

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 1 March 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.

<u>AGENDA</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
1. Apologies for Absence	
2. Notification of Substitute Members	
3. Urgent Items	
4. Notification of Visiting Members	
5. Disclosures by Members and Officers	
6. Disclosures of Lobbying	
7. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.	
8. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 1 February 2022	1 - 5
9. Presentation of Petitions (if any)	
10. Questions and answer session for members of the public (if any)	
11. Questions from Members to the Chairman (if any)	
12. Committee Work Programme	6
13. Reports of Outside Bodies	
14. Reference From Policy and Resources Committee - Management of Temporary Accommodation Portfolio	7 - 8
15. 3rd Quarter Financial Update & Performance Monitoring Report	9 - 33

Issued on Monday 21 February 2022

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

16. Review of the Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan	34 - 50
17. Housing Strategy 2022-2027	51 - 56
18. River Len Local Nature Reserve	57 - 63
19. Brenchley Gardens Fencing Proposal	64 - 71

INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

In order to ask a question at this meeting in person or by remote means, please call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. by 5 p.m. on Friday 25 February 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 25 February 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: **28 February 2022**

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 1 FEBRUARY 2022

Present: Councillors Bartlett, Joy, McKenna, Mortimer, Newton, Perry, M Rose, S Webb (Chairman) and Young

129. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Purle.

130. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor Perry was present as a Substitute for Councillor Purle.

131. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

132. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor Garten was present as a Visiting Member for Item 14 – Reference from Council – Motion – Garden Waste Bin Service, and Item 15 – Garden Waste Service.

Councillor English was present as a Visiting Member for Item 19 – Review of the efficiency and effectiveness of the community safety unit.

133. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

134. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

Councillor Mortimer had been lobbied on Item 17 – Heather House & Pavilion Building Update.

135. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

136. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 NOVEMBER 2021

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 November 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed.

137. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

138. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

139. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

140. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

141. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports of Outside Bodies.

142. REFERENCE FROM COUNCIL - MOTION - GARDEN WASTE BIN SERVICE

RESOLVED: That Item 14 – Reference from Council – Motion – Garden Waste Bin Service, be taken alongside Item 15 – Garden Waste Service, due to the related subject matter.

143. GARDEN WASTE SERVICE

The Head of Environment and Public Realm introduced the report and outlined the disruptions experienced to the service, and the actions which had been taken as a result.

It was acknowledged that both Covid-19 and the shortage of drivers had impacted the service, but the waste team was thanked for their work throughout the difficult period.

In response to questions, the Head of Environment and Public Realm explained that food waste and garden waste collections had not been combined due to the requirement for food waste to be collected weekly, however it could be further considered under the new waste services contract.

RESOLVED: That the current performance of the garden waste service and actions taken to mitigate the HGV driver shortages be noted.

144. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND BUDGET PROPOSALS

The Director of Finance and Business Improvement introduced the report and explained that although there had been a favourable financial settlement from the government, this was set against a higher inflation rate than had been anticipated. Financial challenges for the budget included the extra costs associated with the new waste contract, the

commitment to affordable housing which would require subsidy from the Council, and the public toilet contract. Additional resource had been allocated to community protection to give the team more flexibility to respond to issues such as anti-social behaviour in the Borough.

Continual savings were made through the Council's own provision of temporary accommodation and the in-house management of CCTV. The main expenditure on the capital programme was the affordable housing programme, which had been allocated £113 million for the five-year period to 26/27.

In response to questions, the Director of Finance and Business Improvement explained that the budget allocated for public toilets included all those managed by waste services, and the growth was due to the new waste contract and the addition of public toilets, for example in Mote Park.

RESOLVED: That

1. 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; and
2. 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.

145. HEATHER HOUSE & PAVILION BUILDING UPDATE

The Housing Delivery Manager introduced the report and outlined the previous decisions made by the Committee. A detailed planning application for the Heather House site was submitted on 13 January 2022 for the scheme shown at appendix 1 to the report. Housing with private parking was proposed on the pavilion site, having been designed to Nationally Described Space Standards, with the five properties for market rent being added to Maidstone Property Holdings Portfolio. The new centre would be available for community hire and a management provider would be procured.

The Committee expressed concern that the design was centred around sports provision rather than the community, and that it did not incorporate the facilities commonly required for community use, including a larger storage area and extra rooms for smaller meetings. A bar was not part of the initial design plans and more information was expected regarding the future management of the centre. Further rationale regarding the proposed design was requested, including information on the results of the residents' survey.

In response to questions, the Housing Delivery Manager explained that multiple changing rooms had been incorporated into the design to allow both sports pitches to be used concurrently. The stakeholder consultation and residents survey had informed the design, and a bar was a common

feature of community centres used for events such as weddings and parties. Costs at this stage were estimates as they would not be finalised until the procurement process had been completed, and further information on management providers would also not be available until after the procurement exercise.

RESOLVED: That

1. Additional information be provided to the Committee including further detail on the residents' survey results, the economic impact and the rationale of the proposed design; and
2. Further designs be put forward which incorporate a variety of sports and community uses.

146. REVIEW OF THE USE OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR MEASURES.

The Head of Housing and Community Services introduced the report and outlined the range of activity carried out by the Community Protection Team. The team initially addressed unacceptable behaviour by issuing community protection warnings, and if the behaviour persisted they could issue a community protection notice. Greater compliance with the warnings had resulted in fewer notices being issued, and joined-up working with other teams such as planning enforcement enabled some instances of antisocial behaviour to be resolved more quickly.

