to partially suspend the garden waste service to protect the other services. At no point since August has the whole garden waste service been suspended.
- 2.4 The graph below shows the weekly success rate for delivering the garden waste service. The service has stabilized since the end of October 2021, with 92% of garden collections in November and 100% in December completed successfully. The service was suspended over Christmas for 2 weeks as normal to enable the resources to be focused on collecting the additional refuse and recycling.



- 2.5 The Waste Contractor has already invested considerably in their contract with Maidstone Borough Council to maintain services this year including retention bonuses, enhanced agency pay rates and training packages. Corporately, Biffa have also invested in accelerated driver training programs, including professional apprenticeships, and have developed more attractive recruitment packages and policies, including flexible working, and promoting "Women in Waste".
- 2.6 The current improvements in service delivery are largely due to a new 2-year pay agreement, increased reliability with agency employees, reduced sickness levels and fewer staff on annual leave. There are now 10 vacancies covered by 9 temporary staff and two further agency staff have been inducted. Five employees are also due to start HGV driver training once they receive their provisional licences from the DVLA.
- 2.7 Residents have been encouraged to sign up to the Council's text alert system which enables them to receive specific updates about their collection. This is proving particularly popular with over 32,000 residents signed up. Registration is available through the daily update page on the Council's website which also provides specific information about services: <https://maidstone.gov.uk/home/primary-services/bins-and-recycling/primary-areas/bin-collection-updates>
- 2.8 Where residents have experienced severe disruption to their service and remain dissatisfied, the waste team are working with the customers directly to address their concerns and where appropriate have extended the subscription period by one month, this has only been applied on 70 occasions. However, official complaints have remained relatively low considering the number of customers affected by service suspensions, less than 0.5% of garden waste customers. In addition, email and telephone calls to the customer services team, as well as reported missed collections, remain lower than the previous year.
- 2.9 Alternative options to manage the disruption have been considered including implementing a monthly garden waste service. Whilst this provides greater predictability of collections, it is evident that more residents would be impacted. On average customers have experienced 1.75 suspended collections in the past 4 months, with 33% of customers only missing one collection during that time.
- 2.10 The number of garden waste subscriptions has continued to grow throughout the period of disruption to collections as shown in the graph below.



2.11 The stability of the service continues to be monitored daily and the team are working closely with the contractor at all levels to ensure every effort is made to limit disruption to services. However, the longer-term impacts of the national HGV driver shortage remain unknown and so whilst the service has stabilised, the crisis continues within the industry.

2.12 The Council is also supporting six direct employees to complete their HGV training to provide additional resilience to the commercial waste and street cleansing services as well as offer support to the waste collection contractor.

Conclusion

2.13 The Notice of Motion to Full Council resolved to:

- Make it clear to residents that the service is sporadic at the moment and the frequency will most likely be monthly
- Receive a full report on what actions can be done to get the service back to the fortnightly collection which the Council contracts to deliver

2.14 As shown in this report the service has operated on a regular fortnightly basis since the end of November. Information has been provided to residents through the text alert system, the Council's website and social media. It is not proposed that any further communication is carried out at the time being as the service is operating well and fortnightly services are being maintained.

2.15 This report is provided to the Committee to outline the actions that have been taken by the Council and its contractor to help mitigate the impact of the national shortages. These actions have stabilised the service and enabled fortnightly collections to be delivered consistently since end of November. No further actions have been identified at this time; however, the team continue to monitor the situation to enable risks to be identified early.

2.16 Previous concerns regarding further staff reductions due to Covid-19 have not materialised as yet, however the contractor's management team continue to monitor staff sickness and currently have sufficient staff to cover those who are isolating or are unwell.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

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

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Committee is requested to note the content of the report as no further actions are required.

5. RISK

- 5.1 The key risk for the Council is its ability to deliver all waste and recycling services due to staff shortages brought about by the national HGV driver crisis or Covid 19. During September and October, the risk threat was assessed to be Amber as garden waste services were impacted and there was concern that further loss of staff could result in the recycling or refuse collections being affected.
- 5.2 The Council along with its contractor have taken steps to mitigate the risks and stabilise the garden waste service. Services are now fully operational, and the current level of risk is reduced as services are being maintained despite an increase in sickness due to Covid-19.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 A Members Briefing session was held on 2 November 2021 to outline the risks associated with the HGV driver shortage and provide Members with some reassurance of the actions being taken.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 The Waste Services Team will continue to work with the Waste Collection Contractor to monitor staffing levels and any risk to maintaining full services. They will use the text alert system and website to notify residents of any further service disruptions, however at the present time these are not expected.
- 7.2 The Business Continuity Plan remains in place and will be enacted should staffing levels require it to be.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

None

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

COMMUNITIES HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

1 February 2022

Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Proposals

Final Decision-Maker	Council
Lead Head of Service/Lead Director	Mark Green, Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Author	Mark Green, Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

This report forms part of the process of agreeing a budget for 2022/23 and setting next year’s Council Tax. Following consideration by this Committee at its meeting on 30 November 2021 of the draft Medium Term Finance Strategy for 2022/23 – 2026/27, this report sets out budget proposals for services within the remit of the Committee. These proposals will then be considered by Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 9 February 2022, with a view to determining a budget for submission to Council.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the revenue budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee, as set out in Appendix A, be agreed for submission to Policy and Resources Committee.
2. That the capital budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee, as set out in Appendix B, be agreed for submission to Policy and Resources Committee.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Communities, Housing and Environment Committee	1 February 2022
Policy and Resources Committee	9 February 2022
Council	23 February 2022

Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Proposals

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The Medium Term Financial Strategy and the budget are a re-statement in financial terms of the priorities set out in the strategic plan. They reflect the Council's decisions on the allocation of resources to all objectives of the strategic plan.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Cross Cutting Objectives	The MTFS supports the cross-cutting objectives in the same way that it supports the Council's other strategic priorities.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Risk Management	This has been addressed in section 5 of the report.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Financial	The budget strategy and the MTFS impact upon all activities of the Council. The future availability of resources to address specific issues is planned through this process. It is important that the committee gives consideration to the strategic financial consequences of the recommendations in this report.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Staffing	The process of developing the budget strategy will identify the level of resources available for staffing over the medium term.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Legal	<p>Under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 (LGA 1972) the Section 151 Officer has statutory duties in relation to the financial administration and stewardship of the authority, including securing effective arrangements for treasury management. The legal implications are detailed within the body of the report which is compliant with statutory and legal regulations such as the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management in Local Authorities.</p> <p>The Council is required to set a council tax by the 11 March in any year and has a statutory obligation to set a balanced budget. The budget requirements and basic amount of Council Tax must be calculated in accordance</p>	Principal Solicitor Corporate Governance

	<p>with the requirements of sections 31A and 31B to the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended by sections 73-79 of the Localism Act 2011).</p> <p>The Council is required to determine whether the basic amount of council tax is excessive as prescribed in regulations – section 52ZB of the 1992 Act as inserted under Schedule 5 to the Localism Act 2011. The Council is required to hold a referendum of all registered electors in the borough if the prescribed requirements regarding whether the increase is excessive are met.</p> <p>Approval of the budget is a matter reserved for full Council upon recommendation by Policy and Resources Committee on budget and policy matters.</p>	
Privacy and Data Protection	Privacy and Data Protection is considered as part of the development of new budget proposals. There are no specific implications arising from this report.	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	The MFTS report scopes the possible impact of the Council’s future financial position on service delivery. When a policy, service or function is developed, changed or reviewed, an evidence-based equalities impact assessment will be undertaken. Should an impact be identified appropriate mitigations will be identified.	Equalities and Corporate Policy Officer
Public Health	The resources to achieve the Council’s objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	The resources to achieve the Council’s objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Procurement	The resources to achieve the Council’s objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The resources to achieve the Council’s objectives are allocated through the development of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Medium Term Financial Strategy

- 2.1 At its meeting on 30 November 2021, this Committee considered a draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the next five years. No material amendments were proposed to the Strategy by this Committee or the other Committees which considered it in December, so it will now go forward to Council for approval at its meeting on 23 February 2022.
- 2.2 The MTFS sets out in financial terms how the Strategic Plan will be delivered, given the resources available. The MTFS builds on the previous year's MTFS, but also reflects new priority initiatives including a Town Centre Strategy and a commitment to invest in 1,000 new affordable homes.
- 2.3 The financial projections underlying the MTFS were prepared under three different scenarios – adverse, neutral and favourable. All three scenarios assumed that budget proposals for future years which have already been agreed by Council will be delivered, and that Council Tax is increased by 2% in 2022/23. A further scenario will be considered that will incorporate the risk of inflation remaining at its current rate of around 5%.

Local Government Finance Settlement 2022/23

- 2.4 The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2022/23 was announced on 16 December 2021. This confirmed several of the key assumptions incorporated in the MTFS.
 - The Council Tax referendum limit will be 2%.
 - The existing Business Rates regime will remain in place. Whilst the business rates multiplier will be frozen for ratepayers, local authorities will be compensated for the consequent loss of an inflationary increase.
 - There will be no negative Revenue Support Grant.
- 2.5 In addition, of the £1.5 billion increased funding previously announced in the Spending Review for local authorities, £822 million will be distributed directly to local authorities in the form of a new Services Grant. Maidstone will receive £225,000 in Services Grant.
- 2.6 There will be a new round of New Homes Bonus (NHB) payments in 2022/23, but payments will be made on the basis of two years' growth in housing numbers rather than three as in 2021/22. In Maidstone's case, because of the high number of housing completions in the borough last year, New Homes Bonus will nevertheless increase from £3.8 million in 2021/22 to £4.2 million in 2022/23. However, other authorities have seen significant reductions, so to prevent those authorities seeing an overall reduction in their Core Spending Power, the government is using the Lower Tier Services Grant (LTSG) to cushion the impact. Maidstone will receive an LTSG of £146,000.

- 2.7 The outcome for the Council's budget surplus / savings requirement of the above measures is to increase the projected budget surplus for 2022/23 previously reported to this Committee. Whilst this gives some scope for growth to accommodate new service priorities, it should be noted that much of this is one-off funding which will reverse out in 2023/24, and provision also needs to be made for the risk of higher inflation.

Revenue Budget Proposals

- 2.8 The draft MTFs describes a number of new priorities and budget pressures, as follows:
- The objective of delivering 1,000 new affordable homes may require a level of revenue subsidy, which would represent budget growth.
 - Waste collection costs are likely to increase arising from the forthcoming contract relet in October 2023.
 - The Serco leisure contract comes to an end in 2024. Depending on the scope of any new contract, budget growth may be required.
 - The objective of making Maidstone Town Centre a thriving place may also require budget growth, eg to provide leisure and cultural activities in the town centre.
 - In addition to core development management and spatial planning services, there is a requirement for more extensive planning policies and a Town Centre Strategy.
 - Additional expenditure is likely to be required to support the new governance structure and to meet the Council's aspirations for better quality data analysis.
 - Measures will be required to enable the Council's carbon reduction target to be met, including retrofitting and upgrading heating systems in Council buildings and electrifying the vehicle fleet.