The Community Protection Team were involved in a wide range of other services including domestic abuse prevention and animal welfare issues.

In response to questions, the Head of Housing and Community Services agreed that the team's remit was broad, and explained that COMF funding had allowed additional officers to be recruited to the team. In relation to the team's impact in disrupting organised crime groups, multi-agency working meant that a wide range of tools could be used to interfere with criminal activity.

RESOLVED: That the range of activities undertaken by the Community Protection Team, and information on the use of interventions used to tackle antisocial behaviour, be noted.

147. REVIEW OF THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COMMUNITY SAFETY UNIT

The Head of Housing and Community Services introduced the report and explained a blended approach was required to tackle antisocial behaviour, rather than one single approach. The Community Protection Team had started patrols to increase visibility in areas of concern, however this was not a sustainable solution as it would divert the team's resources away from their statutory duties.

The Maidstone Task Force was ongoing in the Shepway area and preliminary results had shown their methods to be very effective. It had

therefore been proposed that the Task Force approach could be replicated in other areas of Maidstone, with joined up working with partners such as the Police, Social Services and One Maidstone.

RESOLVED: 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 be presented to the Committee in April 2022.

148. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30pm to 8.08pm.

Note: The Committee adjourned between 6.40pm and 6.44pm, and between 6.46pm and 6.50pm, due to technical difficulties.

2021/22 WORK PROGRAMME

	Committee	Month	Origin	CLT to clear	Lead	Report Author
Annual Review of Rules and Protocols - Crime and Disorder Committee	CHE	05-Apr-22	Cllr Request		John Littlemore	John Littlemore
Community Safety Plan and Strategic Assessment - Crime and Disorder Committee	CHE	05-Apr-22	Officer Update		John Littlemore	Martyn Jeynes
Garden Waste Sacks	CHE	05-Apr-22	Officer Update			Jennifer Stevens
Options on Tightening the Approach to Littering, Graffiti and Waste Crime (to incorporate Street Cleansing Monitoring)	CHE	05-Apr-22	Cllr Request		John Edwards	John Edwards
Draft Housing Strategy	CHE	June	Officer Update			John Littlemore
An Overview of the Council's Current and Emerging Fire Safety Responsibilities	CHE	TBC	Officer Update	Yes	William Cornall	Nigel Bucklow / John Littlemore
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

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

1 MARCH 2022

REPORT OF THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON 24 NOVEMBER 2021

MANAGEMENT OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION PORTFOLIO

Issue for Decision

The Policy and Resources Committee (P&R) have requested that the Communities Housing and Environment Committee review the current temporary property portfolio with regard to the management of identified problems.

Recommendation Made

That the Committee consider the request to review the current temporary property portfolio with regard to the management of identified problems.

Reasons for Recommendation

The Phase 5 Purchase & Repair Temporary Accommodation Acquisition was presented to the P&R Committee on 24 November 2021.

Extract of Minute 121 from the above-mentioned meeting is outlined below:

'Phase 5 had been considered by the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee in early November 2021, as the body responsible for its implementation. The Council's governance arrangements required approval from the Committee regarding the provision of delegated authority to the Director of Finance and Business Improvement, as recommended, to purchase the properties.'

The Committee expressed support for work undertaken and reiterated the importance of the Temporary Accommodation Strategy.

In response to questions, the Housing Development Officer explained the existing protocol whereby the Local Ward Members were informed of the Council's intention to purchase a property within their Ward and a request made for any comments. Several Members of the Committee felt that further attention into any issues arising from the properties was required.'

In agreeing the properties' purchase, the request was made for the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee to review the temporary property portfolio with regard to the management of identified problems.

Alternatives Considered and Why Not Recommended

None.

Background Documents

Minutes (Part I) of the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 24 November 2021 - [Minutes Template \(maidstone.gov.uk\)](https://www.maidstone.gov.uk/minutes-template)

Appendices

None.

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

1 March 2022

3rd Quarter Financial Update & Performance Monitoring Report 2021/22

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

Executive Summary

This report sets out the 2021/22 financial and performance position for the services reporting into the Communities, Housing & Environment Committee (CHE) as at 31st December 2021 (Quarter 3). The primary focus is on:

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

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

Budget Monitoring

Overall net expenditure at the end of Quarter 3 for the services reporting to CHE is £3.795m, compared to the approved profiled budget of £4.555m, representing an underspend of £0.761m.

Capital expenditure at the end of Quarter 3 was £3.776m against a total budget of £9.798m. Forecast spend for the year is £6.120m.

The budgets in this report are the revised estimates for 2021/22.

Performance Monitoring

66.7% (2 of 3) targetable quarterly key performance indicators reportable to the Communities, Housing & Environment Committee achieved their Quarter 3 target.

Recovery & Renewal Update

In October Policy and Resources Committee agreed a range of actions for spending under Recovery and Renewal, with updates provided alongside the quarterly performance and budget report. Progress against actions relevant to this Committee can be seen at Appendix 3. Positively substantial progress has been made across all the whole action plan.

Purpose of Report

The report enables the Committee to consider and comment on the issues raised and actions being taken to address both budget pressures and performance issues as at 31st December 2021.

This report makes the following Recommendations to the Committee:

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

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Communities, Housing & Environment Committee	1 March 2022

3rd Quarter Financial Update & Performance Monitoring Report 2021/22

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

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

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

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

1. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Medium-Term Financial Strategy for 2021/22 to 2025/26 - including the budget for 2021/22 - was approved by full Council on 24th February 2021. This report updates the Committee on how its services have performed over the last quarter with regard to revenue and capital expenditure against approved budgets.
- 1.2 This report also includes an update to the Committee on progress against its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- 1.3 Attached at **Appendix 1** is a report setting out the revenue and capital spending position at the Quarter 3 stage. Attached at **Appendix 2** is a report

setting out the position for the KPIs for the corresponding period.

- 1.4 Also attached at **Appendix 3** is an update on the actions taken to date with regards to the Recovery & Renewal Plan agreed previously by Policy & Resources Committee. It should be noted that there is one action where action is not yet due, and this has been highlighted. In relation to the community resilience fund, a review meeting with nominated members of the committee has been arranged to review applications for projects, following this a new round of bidding will be undertaken.

2. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

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

3. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

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

4. RISK

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

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 The KPIs update ("Performance Monitoring") is reported to service committees quarterly: Communities, Housing & Environment Committee;

Economic Regeneration & Leisure Committee; and the Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Committee. Each committee will receive a report on the relevant priority action areas. The report is also presented to the Policy & Resources Committee, reporting on the priority areas of "A Thriving Place", "Safe, Clean and Green", "Homes and Communities" and "Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure".

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 The Quarter 3 Budget & Performance Monitoring reports are being considered by the relevant Service Committees during February and March 2022, including a full report to the Policy & Resources Committee on 9th February 2022.
 - 6.2 The Council could choose not to monitor its budget and/or the Strategic Plan and/or make alternative performance management arrangements, such as the frequency of reporting. This is not recommended as it could lead to action not being taken against financial and/or other performance during the year, and the Council failing to deliver its priorities.
 - 6.3 There remains uncertainty regarding the Council's financial position beyond 2021/22, arising from the impacts of the Covid-19 crisis and the Council's role in responding to this. Future finance reports to this committee will ensure that members are kept up to date with this situation as it develops.
-

7. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Third Quarter Budget Monitoring 2021/22
 - Appendix 2: Third Quarter Performance Monitoring 2021/22
 - Appendix 3: Recovery & Renewal Update
-

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Third Quarter Financial Update 2021/22

Communities, Housing & Environment Committee

1st March 2022

Lead Officer: Mark Green

Report Author: Paul Holland

Contents

Part A: Executive Summary & Overview Page 2

Part B: Revenue Budget Q3 2021/22

B1) Revenue Budget Page 5

Part C: Capital Budget Q3 2021/22

C1) Capital Budget Page 9

Part A

Executive Summary & Overview



This report provides members with the financial position as at 31 December 2021, covering activity for both the Council as a whole and this committee's revenue and capital accounts for the first three quarters of 2021/22.

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

The headlines for Quarter 3 are as follows:

Part B: Revenue budget – Q3 2021/22

- Overall net expenditure at the end of Quarter 3 for the services reporting to this committee is £3.795m, compared to the approved profiled budget of £4.555m, representing an underspend of £0.761m.

Part C: Capital budget – Q3 2021/22

- Capital expenditure at the end of Quarter 3 was £3.776m against a total budget of £9.798m. Forecast spend for the year is £6.120m.

The budgets in this report are the revised estimates for 2021/22.

Part B

Third Quarter Revenue Budget 2021/22



B2) Revenue Budget

B1.1 The table below provides a detailed summary on the budgeted net income position for CHE services at the end of Quarter 3. The financial figures are presented on an accruals basis (e.g. expenditure for goods and services received, but not yet paid for, is included).

CHE Revenue Budget & Outturn – Quarter 3

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
Cost Centre	Approved Budget for Year £000	Budget to 31 December 2021 £000	Actual £000	Variance £000	Forecast 31 March 2022 £000	Forecast Variance 31 March 2022 £000
Parks & Open Spaces	968	739	689	50	958	10
Playground Maintenance & Improvements	148	109	98	10	148	0
Parks Pavilions	45	34	12	22	45	0
Mote Park	249	187	226	-39	299	-49
Parks & Open Spaces Leisure Activities	-2	-1	-0	-1	-2	0
Mote Park Leisure Activities	-19	-14	-19	5	-19	0
Allotments	13	10	8	2	13	0
Cemetery	63	67	26	41	43	20
National Assistance Act	-0	-0	3	-4	-0	0
Crematorium	-898	-618	-677	59	-928	30
Community Safety	28	-7	-11	5	28	0
PCC Grant - Building Safer Communities	0	0	-8	8	0	0
C C T V	77	15	13	2	77	0
Drainage	32	24	6	18	32	0
Licences	-5	-3	-1	-1	-5	0
Licensing Statutory	-63	-47	-90	43	-93	30
Licensing Non Chargeable	8	6	6	0	8	0
Dog Control	28	19	26	-7	28	0
Health Improvement Programme	10	9	0	9	10	0
Pollution Control - General	33	23	5	18	33	0
Contaminated Land	1	0	-1	1	1	0
Waste Crime	38	30	10	20	38	0
Food Hygiene	9	6	-3	9	9	0
Sampling	4	2	0	2	4	0
Occupational Health & Safety	-6	-5	-4	-0	-6	0
Infectious Disease Control	1	1	38	-37	1	0
Noise Control	1	1	0	1	1	0
Pest Control	-12	-9	-2	-7	-12	0
Public Conveniences	208	149	141	7	208	0
Licensing - Hackney & Private Hire	-61	-48	-35	-13	-61	0
Street Cleansing	1,142	843	797	47	1,092	50
Household Waste Collection	1,271	955	982	-27	1,271	0
Commercial Waste Services	-55	-43	-72	29	-55	0
Recycling Collection	745	485	457	28	745	0
Climate change	26	0	0	0	26	0
Community Hub	0	-13	2	-15	0	0