Budget growth in relation to the first two bullet points is within the remit of this Committee and is described below. Additionally, other potential budget changes have been identified which are described below under the heading 'Other savings and growth'. All proposed revenue budget savings and growth items are also set out in in Appendix A.

2.9 1,000 Affordable Homes

The Leader announced at Council on 29 September 2021 his commitment to enable 1,000 new affordable homes in the borough. The principal budgetary impact of this is an expansion of the capital programme. In accordance with the requirement that borrowing to fund the capital programme be affordable and sustainable, provision is also built into the revenue budgets for the revenue cost of the capital programme. This revenue will be offset by rental income from new affordable homes. To the extent that a subsidy is required in order to provide affordable homes, it is

proposed that this be met through a new Maidstone Housing Investment Fund. A range of further sources of funding will be explored, including contributions from Homes England, in line with the pace and scale of the affordable homes programme.

2.10 Waste Collection Contract

As reported to this Committee at its meeting on 2 March 2021, the existing waste and recycling collection contract with Biffa Municipal Ltd terminates in October 2023. A range of options for future delivery of the service were considered and it was agreed that the service be re-tendered. It is very likely that any new contract will be significantly more expensive than the current contract. Accordingly, additional growth of £1 million has been included in the Strategic Revenue Projections with effect from 2023/24.

2.11 Other growth and savings

- Public toilets - £105,000 growth

The current public toilet cleaning contract expires in April 2022 and there will therefore be a tender for new contract. A new 'like for like' contract would be expected in any case to cost more but it is anticipated that additional locations will be added into the contract.

- Anti-social behaviour - £60,000 growth

Additional resource is proposed that would complement existing initiatives that address anti-social behaviour. It is estimated that to provide the necessary capacity budget growth of £60,000 will be required.

- Capital investment to reduce cost of temporary accommodation - £125,000 saving over two years

The budget for third party temporary accommodation can be reduced by continuing with the purchase of housing in the open market for temporary accommodation through the capital programme.

- Housing grant utilisation - £150,000 saving

In recent years, core MBC funding has been increased to deal with the rising level of homelessness. Subsequently, the government has provided a range of grants to address this issue, principally the Homelessness Prevention grant. It is therefore estimated that £150,000 of grant funding can be used to substitute for core council funding.

- CCTV – £9,000 saving over two years

Following the installation of the new CCTV system an estimate for ongoing running costs was included in the budget. Further savings have now been identified following discussions with the current provider.

- 2.12 Budget proposals have been developed, following the same principles, for services within the remit of the other Service Committees. Taken in total, it is projected that the savings proposals will allow the budget to be balanced in 2022/23.

Capital Budget Proposals

- 2.13 Capital investment helps the Council to deliver its strategic priorities. Accordingly, the capital programme includes a number of projects that support the 'Homes and Communities' and 'Safe, Clean and Green' priorities that are of particular concern to this Committee. Capital budget proposals will be considered formally by Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting on 20 January. They are also set out in Appendix B to this report and are summarised below.

Homes and Communities

- The Council will continue to deliver the government funded Disabled Facilities Grants programme.
- Further direct investment in property for temporary accommodation of £1.5 million is proposed.
- A capital budget has been set aside for the 1,000 affordable homes programme.
- Further funding has been set aside for investment in the Private Rented Sector.
- An allowance has been made for the refurbishment of Granada House.
- A major refurbishment of the Council's Gipsy and Traveller Sites is planned for 2022/23.

Safe, Clean and Green

- A capital budget has been set aside for projects that will address flood risk, including natural flood management schemes.
- Existing capital budgets for improvements to play areas, street scene investment, and parks improvements will be retained.
- Additional resource has been included for the waste crime team to allow the purchase of additional CCTV cameras and related equipment.
- An indicative budget has been included for works on open spaces funded by S 106 contributions.

Capital budget proposals are set out in Appendix B.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 Agree the budget proposals relating to this Committee as set out in Appendix A and B for onward submission to the Policy and Resources Committee.
 - 3.2 Propose changes to the budget proposals.
 - 3.3 Make no comment on the budget proposals.
-

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Policy and Resources Committee must recommend to Council at its meeting on 9 February 2022 a balanced budget and a proposed level of Council Tax for the coming year. The budget proposals included in this report will allow the Policy and Resources Committee to do this. Accordingly, the preferred option is that this Committee agrees the budget proposals at Appendix A.
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5. RISK

- 5.1 The Council's MTFS is subject to a high degree of risk and uncertainty. In order to address this in a structured way and to ensure that appropriate mitigations are developed, the Council has developed a budget risk register. This seeks to capture all known budget risks and to present them in a readily comprehensible way. The budget risk register is updated regularly and is reviewed by the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee at each of its meetings.
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6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 Policy and Resources Committee received an initial report on the MTFS at its meeting on 21 July 2021 and it agreed the approach set out in that report to development of an MTFS for 2022/23 - 2026/27 and a budget for 2022/23.
 - 6.2 Service Committees and Policy and Resources Committee then considered a draft MTFS at their meetings in November and December 2021.
 - 6.3 Public consultation on the budget has been carried out. Details were reported to this Committee at its meeting in November 2021.
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7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 The timetable for developing the budget for 2022/23 is set out below.

<i>Date</i>	<i>Meeting</i>	<i>Action</i>
January 2022	All Service Committees	Consider 22/23 budget proposals
9 February 2022	Policy and Resources Committee	Agree 22/23 budget proposals for recommendation to Council
23 February 2022	Council	Approve 22/23 budget

8. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- Appendix A: Revenue Budget Proposals 2022/23 – 2024/25
- Appendix B: Capital Budget Proposals 2022/23 – 2026/27

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

There are no background papers.

Revenue Budget Proposals 2022/23 - 2026/27

Service	Proposal	22/23	23/24	24/25	Total
		£000	£000	£000	£000
Street Scene	Public toilets tender new contract	105			105
Community Protection	Two additional roles	60			60
Housing	Better use of external grant funding	-150			-150
Housing	Capital investment to reduce cost of TA	-50	-75		-125
Community Protection	Review of CCTV budgets	-5	-4		-9
OVERALL CHANGE IN BUDGET (£000)		-40	-79	0	-119

Negative figures shown above represent a reduction in expenditure budgets, or increased income targets. Positive figures indicate increased expenditure, or a reduction in the income budget.

Capital Budget Proposals

FIVE YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23 - 2026/27	Five Year Plan						Total 22/23 to 26/27 £000
	Revised Budget 2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	
	Housing - Disabled Facilities Grants Funding	1,017	1,500	800	800	800	
Temporary Accommodation	3,008	1,560					1,560
Brunswick Street	233						
Union Street	217						
Springfield Mill - Phase 1							
Springfield Mill - Phase 2	2,045	200					200
Private Rented Sector Housing Programme	1,125	2,316	4,632	11,579	11,579	16,211	46,317
Affordable Housing Programme - Trinity Place		500					500
1,000 Homes Affordable Housing Programme	750	5,679	11,358	28,396	28,396	39,754	113,582
Market Sale Housing Programme - Costs of Scheme		515	5,682	5,682	5,167	5,167	22,213
Market Sale Housing Programme - Receipts				-1,853	-12,400	-12,400	-26,653
Acquisitions Officer - Social Housing Delivery P/ship	160	160	160	160	160	160	800
Granada House Refurbishment Works	20	980	1,000				1,980
Street Scene Investment	50	50	50	50	50	50	250
Flood Action Plan	244	200	200	200	150		750
Electric Operational Vehicles	84						
Vehicle Telematics & Camera Systems	35						
Rent & Housing Management IT System	19						
Installation of Public Water Fountains	15						
Crematorium & Cemetery Development Plan	378						
Continued Improvements to Play Areas	200						
Parks Improvements	149	50	50	50	50	50	250
Gypsy & Traveller Sites Refurbishment	50	1,900					1,900
Waste Crime Team - Additional Resources		25					25
Section 106 funded works - Open Spaces		400	400	400	400	400	2,000
TOTAL	9,798	16,035	24,332	45,464	34,352	50,192	170,374

Capital Budget Proposals

FIVE YEAR CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23 - 2026/27	Five Year Plan						Total 22/23 to 26/27 £000
	Revised Budget 2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £000	2024/25 £000	2025/26 £000	2026/27 £000	

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

1 February 2022

Heather House and Pavilion Building Update

Final Decision-Maker	Policy and Resources
Lead Head of Service	John Foster, Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Lead Officer and Report Author	Andrew Connors, Housing Delivery Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	Parkwood

Executive Summary

This Committee have previously approved the Council pursuing a comprehensive redevelopment of the Heather House and the Pavilion Building sites and various redevelopment options have been presented and considered. This resulted in the Committee approving scheme design options to be taken forward. Policy and Resources Committee approved the submission of a combined detailed planning application on the 10th February 2021 for both sites and going out to tender for the works contract and procurement of the management provider for the proposed new community centre.

The project team have since been working hard to complete the detailed design and survey work, stakeholder consultation, planning documentation and plans. A detailed planning application for both sites was submitted on the 13th January 2022. The report provides further details regarding the planning application, timetable and next steps.