(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)	(g)
Cost Centre	Approved Budget for Year £000	Budget to 31 December 2021 £000	Actual £000	Variance £000	Forecast 31 March 2022 £000	Forecast Variance 31 March 2022 £000
Public Health - Obesity	0	-47	-80	33	-108	108
Public Health - Misc Services	0	-1	2	-3	0	0
Grants	166	165	163	2	166	0
Delegated Grants	2	2	1	1	2	0
Parish Services	134	134	133	2	134	0
General Fund Residential Properties	-77	-58	-46	-12	-77	0
Strategic Housing Role	12	-22	-20	-2	12	0
Housing Register & Allocations	14	13	11	1	14	0
Private Sector Renewal	-47	-48	-50	2	-47	0
HMO Licensing	-20	-15	-25	10	-20	0
Homeless Temporary Accommodation	328	135	103	31	298	30
Homelessness Prevention	55	-901	-938	37	-52	107
Predictive Analysis and Preventing Homelessness	0	0	0	0	0	0
Aylesbury House	28	20	14	5	28	0
Magnolia House	-1	-1	-20	18	-1	0
St Martins House	4	3	2	1	4	0
Marsham Street	61	46	36	10	61	0
Sundry Temporary Accommod (TA) Properties	-14	-10	-21	12	-14	0
Pelican Court (Leased TA Property)	0	0	-0	0	0	0
2 Bed Property - Temporary Accommodation	-17	-13	-29	17	-17	0
3 Bed Property - Temporary Accommodation	-71	-53	-75	22	-71	0
4 bed Property - Temporary Accommodation	10	7	4	3	10	0
1 Bed Property- Temporary Accommodation	3	2	-4	6	3	0
Supported Accommodation	0	0	-0	0	0	0
The Trinity Foyer	21	17	25	-8	21	0
Chillington House	-6	-4	-7	3	-6	0
Long Lease Properties	0	0	2	-2	0	0
Marden Caravan Site (Stilebridge Lane)	19	16	23	-7	19	0
Ulcombe Caravan Site (Water Lane)	7	-1	30	-31	34	-27
Head of Environment and Public Realm	110	82	68	15	110	0
Bereavement Services Section	261	196	184	12	261	0
Community Partnerships & Resilience Section	396	283	254	28	363	32
Licensing Section	115	86	79	7	115	0
Environmental Protection Section	272	204	170	34	252	20
Food and Safety Section	267	200	93	107	267	0
Depot Services Section	871	654	634	20	871	0
Biodiversity & Climate Change	62	47	36	11	62	0
Head of Housing & Community Services	111	83	82	1	111	0
Homechoice Section	217	144	117	27	217	0
Housing & Inclusion Section	417	180	114	66	360	57
Housing & Health Section	273	148	80	69	199	75
Housing Management	284	183	159	24	284	0
Homelessness Outreach	6	-104	-111	8	6	0
Salary Slippage 3CHE	-194	-145	0	-145	0	-194
Fleet Workshop & Management	226	169	153	17	226	0
MBS Support Crew	-58	-44	-39	-5	-58	0
Grounds Maintenance - Commercial	-140	-105	-130	25	-140	0
Total	8,130	4,555	3,795	761	7,831	299

B1.2 The table shows that at the end of the third quarter overall net expenditure for the services reporting to CHE is £3.795m, compared to the approved profiled budget of £4.555m, representing an underspend of £0.761m.

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

B2) Variances

B2.1 The most significant variances for this Committee are as follows:

	Positive Variance Q3	Adverse Variance Q3	Year End Forecast Variance
Communities, Housing & Environment Committee	£000		
Parks & Open Spaces – The plan is to use the current underspend for number of items. These include funding for agency staff covering sickness absence, some works that need to be undertaken and a tree survey.	50		10
Crematorium - Demand for the service continues to be high. This has led to the need to realign the cremator, and surplus income is being used to fund these works.	60		30
Street Cleansing – The underspend is a consequence of staff vacancies that have now been filled, so the variance should not change significantly by the end of the year.	47		50
Public Health (Obesity) – The underspend is due to a number of unused grants that will be carried forward at the end of the year.	32		108
Homelessness Prevention - There are a number of budgets in this area that are not being fully utilised, the most significant ones being those for the guaranteed rent scheme and the homefinder scheme.	37		107

Part C

Third Quarter Capital Budget 2021/22



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

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

CHE Capital Programme 2021/22 (@ Quarter 3)

	Revised Estimate 2021/22 £000	Actual to December 2021 £000	Budget Remaining £000	Q4 Profile £000	Projected Total Expenditure £000	Projected Slippage to 2022/23 £000
Housing - Disabled Facilities Grants Funding	1,017	535	481	250	785	231
Temporary Accommodation	3,008	9	2,998	1,000	1,009	1,998
Brunswick Street	233	230	3		230	3
Union Street	217		217			217
Springfield Mill	2,045	1,888	157	157	2,045	0
Private Rented Sector Housing Programme	1,125	56	1,069	250	306	819
1,000 Homes Affordable Housing Programme	750	651	99	99	750	
Acquisitions Officer - Social Housing Delivery P/ship	160	150	10	10	160	
Granada House Refurbishment Works	20	13	7	7	20	
Street Scene Investment	50	21	29	29	50	
Flood Action Plan	244		244	75	75	169
Electric Operational Vehicles	84		84	84	84	
Vehicle Telematics & Camera Systems	35		35	35	35	
Rent & Housing Management IT System	19	8	11	11	19	0
Installation of Public Water Fountains	15		15	15	15	
Crematorium & Cemetery Development Plan	378	171	207	207	378	0
Continued Improvements to Play Areas	200		200	50	50	150
Parks Improvements	149	7	142	50	57	92
Gypsy & Traveller Sites Refurbishment	50	35	15	15	50	0
Total	9,798	3,776	6,022	2,344	6,120	3,679

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

Temporary Accommodation – This is the funding for the latest phase of property acquisitions to provide accommodation for temporarily homeless families and persons. There have been no acquisitions to date. A number may take place during the fourth quarter, but it has proved difficult to obtain properties at reasonable valuations given the current overheated housing market.