Purpose of Report

To update the Committee on latest progress with the redevelopment of the Heather House and Pavilion Building sites and next steps.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

To note that:

1. The planning application has been submitted for the redevelopment of the Heather House and Pavilion Building sites.
2. Officers will now be preparing to go out to tender for the works contract and procurement of the management provider for the proposed new community centre.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
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Communities, Housing and Environment Committee	1 February 2022
Policy and Resources Committee	June 2022

Heather House and Pavilion Building Update

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 Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure; Homes and Communities.</p>	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The project will support the four cross-cutting objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected 	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Risk Management	Already covered in the risk section.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Financial	There is provision for this project within the approved capital programme. It should however be noted there is a funding shortfall in relation to the Council's criteria for investment in capital projects. This will need to be addressed before seeking approval for release of capital funding from Policy & Resources Committee.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Legal	No implications	Legal Team
Privacy and Data Protection	No implications	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	We recognise the recommendations may have varying impacts on different communities within Maidstone. Therefore, we will complete a separate equalities impact assessment.	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals in an area of Maidstone where health inequalities are most stark.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	No implications.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Procurement	The Council will follow procurement exercises to appoint the necessary contractor and management provider to facilitate the delivery of the project. We will complete those exercises in line with financial procedure rules and applicable public contracts regulations and principles if applicable.	Head of Regeneration and Economic Development
Biodiversity and Climate Change	<p>In terms of Biodiversity and Climate Change minor implications have been identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firstly, the new development and design should incorporate the council's commitment to net zero 2030 by moving away from fossil fuel heating systems, improve EPC ratings, and enhance biodiversity where possible. • Secondly, in terms of sustainable procurement measures should be taken to ensure contractors reduce waste, utilise sustainable materials and practices, reduce supply chain distances, as well as conserve as much biodiversity at site as possible during construction. 	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finally, developing the MBC portfolio of housing will increase the CO2e of the council through the edition of gas and electricity usage in the new properties adding to MBC total Carbon Footprint. 	
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2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This Committee has previously approved taking forward scheme design options for a comprehensive redevelopment for both sites. Policy and Resources Committee approved the submission of a combined detailed planning application for both sites on the 10th February 2021. This also included going out to tender for the works contract and procurement of the management provider for the proposed new community centre. With a follow up report to be presented to the Policy and Resources Committee to approve the final scheme costs and necessary financial commitments associated with the development and management of the sites (including how the funding gap has been bridged), prior to any construction work taking place. It was pointed out that potential funders and management providers will want to see evidence that a project such as this is deliverable and has plans in place before committing any resource to it, hence why the approval was being sought at this early stage.
- 2.2 The project team have since been working hard to complete the detailed design and survey work, stakeholder consultation, planning documentation and plans which has resulted in the submission of a detailed planning application on the 13th January 2022. The planning drawings showing the site layout, floor plans and elevations for the new community centre and residential housing are shown at Appendix 1.

Design Principals

The design team have worked to develop the scheme to respond to the issues raised in both pre-application meetings and from stakeholder engagement. The proposals for both sites are high quality designs featuring robust materials that are durable and compliment the setting and reinforce the contemporary architectural theme. An energy consultant has been appointed to provide guidance on achieving the necessary thermal requirements and energy efficiency measures across both schemes.

- 2.3 The detailed well considered, site wide landscaping scheme will clearly define the boundaries between private, shared and public spaces enhancing the development and improving the surrounding environment.
- 2.4 Like many places throughout the country this area does have a historical issue with anti-social behaviour. In response to ASB issues we have liaised with the secured by design officer throughout the design process and acted upon his recommendations as the proposals have developed for both the residential development and the new community centre.

2.5 The following scheme design principles have been adopted within the planning application.

- A proposal that has been designed to respect the existing topography and the provision of a scheme that brings back into use an underused site.
- A development that rationalises the two dated buildings situated on Bicknor Road to create a better combined community resource that could provide a wider range of activity and potential outreach work to serve the local community.
- To significantly improve the image, visual appearance and public perception of the community centre and contribute towards the regeneration of the area.
- To provide a new modern multi-purpose community facility to accord with the latest accessibility and energy efficiency standards, resulting in lower long-term maintenance and running costs.
- A development that provides housing in a sustainable location (on brownfield land within the confines of an existing settlement).
- The provision of a development that has regard to the location of the site and optimises upon the close proximity of local facilities and transport services.
- The provision of a development that will respond positively and contribute to the surrounding built environment. Continuing to enhance an area of deprivation that has recently benefited from major regeneration programmes by Golding Homes and new developments in the surrounding areas.
- The ability to increase more usable open space provision by repositioning the new community centre further away from the area of ancient woodland on the southern/western boundary. Establishing the required buffer zone of 15m and giving back areas of existing small underused open space taken up on the Pavilion Building development site area.
- A proposal that will not involve the loss of any existing open space amenity land or the alteration of the existing play areas within the middle of the site of which are already benefiting from upgrade and improvement works that are not part of this application.
- Providing high quality family homes that meet Nationally Described Space Standards.

Pavilion Site

2.6 The submitted scheme seeks to demolish the Pavilion building and introduce a mixed tenure scheme of 11 residential houses (6 for market sale and 5 for market rent) incorporating private parking spaces and parking court, together with semi-public landscaped spaces, private rear gardens and home zone. A total of 22 parking spaces in accordance with parking standards are proposed to serve the new residential development.

2.7 All dwellings have been designed to accord with the Nationally Described Space Standards and provide flexibility to respond to the changing needs of their occupants over time. The following table shows the schedule of new accommodation proposed.

Type of Unit	Unit Size	Tenure	Number
3-Bed (5 Person) Terraced Houses	93m2	Market Rent	5
3-Bed (5 Person) Detached Houses)	99m2	Market Sale	3
4-bed (7 Person) Detached Houses	121m2	Market Sale	3
Totals			11

- 2.8 The proposed properties include a row of 5 terrace homes which face onto Bicknor road and mirror the rhythm of surrounding properties. Towards the rear of the site are 6 detached homes formed around an informal cul-de-sac, with each property benefiting from a view over the recreation ground. To make best use of the site whilst respecting the amenities of adjoining neighbours we have used the access road and parking areas to provide the necessary separation we have also carefully considered the location of window & door openings to control overlooking and protect resident privacy.
- 2.9 The 2 storey properties will accord with the heights of existing properties in the surrounding area. The proposal is set back from Bicknor Road to allow sufficient space for a well-considered landscaping scheme; this will enhance the development and integrate with the neighbouring green space.
- 2.10 The proposed layout of the houses will ensure that all dwellings benefit from a private rear garden with independent gated access. Separation distances between the proposed development and neighbouring properties is in accordance with Maidstone's Local Plan and accords with planning discussions during the preapplication phases. The residential scheme will benefit from 4 photovoltaic panels per home, these will provide renewable energy from sunlight.
- 2.11 As the number of dwellings proposed is over 10, there would be a requirement for 30% affordable housing, equating to 4 dwellings. As previously reported to this Committee, the scheme would unfortunately not be able to provide affordable housing as well as a new community centre due to the loss of surplus cross subsidy to help fund the new community centre.

- 2.12 An open book economic viability report has been submitted as part of the supporting documentation for the planning application that demonstrates that the affordable housing targets cannot be achieved in this case with the iterations of tenure and mix as mentioned in the Local Plan Policy.
- 2.13 The possibility of reinstating the provision of affordable housing will be fully explored to see if there are any s106 off-site affordable housing contribution sums and/or non-s106 affordable homes grant subsidy available from Homes England to provide further cross subsidy. This will be concluded before a final report is presented to the Policy and Resources Committee to approval the final scheme costs associated with the delivery of the scheme.

Heather House

- 2.14 The submitted application includes the demolition and re-provision of a new community centre which has been designed to accord with guidance produced by Sports England for community/village halls, together with Rugby Football Union design guide to changing rooms and clubhouses. The current and future needs of stakeholders are provided for and incorporated into the design where possible to do so taking into account the site space and financial viability constraints. It is expected that all the existing clubs can make use of the new facility with exception of the Maidstone Boxing Club, of whom as previously reported the Council are trying to assist in finding an alternative venue to support their future activities.
- 2.15 The proposed schedule of accommodation for room areas is set out below compared to what is existing.

Area	Existing Size	Proposed Size
Main Hall	257m ²	180m ²
Small Hall	103m ²	nil
Small Room (Boxing Club)	56m ²	nil
Storage	102m ²	52m ²
Kitchen	21m ²	14m ²
Bar/Communal Lounge	nil	58m ²
Manager's Office	16m ²	11m ²
Home/Away Changing Facility	nil	132m ²
Referee Changing Facility	nil	17m ²
WC/Changing Places/Toilets	55m ²	36m ²
Plant Room / Services	11m ²	8m ²
Meeting Room	47m ²	nil
Communal/Circulation/Entrance Area	44m ²	72m ²
Total	712m²	580m²

- 2.16 The new community centre will provide a GIA of 580m² and includes a one court sports/community social use hall, the height of which will be capable of accommodating badminton, a kitchen, storage, bar and communal lounge area, as well as further ancillary areas that will provide for field-based sports. The car park will provide parking for 28 vehicles and include appropriate spaces for 3 disabled drivers close to the main entrance.

2.17 The community centre includes 4 separate changing rooms, these provide direct access out to the sports pitches. It was appropriate to locate the new building to adjoin the recreation ground, thereby creating the shortest route between the sporting activity and changing facility.

2.18 The community centre has been designed to include a central circulation space which provides access to all areas within the centre, this was the most economic use of space to cater for the changing needs of the stakeholders. A 'changing places' facility has been incorporated into the community centre to encourage inclusion and cater for a diverse range of specific needs. The new community building will also incorporate a waste-water heat recovery system to improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions.

Proposed Schedule of Events

2.19 The proposed schedule of events is given in the table below. The dates should be regarded as indicative at this stage as the Council may need to extend and /or amend the timetable as necessary. Any major changes will be discussed with the relevant consultants.

Full Planning submission	14 th January 2022
Issue Tender Package (Works and Management Contract)	By end of February 2022
Planning Approval	Late April 2022
Tender Returns and Evaluation (Works and Management Provider)	Early May 2022
Policy and Resources Committee approval (final scheme costs and to proceed to construction)	June 2022
Sign Contracts and Detailed Design Period Post Planning with Contractor and Management Provider	October 2022
Start on site	October 2022
Practical completion	March 2024

3. RISK

3.1 Planning consent is a risk, but positive pre planning application feedback has been received for the scheme design proposals of which have catered for existing stakeholders needs where possible. Other risks previously reported

to this committee remain unchanged.

4. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 4.1 Previous feedback from Committee was that they wished Heather House to remain open and that a replacement/upgraded facility be provided. It was approved by Policy and Resources Committee that a combined detailed planning application be submitted for both sites as well as going out to tender for the works contract and procurement of the management provider for the proposed new community centre.
- 4.2 Ward Councillors have been consulted and are supportive of the scheme design proposals and consultation has already taken place with stakeholders and residents of which their feedback has been incorporated into the scheme design proposals where possible taking in account site and financial viability constraints.
-

5. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 5.1 Officers will now prepare the necessary documentation in order to go out to tender for the works contract and procurement of the management provider for the proposed new community centre.
- 5.2 A follow up report will need to be presented to Policy and Resources Committee to approve the final scheme costs and necessary financial commitments associated with the development and management of the schemes, once the tenders and planning consent has been received
-

6. REPORT APPENDICES

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

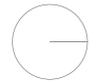
- Appendix 1: Planning Drawings
-

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.



North Point



Notes

Scale

1 : 250@A0



Status

Planning
Drawing Title

Proposed Development Plan

Client

Maidstone Borough Council

Date

December 2021

Project No

K190434

Drawing No- Revision

PL-04 Rev.1

Heather House, Maidstone ME15 9ZS



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Community Hub - Area Schedule	
Name	Area
New Community Hub	580 m ²
Extent of Canopy	60 m ²

Community Hub - Room Schedule	
Name	Area
Extent of Canopy	60 m ²
Changing Facilities 1	33 m ²
Changing Facilities 2	33 m ²
Changing Facilities 3	33 m ²
Changing Facilities 4	33 m ²
Ref Changing	17 m ²
Circulation	33 m ²
Communal Lounge	49 m ²
Entrance Area	21 m ²
Bar	9 m ²
Kitchen	14 m ²
Managers Office	11 m ²
Changing Places	12 m ²
WC-F	12 m ²
WC-M	12 m ²
Plant Room	8 m ²
One Court Sports Hall	180 m ²
Hall Storage 1	25 m ²
Hall Storage 2	14 m ²
Rugby Storage	9 m ²
St.	1 m ²
St.	2 m ²
St.	1 m ²
Total	622 m²

Ground Layout
1 : 100





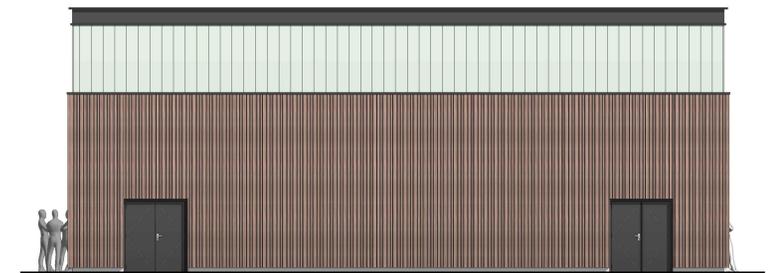
Front Elevation
1 : 100



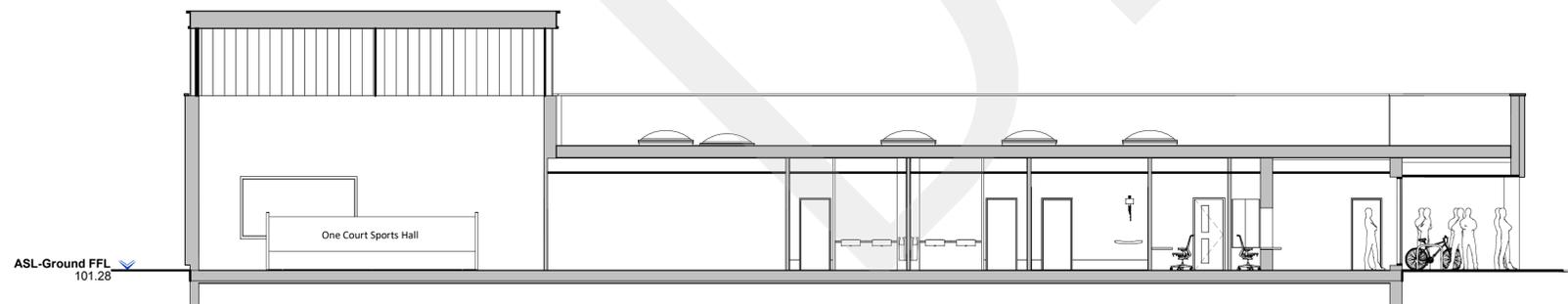
Right Elevation
1 : 100



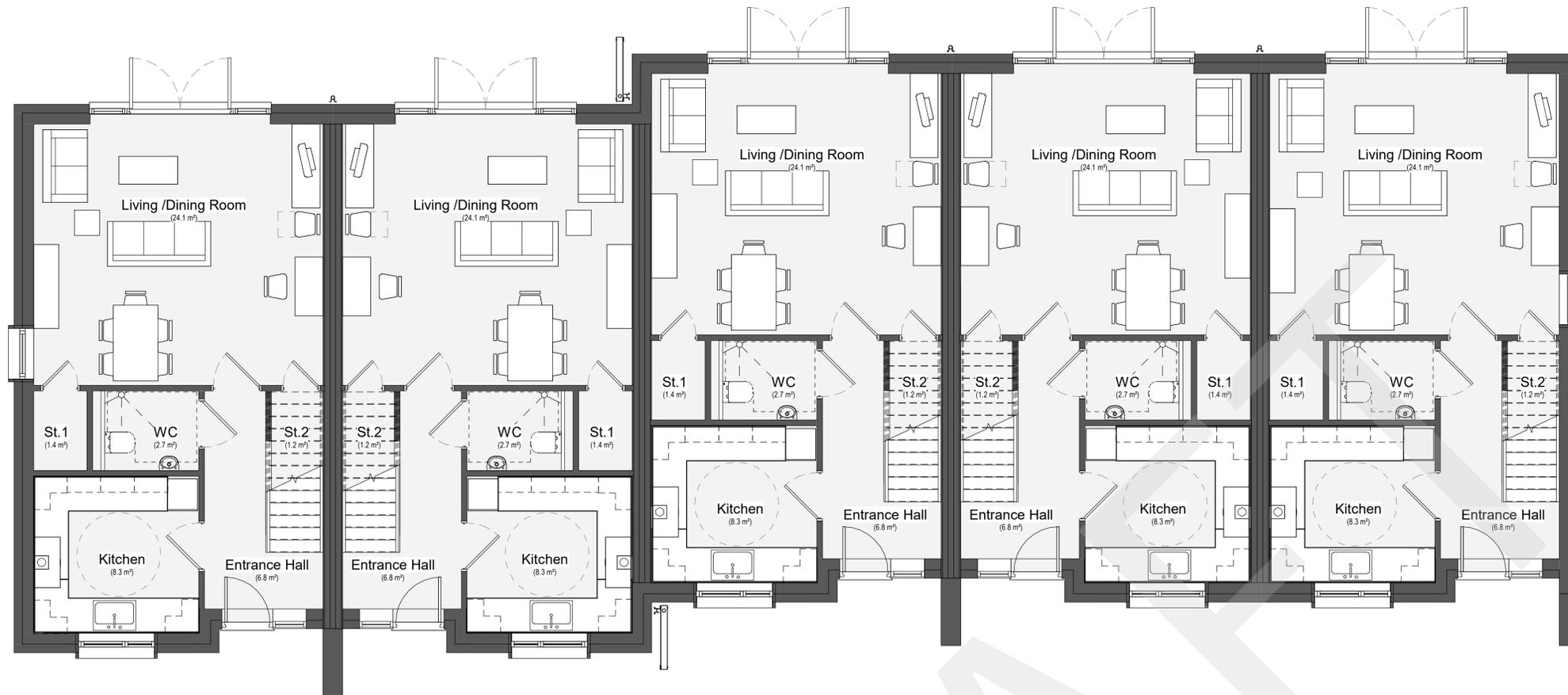
Rear Elevation
1 : 100



Left Elevation
1 : 100

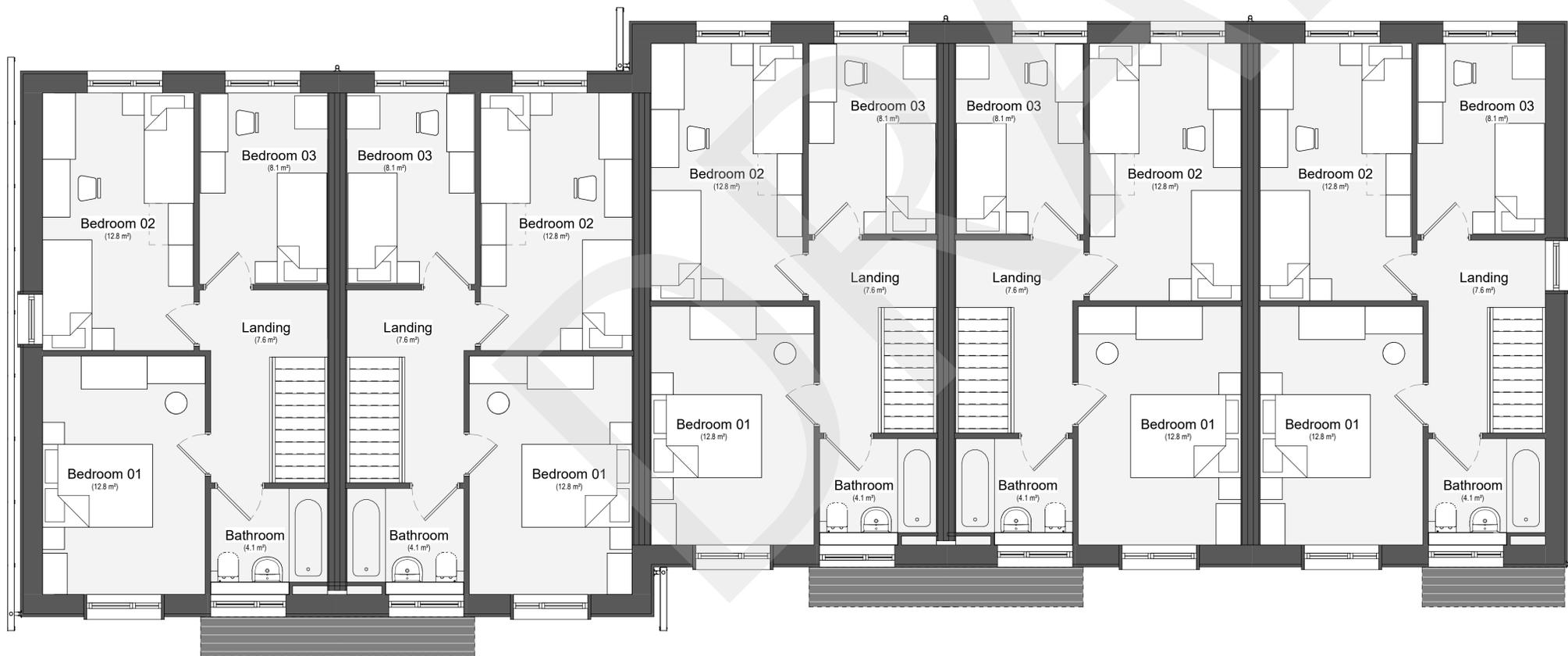


Section 1-1
1 : 100



GROUND FLOOR

1 : 50



FIRST FLOOR

1 : 50

House Type 01 - Area Schedule

Name	Area
Ground Floor	46 m ²
First Floor	47 m ²
	93 m ²

House Type 01 - Room Schedule

Name	Area
Entrance Hall	7 m ²
Kitchen	8 m ²
Living /Dining Room	24 m ²
St.1	1 m ²
St.2	1 m ²
WC	3 m ²
0	44 m ²
Bathroom	4 m ²
Bedroom 01	13 m ²
Bedroom 02	13 m ²
Bedroom 03	8 m ²
Landing	8 m ²
1	45 m ²
	90 m ²