Private Rented Sector Housing and 1,000 Homes Affordable Housing Programmes – The housing team are working on various projects which are currently at different stages. Expenditure is very much indicative at this stage and expected to increase during the last quarter once schemes have progressed further and new ones are potentially secured.

CHE: Quarter 3 Performance Report

Key to performance ratings

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

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

Performance Summary

RAG Rating	Green	Amber	Red	N/A ¹	Total
KPIs	2	1	0	8	11
Direction	Up	No Change	Down	N/A	Total
Last Quarter	6	0	5	0	11
Last Year	2	0	3	6	11

- 66.7% (2 of 3) targetable quarterly key performance indicators (KPIs) reportable to this Committee achieved their Quarter 3 (Q3) target¹.
- Compared to last quarter (Q2 2021/22), performance for 54.5% (6 of 11) KPIs has improved, and for 45.5% (5 of 11) KPIs has declined¹
- Compared to last year (Q3 2020/21), performance for 40% (2 of 5) KPIs has improved, and for 60% (3 of 5) KPIs has declined¹

Communities

Performance Indicator	Q3 2021/22				
	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
Number of households living in temporary accommodation last night of the month (NI 156 & SDL 009-00) (average taken from October – December)	149				
Number of households living in nightly paid temporary accommodation last night of the month (average taken from October – December)	54				
Percentage of successful Prevention Duty outcomes	71.67%	60%			
Number of households prevented or relieved from becoming homeless	141	112.5			
Percentage of successful Relief Duty outcomes	58.51%	60%			

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

Performance Indicator	Q3 2021/22				
	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
Number of Rough Sleepers accommodated by the Council on the last night of the month (average taken from October – December)	28				
Number of Rough Sleepers newly engaged in the period	14				
Number of households newly in temporary accommodation due to loss of tenancy and home ownership	16				
Number of homeless cases where the cause of homelessness is domestic abuse	42				
Percentage of Community Protection Warnings to Community Protection Notices in period (Community Protection Team/Safer Maidstone Partnership)	3.4%				
Percentage of noise complaints followed up with diary sheets by a customer	23.6%				

The “**Percentage of successful Relief Duty outcomes**” indicator achieved a result of 58.51% against a target of 60%, missing its target within 10%. Quarter three’s outcome is a higher result when comparing to the last quarter (Q2: 56.16%) and also much higher when comparing to the same quarter the previous year (35.29%).

The outcome of 58.51% of homelessness relieved in the quarter demonstrates good performance and is significantly higher than the national average of homelessness relieved for the quarter of 40.7%, taken from the new DLUCH interactive data dashboard. The team have also performed much better than the Kent average of 40.1%, also taken from the DLUCH interactive data dashboard. As reiterated in quarter one’s report, the target of 60% successful Relief Duty outcomes is an ambitious target, significantly higher than national figures on the percentages of homelessness being successfully relieved. When the target was originally set, there were no national figures to benchmark against.

It is recognised that relieving homelessness is more difficult than preventing homelessness, with restricted access to the Private Rented Sector because of unaffordable market rents and an increase in demand for private rented accommodation from those who are not economically disadvantaged. Additionally, applicants who are in priority need and unintentionally homeless, can only be owed the relief duty of 56 days, before they become owed the main housing duty, giving only a short window of opportunity to relieve homelessness.

Update

Please note, that due to a technical issue gathering the data, outcomes for the indicator: "Percentage of noise complaints followed up with diary sheets by a customer" was not available Q2. The data provided in the Q1 report to this committee was also incorrect. This issue has been resolved and the updating outcomes are provided below:

Performance Indicator	Q1 2021/22				
	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
Percentage of noise complaints followed up with diary sheets by a customer	19.1%				

Performance Indicator	Q2 2021/22				
	Value	Target	Status	Short Trend	Long Trend
Percentage of noise complaints followed up with diary sheets by a customer	26.2%				

Recovery and Renewal Progress Update

Resilient Communities					
Action	Agreed funding	Target Start	Target End	Success	Progress at January 2022
Establish Community Compact	n/a	May-21	n/a	Partnership in place between the community and voluntary sector and the council. Joint projects completed and greater resilience	Joint meeting was held with Involve Kent and VCS in July 2021 to consider Community Compact, Originally envisaged as a document, the engagement with the VCS via forums, consultation and events, plus the publication of the Civil Society Consultation has moved this original concept forward and MBC's role is facilitatory and the compact is its commitment to the VCS. It is likely that this commitment will be formally developed and established through a market-place event with the VCS in Maidstone. MBC represented on KCC and District Council VCS Forum established in November 2021.

Resilient Communities					
Action	Agreed funding	Target Start	Target End	Success	Progress at January 2022
Support and Encourage Volunteering in the Borough.	£25,000 Recovery Fund	Jun-21	Oct-22	Increase in the number of volunteers, volunteering in the Borough and as a consequence more community initiatives delivered. Work with involve to develop an indicator.	Website pages have been developed and updated with guidance on Volunteering. Research has been undertaken on our local offer which includes online platforms for advertising opportunities and Kent's Lord Lieutenant's Office is working in partnership with Kent Volunteers. A Joint Meeting was held with Involve Kent and VCS provided qualitative feedback on volunteering, there is ongoing work with Community Groups to help access the need. Work has recently begun work on benchmarking offer with CIPFA nearest neighbours, Evaluating internal policies and use of volunteers. Team have sought expert advice/training on best practice from APSE. The next steps – to complete the research to date and develop options ready to take 'to market'.
Online Community Participation	£15,000 Recovery Fund	Sep-21		Online tool in place and used to successfully engage with the public on projects and initiatives.	The team have evaluated several platforms, narrowing down to two which meet the needs of the wider Council, stakeholders from across the Council met to establish which provider would best meet the need. Feedback informed final choice. Purchase to be completed by end of the month
Community Resilience Fund	£150,000 Recovery Fund	Oct-21	Oct-24	30 projects delivered by a variety of community and voluntary sector groups and organisations.	To date we have had 14 applications, adding up to bids for £26,858. The first wave closes on 11 February. There have been a wide variety of applicants from Scout and gardening groups to charities supporting the homeless.

Resilient Communities					
Action	Agreed funding	Target Start	Target End	Success	Progress at January 2022
Equip Trinity Foyer to be a Community Hub	£30,000 Recovery Fund	Jun-21	Oct-21	New community hub delivered for all housing and related support services in Trinity Foyer	<p>The funding is being used to ensure digital inclusion and a multi-media training equipment are installed and embedded in the functions of our new Community Hub at Trinity. The specific digital aspects are being implemented by a local Audio-Visual contractor. We are currently working on developing our timetable of activities and learning support for those individuals most excluded from the job market and on the peripheral of societal activities. Our two new Homelessness Navigators have commenced in the role and working towards maximising digital inclusion.</p> <p>The handover of Trinity has been delayed due to unexpected refurbishment issues arising – handover now predicted to be in March. All the digital inclusion equipment will be in situation at the same time.</p>
Financial Inclusion Strategy and Actions	£34,320 Recovery Fund			The number and value of unclaimed benefits that residents are supported to claim A reduction in the number of households in financial crisis or at risk of moving into crisis Increased take up of debt advice services by households with problem debt A reduction in the number of households identified as being in a repeated	A dedicated welfare support officer has been recruited and started on the 17 th January. Immediate priority is to complete the campaign to increase the take up of Pension Credit among low-income households and develop stronger links within the advice sector.

Resilient Communities					
Action	Agreed funding	Target Start	Target End	Success	Progress at January 2022
				pattern of Council Tax debt The number of low-income households supported with energy efficiency measures The number of low-income households supported to access a more appropriate tariff	
Love Where You Live and Get Involved.	£35,000 Recovery Fund	Sep-21	Sep-22	8 community environmental projects delivered. Civic Pride increased as measured by the Resident's Survey. Baseline the number of participants in the project.	A pilot area in Tovil is being developed by the Street Scene Operations Manager and Communications Team which will be used to launch the project to other community groups, volunteers, Parish Councils and Ward Members across the Borough in the Spring. The pilot will enable the team to work closely with a group of volunteers in one community to determine what resources are required and how best these can be used to support the community to improve an area of unsightly, unadopted land. The team are currently engaging volunteers and known groups in the area. The plan is to provide support with planning and delivering the project as well as practical support in terms of funding small improvements such as lighting or fencing. The pilot area will then provide the blueprint for 7 other community projects across the Borough.

Responding to Increased Demands arising from COVID-19					
Action	Agreed funding	Target Start	Target End	Success	Progress at January 2022
Revenues and Benefits – Citizens Advice Maidstone Post	£18,000 Contain Outbreak Managem nt Fund	Aug-21		Residents with debt problems are assisted to maximise income, reduce debt by claiming the benefits they are entitled to	A service level agreement has been entered with the Citizens Advice Bureau who pro- actively contact 40 low-income households who are experiencing with debt issues.

Agenda Item 16

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

1 March 2022

Review of the Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy Action Plan

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

Executive Summary

For the Committee to review the 2019-24 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Action Plan (Appendix 1) and approve the proposed new additional action plan attached at Appendix 2.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. To note the 2019-24 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Action Plan attached as Appendix 1 to this report.
2. To ratify and endorse the proposed additional action plan for 2022-24 attached as Appendix 2 to this report.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Communities, Housing and Environment Committee	01/03/2022

Review of the Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy Action Plan

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"> • Homes and Communities • Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve Homes and Communities. We set out the reasons other choices will be less effective in section 2 [available alternatives]. 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report recommendation(s) supports the achievement(s) of the deprivation and social mobility is improved cross cutting objectives by support the Councils aspiration to provide and support greater access and choice to the local community in relation to housing.</p>	Head of Housing & Community Services
Risk Management	Covered in the risk section.	Head of Housing & Community Services
Financial	The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

Staffing	We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.	Head of Housing & Community Services
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepting the recommendations will fulfil the Council's duties under the homelessness legislation. 	Legal Team
Privacy and Data Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accepting the recommendations will increase the volume of data held by the Council. We will hold that data in line with our retention schedules. 	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment 	Policy & Information Manager
Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals. 	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendation will have a positive impact on Crime and Disorder. The Community Protection Team have been consulted and mitigation has been proposed 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not applicable 	Head of Service & Section 151 Officer
Biodiversity and Climate Change	<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. 	Biodiversity and Climate Change Officer