48

North Point



Notes

Scale

1 : 50@A1



Status

Planning

Drawing Title

Proposed Plots 1-5 Plans

Client

Maidstone Borough Council

Date

December 2021

Project No

K190434

Drawing No - Revision

PL-07 Rev.1

Heather House, Maidstone ME15 9ZS



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Front Elevation
1 : 100



Left
1 : 100



Rear Elevation
1 : 100

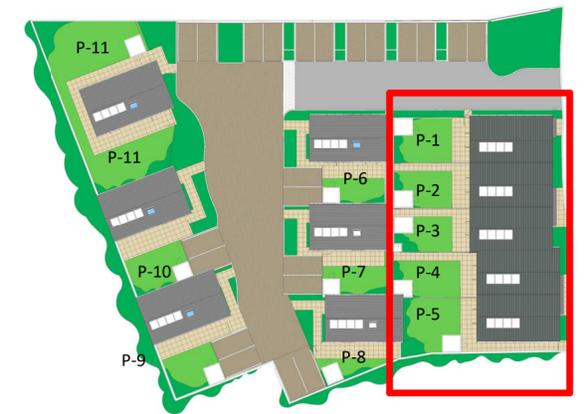


Right
1 : 100

49



Section 1
1 : 100



North Point



Notes

Scale

1 : 100@A2



Status

Planning

Drawing Title

Proposed Elevations

Client

Maidstone Borough Council

Date

December 2021

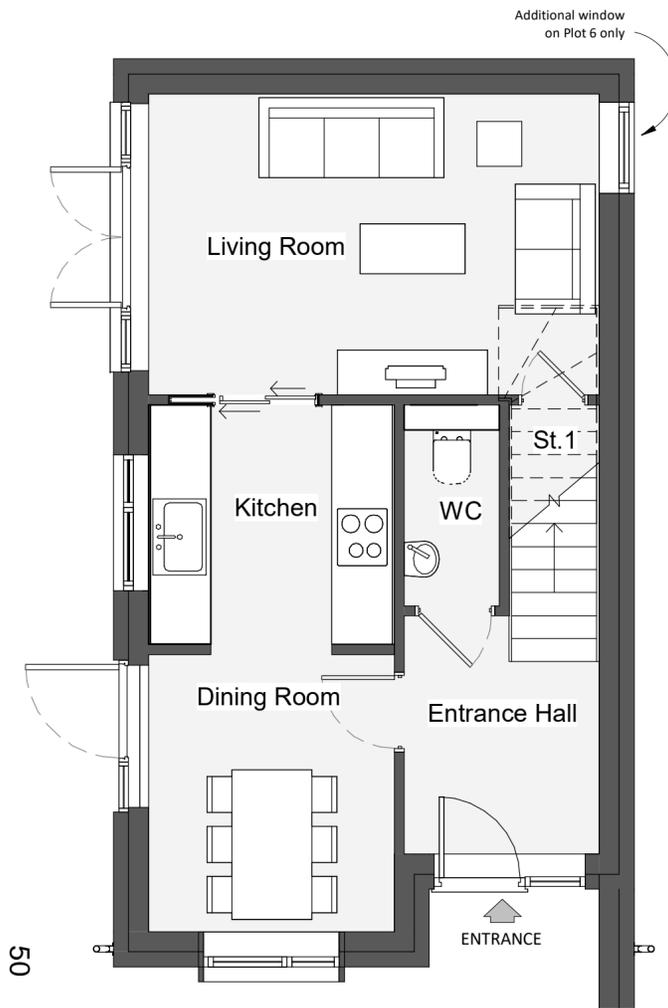
Project No

K190434

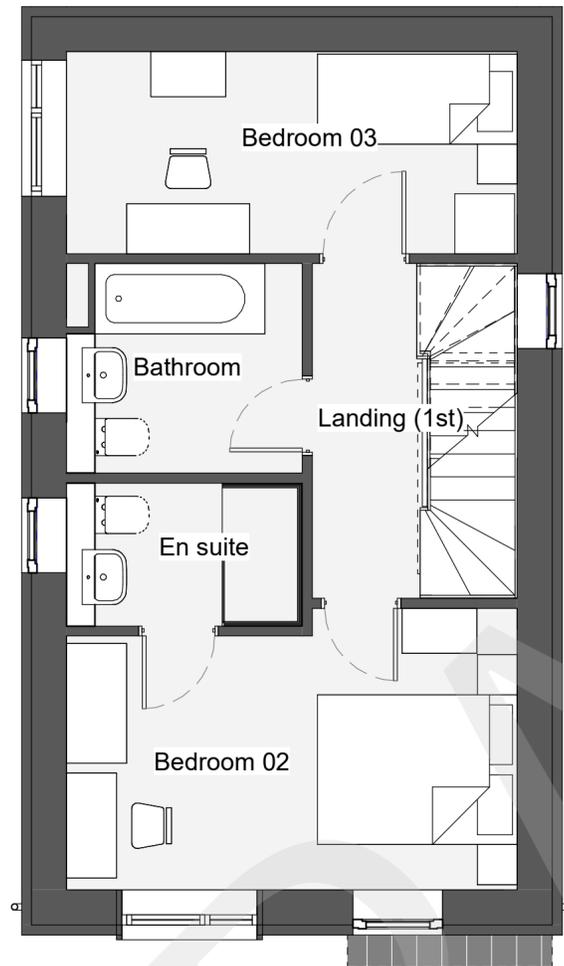
Drawing No - Revision

PL-08 Rev.1

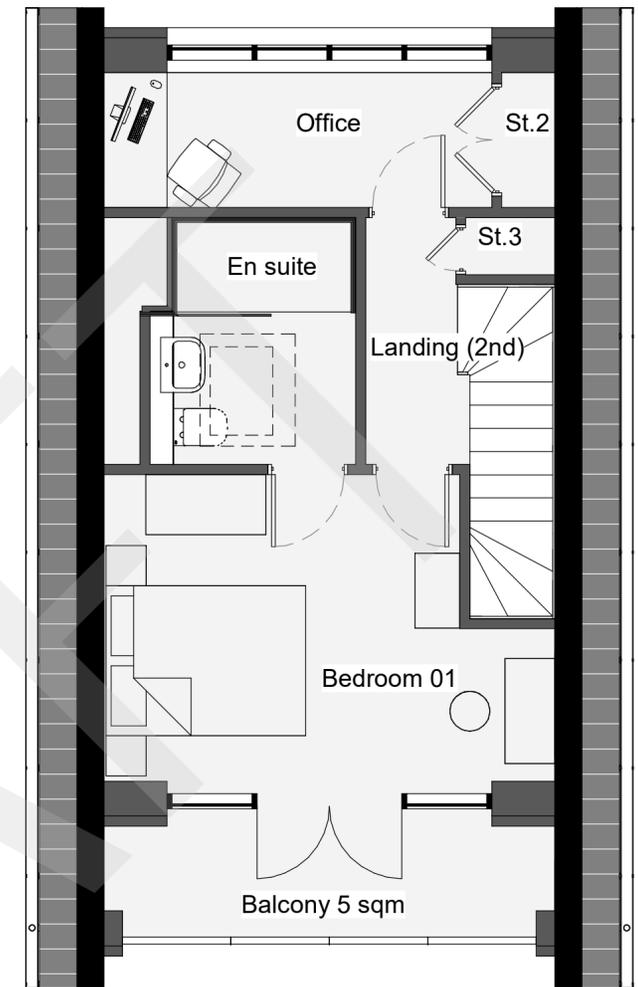
Heather House, Maidstone ME15 9ZS



GROUND FLOOR
1 : 50



FIRST FLOOR
1 : 50



SECOND FLOOR
1 : 50

House Type 02 - Area Schedule GIA	
Name	Area

Ground Floor	36 m ²
First Floor	38 m ²
Second Floor	28 m ²
	102 m ²

House Type 02 - Room Schedule	
Name	Area

Dining Room	7 m ²
Entrance Hall	6 m ²
Kitchen	6 m ²
Living Room	14 m ²
St.1	1 m ²
WC	2 m ²
0	35 m ²

Bathroom	5 m ²
Bedroom 02	12 m ²
Bedroom 03	9 m ²
En suite	3 m ²
Landing (1st)	7 m ²
1	36 m ²

Bedroom 01	13 m ²
En suite	5 m ²
Landing (2nd)	2 m ²
Office	5 m ²
St.2	1 m ²
St.3	1 m ²
2	27 m ²
	98 m ²



Status
Planning

Client
Maidstone Borough Council

Drawing Title
Proposed Plots 6-8 Plans

Date
December 2021

Project No
K190434

Drawing No - Revision
PL-09 Rev.1

Heather House, Maidstone ME15 9ZS





Front Elevation

1 : 100



Left Elevation

1 : 100

PV Panels

Rooflight

Standing Seam roof

Horizontal man made Weatherboarding (timber grain)

Composite Aluminium Double glazed Window & Doors (Anthracite grey)

Standing Seam canopy

Contemporary Brickwork (Grey/White)