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 It is a statutory requirement of every Local Housing Authority to produce a current and relevant Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy which sets out how they intend to support their local community to obtain, sustain and develop a local offer which supports the housing needs across the district.
- 2.2 The legislation states in Section 1(1) of the Homelessness Act 2002 gives housing authorities the power to carry out a homelessness review for their district and Section 1(4) requires a housing authority to publish a new homelessness and rough sleeping strategy based on that review. Strategies should be published every five years but can be more often if the need arises.
- 2.3 In 2019, Maidstone Borough Council, developed our most recent strategy, which was ratified by the Committee in 2019. See link: https://maidstone.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0005/164669/Homelessness-Strategy-2019-2024-Final-with-glossary.pdf
- 2.4 Since then, the Housing Department have been working towards achieving the action plan as agreed, see Appendix 1. The document demonstrates the actions and the current position of each one.
- 2.5 To enable Members to be kept informed of progress, this report shares with the Committee the success of the team, over the past two years, even within the midst of the Covid Pandemic – the achievements have been positive, and we have made significant progress with the Action Plan see Appendix 1
- 2.6 At the mid-point of the strategy, it is the most appropriate time to review the incumbent actions and seek new ideas for the team to work towards. Our aim is always to be an innovator amongst our district peers, to best serve our residents.
- 2.7 From the current plan we would request that the following actions are specifically noted:
 - The development of the Predicative Analytics programme which was a winner of a prestigious award from the Local Government Chronicles. This development of software within a collaboration of partners has enabled MBC to identify those who are at risk of homelessness before they have even approached us for advice and assistance. Once identified the household will be contacted and supported to access various interventions or financial support.
 - Development of the Intentional Homelessness Protocol to divert households away from homelessness to work together to address key issues and challenges. Since its mobilisation in 2020, the IH pathway has supported 15 household into accommodation, whom otherwise would have been found IH. Many of these households have children, so we have halted the traumatic and stressful experience of the IH decision and not made the required referrals to KCC's Children's service under the Children's Act. This intervention has made both

financial and emotional stress savings for the household. During year 2019/20 we made 24 IH decisions, this decreased to 10 in 20/21 and year to date we have made 3.

- Development of specific accommodation for different cohorts – including ex-offenders, rough sleepers and private sector tenants.

2.8 More recently KCC have made the decision to decommission the Kent Homeless Connect Service, which provides 70 units (beds or floating support) to individuals from Maidstone and those who move into supported accommodation. The date of these services being decommissioned is not yet clear but we anticipate some will cease in September 2022 and others thereafter in April 2023. This will have an impact on our future provision and finances – so the refresh of the action plan will enable us to take the potential impact into consideration, and seek to find alternative solutions.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 To undertake no further actions and continue with working to the original plan. This would be an easy option to employ as we have embedded the working practises within the team. This would also ensure that our service remains static and would not be pressing ahead with any new initiatives which could potentially enhance opportunities for our local community.
- 3.2 To agree the additional action plan and accompanying target dates as set out in Appendix 2. This ensure the Council are working towards a healthy and progressive agenda for our local community.
-

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 For the Committee to agree the new additional proposed action plan as set out in Appendix 2. This will give the Housing Department a clear trajectory to work towards over the coming two years, building on what we have developed thus far, and seeking to continue to offer an exceptional housing offer to our local community.
- 4.2 The additional action plan will be reviewed in 2024 alongside a wider needs assessment for the district which will form the bedrock of the new 2024-29 Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
-

5. RISK

- 5.1 The risks associated with this proposal, including the risks if the Council does not act as recommended, have been considered in line with the Council's Risk Management Framework. The actions our within our appetite and the capability of the management structure. The wider team and the officers will enjoy the challenges that this new plan may present.

5.2 Funding for the initiatives will be covered off by the number of grants we are receiving specifically for housing and homelessness. None of the actions suggested have an excessive funding requirement.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

6.1 No formal discussions or consultations have taken place in the creation of Appendix 2.

6.2 We have been meeting with the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in relation to our Rough Sleeper specific work.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

7.1 Once ratified the new action plan will be shared with the wider housing team so officers are clear on our trajectory.

7.2 The new document will also be shared at the next appropriate Homelessness Forum so we can share with our partners and stakeholders.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

- Appendix 1: Action Plan 2019 -2024
- Appendix 2: Proposed Additional Action Plan 2022 – 2024

APPENDIX 1 -ActionPlan

Objective 1: Prevention					
Action		Outcomes	Lead	Timescale	Update Feb 2022
1.1	Continue tenancy mediation service for private sector landlords and tenants and involve third sectors and partners if suitable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Fewer private sector evictions · Reductions in family evictions 	MBC Maidstone Mediation Private landlords	On-going	We continue to make referrals and service is operational
1.2	Provide low income households with finance and budget management advice and guidance through our Financial inclusion Officer and look to expand this in-house programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Fewer rent arrears amongst private sector tenants · Fewer private sector evictions · Additional staff 	MBC Registered Providers CAB	On-going	A number of staff are in post who support households in financial difficulties. Predictive analytics is fully embedded through the One View platform.
1.3 40	Work in partnership with MBC communications team to educate young people within the borough about the realities of homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Fewer young people presenting as homeless · Expectations will be in line with options. 	MBC Schools Housing support providers	December 2020	Housing Advice Manager has approached schools. Working towards embedding this.
1.4	Roll out the Predictive Analytics systems across MBC to help identify those at risk of homelessness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Model operational · Clear outcomes demonstrated · More partners involved 	Housing Advice Manager	April 2020	Implemented. Expansion plans to look at singles who are at risk of Rough Sleeping. More partners will to be added. Recipient of the Local Government Award
1.5	Allocation Scheme to be reviewed to include the "Staying Put" incentive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Reviewed and amended 	Head of Service	Dec 2019	Implemented - reviewed in Sept 2021