Section A-A

1 : 100

51



Rear Elevation

1 : 100



Right Elevation

1 : 100

Additional window on Plot 6 only



North Point



Notes



Scale

1 : 100@A3
10
m

Status

Planning

Drawing Title

Proposed Elevations

Client

Maidstone Borough Council

Date

December 2021

Project No

K190434

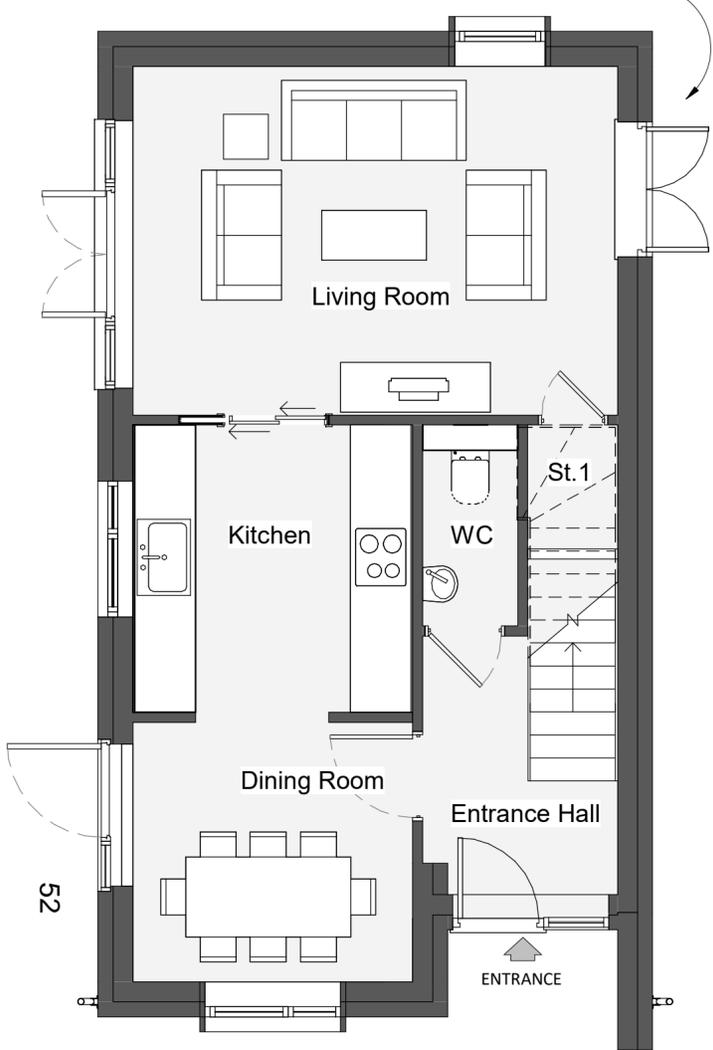
Drawing No - Revision

PL-10 Rev.1

Heather House, Maidstone
ME15 9ZS

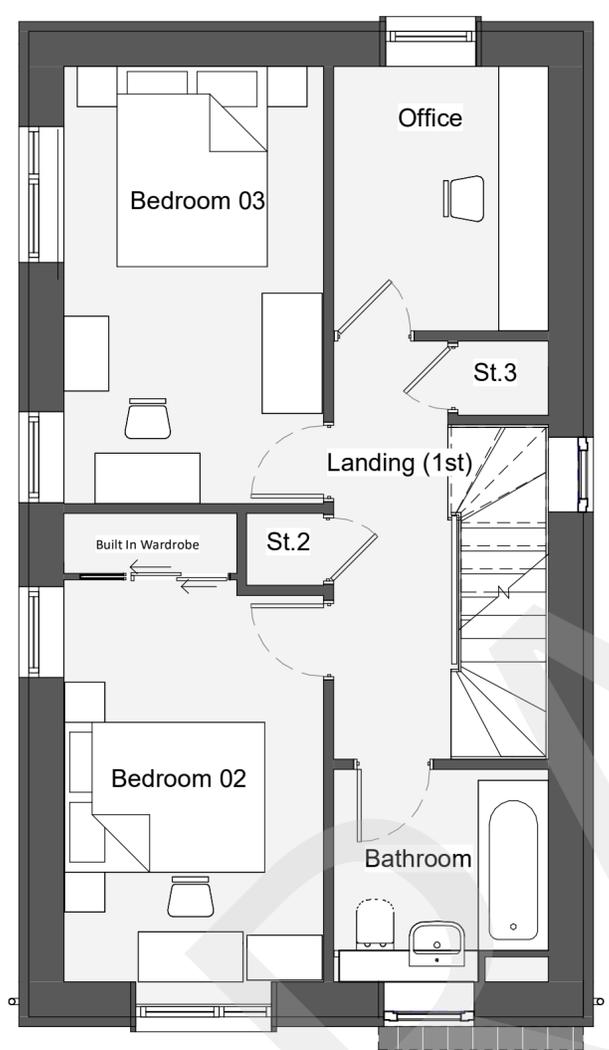


Additional doors
on Plot 11 only
(Dual aspect garden)



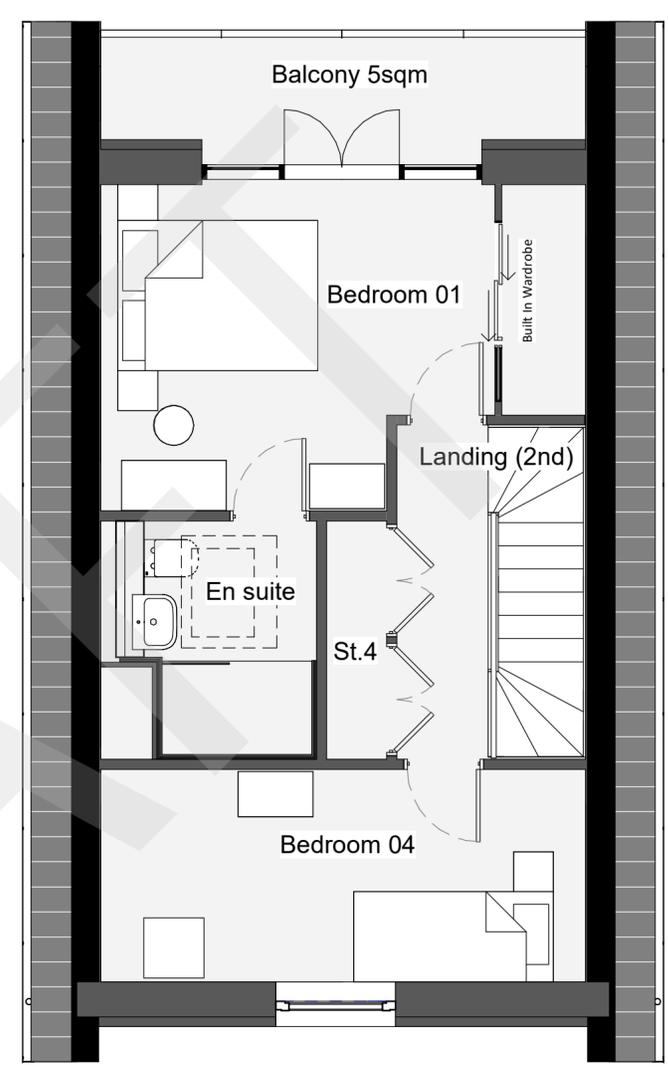
GROUND FLOOR

1 : 50



FIRST FLOOR

1 : 50



SECOND FLOOR

1 : 50

House Type 04 - Area Schedule	
Name	Area
Ground Floor	43 m ²
First Floor	44 m ²
Second Floor	34 m ²
	121 m ²

House Type 04 - Room Schedule	
Name	Area
Dining Room	7 m ²
Entrance Hall	6 m ²
Kitchen	8 m ²
Living Room	17 m ²
St.1	1 m ²
WC	2 m ²
0	41 m ²

Bathroom	4 m ²
Bedroom 02	11 m ²
Bedroom 03	11 m ²
Landing (1st)	8 m ²
Office	6 m ²
St.2	1 m ²
St.3	1 m ²
1	42 m ²

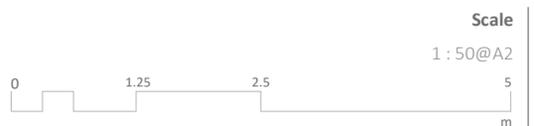
Bedroom 01	13 m ²
Bedroom 04	9 m ²
En suite	4 m ²
Landing (2nd)	5 m ²
St.4	1 m ²
2	33 m ²
	116 m ²



North Point



Notes



Scale

1 : 50@A2

Status

Planning
Drawing Title

Proposed Plots 9-11 Plans

Client

Maidstone Borough Council

Date

December 2021

Project No

K190434

Drawing No - Revision

PL-11 Rev.1

Heather House, Maidstone ME15 9ZS



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Front Elevation

1 : 100

53



Rear Elevation

1 : 100



Left Elevation

1 : 100

PV Panels

Rooflight

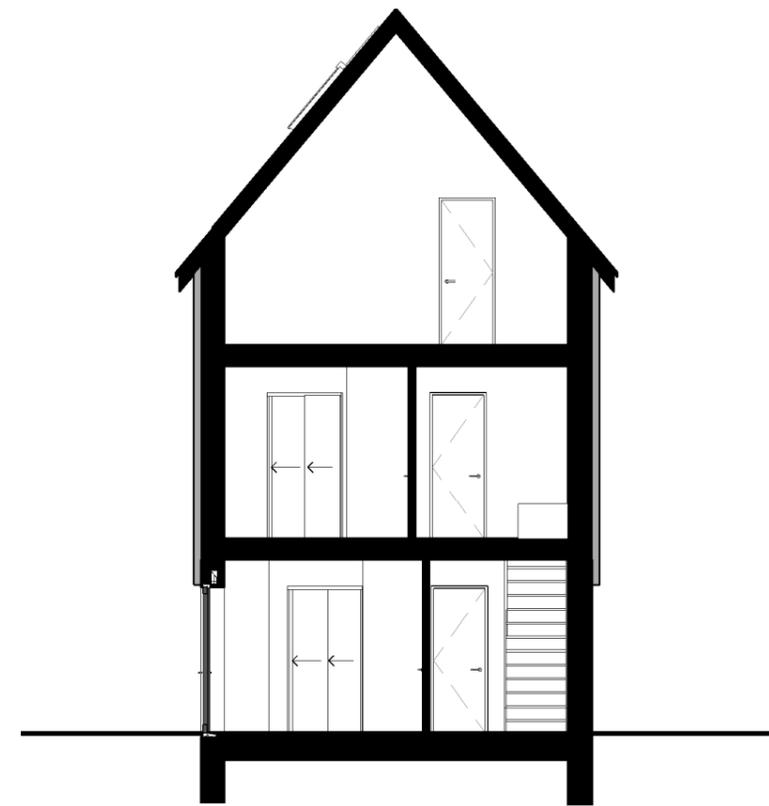
Standing Seam Roof

Horizontal man made
Weatherboarding (timber grain)

Composite Double glazed
Window & Doors (Anthracite grey)

Standing Seam canopy

Contemporary Brickwork
(Grey/White)



Section A-A

1 : 100



Right Elevation

1 : 100

Additional doors
on Plot 11 only
(Dual aspect garden)



North Point



Notes

Scale

1 : 100@A3



Status

Planning

Drawing Title

Proposed Elevations

Client

Maidstone Borough Council

Date

December 2021

Project No

K190434

Drawing No - Revision

PL-12 Rev.1

Heather House, Maidstone
ME15 9ZS





NEW COMMUNITY CENTRE
580sqm

EXISTING
HEATHER HOUSE
FOOTPRINT

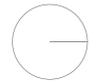
SKATE PARK

To be read in conjunction with
Landscape Masterplan Drawing - TD955_02
+ Arboricultural Report - BS-5837

SENIOR PLAY AREA

Turning Circle - Coach / Minibus / Refuse / Emergency Vehicles

North Point



Notes



Status

Planning
Drawing Title

Proposed Community Centre Site

Client

Maidstone Borough Council

Date

December 2021

Project No

K190434

Drawing No- Revision

PL-13 Rev.1

Heather House, Maidstone ME15 9ZS



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To be read in conjunction with
Landscape Masterplan
Drawing - TD955_01



55

North Point



Notes



Status
Planning
Drawing Title
Proposed Residential Site

Client
Maidstone Borough Council
Date
December 2021

Project No
K190434
Drawing No- Revision
PL-14 Rev.1

Heather House, Maidstone ME15 9ZS



Agenda Item 18

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

1 February 2022

Review of the use of anti-social behaviour measures.

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

Executive Summary

The report outlines the range of activities undertaken by the Community Protection Team and provides information on the use of interventions used by the team to tackle ASB.

Purpose of Report

For noting.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. To note the content of the report.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Communities, Housing & Environment Committee	1 February 2022

Review of the use of anti-social behaviour measures.

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	The four Strategic Plan objectives are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe, Clean and Green • A Thriving Place 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Cross Cutting Objectives	The four cross-cutting objectives are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Risk Management	Not Applicable	Head of Housing & Community Services
Financial	The report is for noting.	Head of Housing & Community Services
Staffing	The report is for noting	Head of Housing & Community Services
Legal	The report is for noting	Head of Housing & Community Services
Privacy and Data Protection	Not applicable	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	The report is for noting	Head of Housing & Community Services
Public Health	The report is for noting	Head of Housing & Community Services
Crime and Disorder	Contained within the report	Head of Housing & Community Services

Procurement	Not applicable	Head of Housing & Community Services
Biodiversity and Climate Change	<p>The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are no implications on biodiversity and climate change. 	Head of Housing & Community Services

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In August 2020 the CHE Committee received a report on the use of anti-social behaviour powers and the role of the Council's Community Protection Team. The broad remit of the CPT's function was produced in an appendix and is attached to this report at Appendix 1 for ease of reference.
- 2.2 One of the functions undertaken by the service is to tackle anti-social behaviour. This can be achieved in a number of ways that seek to deal with the behaviour exhibited by some members of the community in the short-term and long-term.
- 2.3 One tool implemented by the Council is the use of Public Space Protection Orders. For the purpose of this report, the Council has introduced two PSPO's that seek to address behaviour in connection with dogs whilst in the public, and a PSPO concerned with the Town Centre.
- 2.4 The Town Centre PSPO was first approved in September 2016 and was renewed in September 2020 for a further 3 years. The Town Centre PSPO covers begging, and the consumption of alcohol in public places where this is leading to behaviour that is causing a disturbance.
- 2.5 The PSPO was introduced to cover this issue, as it was felt that the previous DPPO banning alcohol consumption in public was not effective, as it could only lead to the alcohol being seized rather than the tackling the behaviour being exhibited. In effect, the person could acquire additional alcohol and continue with the same course of conduct. Whereas the PSPO is able to deal with the behaviour by way of a warning or fixed penalty notice, as well as seizing the alcohol
- 2.6 In the period up to November 2018, following the introduction of the PSPO, there were 34 offences recorded in relation to the PSPO against 18 individuals. Three of those resulted in the matter being brought to the Magistrates' Court. Since that time, no further cases have arisen that have required a prosecution at Court.
- 2.7 Following the implementation of the Council's rough Sleeper Outreach Service, the combined efforts of the Council's teams and other partners reduced the harm being caused by persons associated with entrenched street homelessness. As a result, recorded action under the PSPO

significantly reduced, as the impact and threat of the PSPO had achieved its aim.

- 2.8 When members of the public are acting in contravention of the PSPO and challenged to desist from that behaviour or face being sanctioned under the PSPO most persons comply. However, this outcome is not recorded and does not therefore empirically evidence the effectiveness of the PSPO.
- 2.9 In terms of overall activity, the following table demonstrates the types of issues managed by the Community Protection Team in 2021/22 (to date)



2.10 In line with the adopted Enforcement Policy, the Community Protection Team adopts an approach of working with people in the first instance to inform and encourage change in negative behaviour. If this cannot be achieved, then the approach escalates from warning to enforcement. Innovative use of the Community Protection Warning very often has the desired outcome when compliance through persuasion proves ineffective.

2.11 In the vast majority of cases the Community Protection Warning is sufficient to modify behaviour to an acceptable level. The tables below demonstrate this approach by illustrating that a large number of Community Protection warnings are issued but fewer result in a Community Protection Notice.

Breakdown of Community Protection Warnings Issued

Reason	2019	2020	2021
ASB	13	28	26
Nuisance/Dangerous Dog (Inc. Barking)	5	8	19
Noise (Inc. with ASB)	4	18	25
Nuisance	1	14	15
Planning related issues	0	3	0
Unauthorised Encampments	5	2	0
Total	28	74	85

Breakdown of Community Protection Notices Issued

Reason	2019	2020	2021
ASB	1	20	4
Nuisance/Dangerous Dog (Inc. Barking)	0	0	0
Noise (Inc. with ASB)	1	2	6
Nuisance	0	8	3
Planning related issues	0	3	0
Unauthorised Encampments	1	1	0
Total	6	34	13

2.12 In terms of how this activity compares with our nearest CIPFA comparison local authorities the tables below set out both community protection warnings and community protection notices during 2020/21.

Table A. Community Protection Warnings issued.

2020/21	AVG	MAX	MIN
Kent	28	154	0
CIPFA Nearest Neighbours	11	48	0
Maidstone	86		

Table B. Community Protection Notices issued.

2020/21	AVG	MAX	MIN
Kent	10.63	27	0
CIPFA Nearest Neighbours	8.17	34	0
Maidstone	0		

2.13 This suggest that MBC takes a more innovative approach to the use of the Community Protection Warnings and as a result this is quite effective. This would explain the relative low number of Community Protection Warnings then are ignored an then become Community Protection Notices.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 To note the report to help inform debate on the Council’s approach to tackling anti-social behaviour.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 To accept the recommendation in Paragraph 3.1 above.

5. RISK

5.1 Assess if within the council’s risk appetite and any mitigating actions proposed if needed.

6. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Community Protection Team Range of Responsibilities.

Appendix 1.

Community Protection Team Range of Responsibilities

- Anti-social behaviour
- Noise nuisance
- Pollution & verminous properties
- Drains
- Public Space Protection Order
- Issuing Fixed Penalty Notices
- Organised crime groups
- Gangs & exploitation
- Supporting the Safer Maidstone Partnership
- Animal welfare licensing
- Safety Advisory Group
- Gypsy/holiday home site licensing
- Unauthorised encampments on MBC land

In addition to this reactive work the team also undertakes a significant amount of proactive and preventative work to safeguard the most vulnerable within the borough. This includes, in the last 12 months:

- Implementation and management of the new Public Realm CCTV system
- Improved management of our Mobile CCTV assets and their deployment with Kent Police CSU
- Administration of the Weekly Community Safety Vulnerabilities Group
- Chairing the Maidstone Domestic Abuse Forum and supporting the provision of support services, including the One Stop Shops
- Co-chairing the District Contextual Safeguarding Meeting
- Participating in the Local Children's Partnership Group for Maidstone
- Administration of the Police Crime Commissioner's annual Community Safety fund, making c£15k of funding available to support local projects, including Maidstone Street Pastors and awareness programs for kids around gangs, violence and personal resilience
- Engagement with the Serious Organised Crime Panel to successfully disrupt 3 recognised Organised Crime Groups and to target County Line activity

Obtained funding from the Kent Violence Reduction Unit for funding projects and initiatives including:

- Emergency Trauma Packs for key locations around the town
- A new knife bar and two knife wands
- 2 new rapid deployment cameras
- Youth Safety Survey (postponed till October 2020)

Hosting a partnership "sites of interest" meeting for complex sites with criminal, planning and environmental concerns

Introduced a more efficient Safety Advisory Group process to allow event organisers to seek advice on how to run their events safely and reducing the need for meetings

Introduced new animal welfare legislation in relation to animal activities, including new processes for home boarding, assessing them against new criteria and awarding star ratings as follows

Played pivotal role in the post lockdown "Town Centre re-opening" task force for both day time and night time economies

Agenda Item 19

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

1 February 2022

Effective interventions for tackling ASB by the community safety unit

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

Executive Summary

Anti-social behaviour covers a wide spectrum of activity. Research indicates that enforcement alone does not provide the most effective solution but may contribute to the reduction of ASB when set alongside other interventions.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

That:

1. The Community Protection Team work with key partner agencies to adopt a 'Task Force Approach' to reducing ASB and other criminality in the Town Centre, including an increased presence and joint problem solving; and
2. An assessment of the effectiveness of this approach to be presented to Committee in April 2022

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Communities, Housing & Environment Committee	1 February 2022

Effective interventions for tackling ASB by the community safety unit

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place • Accepting the recommendation is intended to materially improve the Council's ability to achieve a safe environment for residents and visitors to enjoy. 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Already covered in the risk section. 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is proposed to resource the recommended proposal from existing resources. 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be staffing implications and these are set out in Paragraph 3.3 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acting on the recommendations is within the Council's powers as set out in the Crime & Reduction Act. 	Head of Housing & Community Services

Privacy and Data Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepting the recommendations will increase the volume of data held by the Council. We will hold that data in line with our retention schedules. 	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals. 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Crime and Disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendation is intended to have a positive impact on Crime and Disorder. The Community Protection Team have been consulted and mitigation has been proposed 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not applicable 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Biodiversity and Climate Change	<p>The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no implications on biodiversity and climate change. 	Head of Housing & Community Services

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Chair & Vice Chair of the Communities, Housing & Environment Committee requested officers to provide a report on the effectiveness of the Council's Community Safety Unit in relation to tackling anti-social behaviour; and whether this could be improved through the introduction of additional resources. In particular whether this could be improved by providing a visible presence and deterrent to those committing ASB, and where necessary to enforce the Public Space Protection Orders currently in place within the Borough.
- 2.2 In considering these points research was undertaken to identify areas of good practice that could evidence what types of intervention are most effective in reducing ASB. A number of reports were reviewed and referenced in this report, and acknowledgement is given to their authors in Paragraph 9. below.
- 2.3 The Queen's University of Belfast produced a report on "Understanding and addressing anti-social behaviour" for the Belfast Community Safety

Partnership in 2019. It stated that anti-social behaviour encompasses a broad range of activity and may differ depending on the demographic that witnesses or perpetrates the actions. This captures a spectrum of behaviours from more general, nuisance behaviours that are subjective but generally low risk through to more serious forms of ASB, often referred to as chronic substance misuse, aggression and higher risk behaviours.”

- 2.4 It was noted that “Antisocial behaviours can cause harm and distress to individuals and communities. Community perceptions have a role in perpetuating assumptions about young people, what antisocial behaviour is and what responses are required.”
- 2.5 Our own recent consultation carried out to inform the review of the Community Safety Plan also supports the finding of the Belfast study, that at a lower end of the scale ASB can be very subjective and the geographical location can also affect the person’s perception of what is ASB, as well as the level of tolerance towards the conduct of the perpetrator.
- 2.6 The Community Safety Survey was conducted between 17th September and 31 October 2021. There was a total of 1241 responses to the survey, which was carried out via various social media channels and the Council’s website. Anti-social behaviour was cited as the most single issue of concern by 653 of respondents. However, further analysis of what was being thought of as ASB varied significantly depending on where the respondent lived.
- 2.7 Littering was the main issue of concern ascribed to the definition of ASB, with 76% describing this as a ‘fairly big or very big issue’. Of all respondents, dog-fowling and fly-tipping were all cited within the definition of ASB as being a ‘fairly big or very big issue’ above drunk /rowdy people or young people hanging around.
- 2.8 Overall, 32% of respondents felt that drunk/rowdy people were a ‘fairly big or very big issue’ but this rose to 67% when broken down into the High Street Ward or as low as 4% for Harrietsham & Lenham Ward. Similarly concerns around young people hanging around scored 45% as a ‘fairly big or very big issue’ overall but 57% for High Street Ward and 24% for Harrietsham & Lenham Ward.
- 2.9 Defining what is meant by ASB is important when considering the intervention that may prove to be most effective. As can be seen from the extract from the survey above, what professionals may deem to be the main concern around ASB is not necessarily reflected by the community. Solutions will also need to be nuanced to address the concerns of specific community areas.

2.10 Evidencing the impact of interventions:

The National Audit Office in 2005 commissioned the RAND Europe Institute to evaluate the effectiveness of ASB interventions. The report noted that “There is no strong tradition of rigorous evaluations of interventions in Europe.”

- 2.11 Unfortunately, this position does not appear to have significantly changed, the House of Commons (HoC) library report (April 2020) on "Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour stated "There is no centrally published and accredited data on the use of all ASB powers. Each police force and local authority might have its own records on the use of powers but there is no central authority responsible for collecting and publishing this data at the national level. We therefore do not have an accurate picture of when and how ASB powers are being used or who is being affected by their use across England and Wales." This makes evaluating our own Community Safety Unit approach difficult to evaluate in comparison to other areas, and also in identifying potential best practice.
- 2.12 The HoC report referenced the Crime Statistics for England & Wales (CSEW), noting around 39% of people personally experienced anti-social behaviour in their local area between October 2018 and September 2019. This was an increase from the previous year but the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has said changes in how the survey questions were asked may have contributed to the increase.
- 2.13 In contrast, national Police data shows a decrease in anti-social behaviour over the last ten years. However, it is not clear how much of this decrease can be attributed to police recording practices, as more instances of 'anti-social behaviour' are now being recorded as crime.
- 2.14 The CSEW showed a marked decrease in people's perceptions of anti-social behaviour as a "very big" or "fairly big" problem over the past ten years. Overall, 7% of people thought that "high level anti-social behaviour" was a very/ fairly big problem between October 2018 and September 2019. This is down by almost ten percentage points from ten years ago (from 16% between April 2008 and March 2009).
- 2.15 The advent of the Covid19 pandemic together with the measures taken to address its spread, lead to a sharp increase in reported ASB. This can be attributed to many more people being at home, and also changes in activity that led to complaints round noise and bonfires. This makes data collected from the period post March 2020 difficult to compare against data from previous years.
- 2.16 Whilst some restrictions have been lifted, the long-term impact on people's behaviour and mental health from the unusual set of social impacts brought about by the pandemic and the ensuing restrictions – particularly for young people, has yet to be studied and understood.

2.17 Interventions:

The House of Commons Library report on "Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour April 2020" noted that local authorities and the police lead on tackling anti-social behaviour, but many public, private and social organisations work to prevent and respond to ASB.

- 2.18 The multi-organisation and methodology approach was a common feature across the various studies and reports reviewed during the compilation of the report.

2.19 The 2005 RAND report for the National Audit Office made the following conclusions:

- Early interventions aim to tackle risk factors from pregnancy through to early childhood and have been found to be effective.
- Educational interventions to prevent the onset of offending in at-risk youth can prevent the onset of delinquency.
- Coercive interventions, such as detention and imprisonment, have been found to produce nil or even negative effects in reducing recidivism.
- There is little reliable data on the effectiveness of ASBOs, a type of coercive intervention and a key measure to tackle ASB in the UK.
- Developmental/rehabilitative interventions can significantly reduce the rate of recidivism amongst young offenders.
- Situational interventions that aim to reduce the opportunity to commit crime, for example by improving street lighting, have also been found to be effective.

2.20 The study by the University of Belfast for the Belfast Community Safety Partnership identified that "Coercive interventions such as Anti-social behaviour orders have been widely implemented in recent years but reviews and meta-analysis examining their effectiveness have concluded that these have nil effect on the deterrence of ASB."

2.21 Equally the study noted that if a "community experiences significant, persistent and dangerous forms of ASB then group based, diversionary and activity focused projects appears to be insufficient on their own to have a meaningful impact on behaviour. Policy makers and commissioners need to be aware of the specific forms of ASB which they want to prioritise, but also the specific approaches which are proven to be more effective for those forms of ASB."

2.22 A number of reports concluded that only a minority of young people were engaged in more serious forms of ASB and present a threat to themselves, their peers and their communities. A combination of youth work, family work and therapeutic approaches are often most successful when combined with outreach work and direct engagement.

2.23 Similar findings were found by MVA Consultancy in 2007 when they undertook a study and "Evaluation of Four Anti-Social Behaviour Projects in Wales" on behalf of the Welsh Assembly. This study reviewed four separate projects that had a similar aim of reducing ASB but were different in their approach and delivery.

2.24 One project focused on getting young people more involved in activities that would result in benefits for their community. Another project concentrated on designing out crime through a programme of clean-up activities in the local community, as a first step towards increasing community pride and ownership among residents in the area.

2.25 The third project took a more person-focussed approach, specifically working with an identified cohort of known offenders with the aim of

reducing the number of disaffected young people who carry out anti-social behaviour, as a means of reducing fear of crime in the wider community. The final project reviewed took a more enforcement led intervention, using statutory powers to reduce anti-social behaviour in Cardiff's parks and open spaces.

- 2.26 The four projects all achieved a degree of success, but it was noted that some required a more blended approach in order to address the negative behaviours of a minority of individuals who exhibited the worst types of behaviour. Some interventions had short-term benefits or had the effect of displacing the problem thus providing a period of relief for the community. However, for there to be a long-term benefit addressing the causation of the behaviour was just as important as enforcement.
- 2.27 The research of four projects concluded that there was an "inherent assumption that the targeted behaviours would result in reduced levels of fear of crime or increased levels of feelings of safety. Despite this, in each of the projects, it might be argued that the main benefits to arise were for participants' quality of life rather than any notable decrease in communities' fear of crime or feelings of safety. This might suggest, again, a need for greater public consultation at an early stage of project planning to ensure that the activities undertaken are matched to the desired changes. It is recognised that this is a challenging target."

2.28 Maidstone's approach:

The Council has been working together with its partner organisations including Kent Police and Kent County Council to address areas of concern such as Brenchley park. This has included providing diversionary events, engaging with young people through County's youth service, as well as an increase in Police presence over a short-period. This approach seeks to address the behaviour in the short-term but also to assist with tackling the underlying causes of the behaviour over a the long-term.

- 2.29 The use of the Town Centre PSPO has evolved. When first implemented there were increasing concerns around begging and ASB associated with groups gathering to consume alcohol in public places. Through the joint work with the Outreach Team, many of the individuals who were known to be street homeless and exhibiting this type of behaviour have been assisted to come off the streets.
- 2.30 This has significantly reduced the number of complaints received around begging and ASB that was attributed to this cohort of people. The effect of the offer of assistance or the use of the PSPO for those who were not minded to accept help, meant that in time not only were those individuals helped and awareness was raised amongst the wider peer group.
- 2.31 Since the lifting of the lockdown regulations, and with more people socialising in a public setting, other concerns have emerged – particularly around young people gathering in groups; and activity linked to supply and use of illegal substances.

- 2.32 The same approach of warning and informing first is captured in most of the Council's enforcement policies. Most members of the public desist from the activity that is causing concern when requested to do so. This means that a Community Protection Notice or Fixed Penalty Notice is required to be served. Our officers will always seek to resolve situations where they can but their powers are limited. For example, those persons who become belligerent and refuse to provide their details in order that a FPN can be issued may still require the attendance of a police constable to effect an arrest.
- 2.33 Whilst the Community Protection Team has a role to play in disrupting activities linked to illegal substances, it does not have the powers to intervene e.g. to make arrests. In addition, any role that the Council takes in tackling this issue has to be carefully coordinated with the Police so as not to compromise criminal investigations that are being pursued.
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3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Committee could choose to do nothing but this option is not recommended as the Committee has previously expressed a desire to be more interventionist in tackling ASB.
- 3.2 The Committee recently tasked officers to deploy resources from the Community Protection Team to deliver a more visible presence in areas where the Council has an existing Public Space Protection Order. Whilst this can be achieved over the short-term, it would not be possible to sustain diverting resources away from the Team's statutory functions concerning nuisance and licensing without diluting services for residents; and reducing capacity to deliver interventions linked to domestic abuse, disrupting serious crime groups and the Council's contribution to the Maidstone Task Force - all of which are being made in order to reduce both the short-term and long-term harm on the community.
- 3.3 The Committee will be aware that the Maidstone Task Force is nearing the completion of its work in relation to Shepway. The Task Force will be undertaking a full assessment as to the impact, but early indications are that the methodology employed has been very effective.
- 3.4 The Town Centre area has a range of characteristics and indices that promote a similar approach with a range of partners, including the Town Centre Police Team; One Maidstone; Kent County Council Youth Services; Public Health; voluntary organisations and the Council. A Task Force approach deployed in this way by these agencies would enable a more focused use of existing resources Town Centre that could assist the Community Protection Team in tackling anti-social behaviour.
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4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 A two phased approach is recommended that will enable the Committee to review the impact of deploying a Task Force approach with a more visible role in the Town Centre. It is proposed that the Head of Housing and

Community Services provides a further report in April 2022 that will bring together an assessment of the increased presence of the Community Protection Team together with the future deployment of the Town Centre resources.

5. RISK

- 5.1 The officer recommendation is within the Council's agreed risk appetite for the intended purpose of reducing anti-social behaviour.

6. REPORT APPENDICES

- None
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7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Interventions to Reduce Anti-Social Behaviour and Crime – prepared for the National Audit Office by RAND Europe 2005

Positively Affecting Lives; Evaluation of Four Anti-Social Behaviour Projects in Wales - Report for Welsh Assembly Government August 2007 prepared by MVA Consultancy

Understanding and Addressing Anti-Social Behaviour – prepared by the University of Belfast for the Belfast Community Safety Partnership 2019

Tackling Anti-social Behaviour; House of Commons Library April 2020