1.6	Develop the Intentional Homelessness Protocol with key partners and start working towards eliminating those outcomes for households	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Protocol in place and implemented throughout practice. · Seek specific accommodation for IH households as trial tenancies and a route into mainstream accommodation 	Housing and Inclusion Manager	July 2020	IH pathway has been developed internally and has been successful. Further work underway with KHOG to develop a County wide agreement.
1.7	Work with registered providers to ensure they accommodate those household which are the most vulnerable and may include those found to be IH.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Develop networking opportunities · Those most vulnerable are being accommodated 	Housing and Inclusion Manager	On-going	Liaison meetings with Golding Homes. CSVG continues – Virtual viewings Offering additional support to RP's to ensure tenancy sustainment.
1.8 41	Development of a crash pad option for young people to give some time out from the parental home	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Reduction in the number of parental evictions · Increase in the number of successful reconnections to family 	Housing Advice Manager	April 2021	KCC – Social Care – are in place across Kent.
1.9	The creation of a drop in and hub service for people facing homelessness which is not located within the Link; to include debt advice and support, floating support and signposting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Location identified and developed. · Staff are working outside of the office to ensure maximum engagement with the community · Increase in digital inclusion 	Housing and Inclusion Manager	April 2020	Trinity will be offering our “front door” service to all Housing Departments in Maidstone. Partnership development with other agencies to offer activities and interventions.

Objective 2: Accommodation					
Action		Outcomes	Lead	Timescale	Update Feb 2022
2.1	Deliver phase three of emergency accommodation within the borough and reduce nightly paid accommodation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce use of bed and breakfast accommodation Reduce costs to the authority 	MBC	December 2019	Purchase and Repair phase four is underway
2.2	Support the development and implementation of the affordable housing supplementary planning document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More social homes available within the borough Those most in need able to secure a social home 	MBC Registered Providers	On-going	Completed
2.3	Review the Homefinder lettings scheme to ensure value for money and delivering effective outcomes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure a scheme fit for purpose. 	Housing and Inclusion Manager	January 2021	Completed but still under review.
2.4 42	MBC to work towards balancing the housing market through Maidstone Property Holdings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More homeless and rough sleeping households accommodated through MPH 	Head of service	On-going with quarterly reviews	Completed
2.5	Develop a MBC floating support service using new funding streams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More households are being supported through the traditional floating support model - this to be needs led and not dictated by a timeframe. 	Housing and Inclusion Manager	August 2020	Partially completed and work continuing towards a robust Floating Support service via RSI funding.
2.6	Local Housing Allowance - seek to lobby the government on an uplift which reflect the local market rates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Raise this at more senior levels including KHG and central government forums. 	Head of Service	On-going	Completed

Objective 3: Support for Vulnerable People					
Action		Outcomes	Lead	Timescale	Update Feb 2022
3.1	Ensure vulnerable people have sufficient access to appropriate housing and support services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Quicker, simpler referrals between housing and health services · More self-contained accommodation within the borough · People with mental health needs can access appropriate accommodation · Fewer vulnerable households are evicted 	MBC KMPT Registered Providers	April 2021	Completed Range of supported housing options available in Maidstone including: Lily Smith House Pippin Court MBC supported housing
3.2	Continued support for victims of domestic abuse through: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sanctuary 2. MARAC 3. One Stop Shop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Fewer people fleeing domestic abuse at point of crisis · Increased resilience for individuals suffering domestic abuse · Increased homelessness prevention for victims of domestic abuse · Attendance at the OSS by Housing Advisors 	MBC One Stop Shop	On-going	On-going DA and SG coordinator has been embedded. Working towards a central DA offer. Trinity will host the DA forum and the One Stop Shop.
3.3	Develop appropriate accommodation for ex-offenders within Maidstone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Reduction in re-offending rates amongst ex-offenders · Close working relationship with Probation and support providers. · More accommodation options · Increase in individuals accessing work and training who have an offending background. 	MBC Kent Probation Kent Prison Service Kent	August 2019	Completed the funding of The Link Project AfO funding for a Housing First model in Maidstone

3.4	Continue the development of the hospital discharge program ensuring MBC have robust relationships with all key health partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Service level agreements are developed with those partners. · Expansion into MDT's for mental health services · On-going review of outcomes achieved to review if service needs amendment. 	MBC and CCG's. MTW. Littlebrook and Priority House.	Dec 2019	MTW is embedded and fully functional, Cottage Hospital and KIMS. Virtual engagement.
3.5	Improve access to GPs and primary care services for homeless households and rough sleepers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Increase the numbers of households in temporary and emergency accommodation accessing primary health care services · Increase no. of rough sleepers accessing primary health care services 	MBC, CCG's and medical facilities across Maidstone	Reviewed in March 2020	KCHFT provide physical health to Rough Sleeping and at risk homeless individuals. Collaborative working agreement underway for One You service and the housing teams. Include health care in the PhP
3.6	Staff are well trained and have specialist knowledge on a range of support issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Staff specialisms are developed and encouraged · Regular training undertaken · Staff can work with the most complex and be empathic and supportive 	H&IM, AM and HAM	On-going but reviewed twice yearly in line with performance	Completed

Objective 4: Rough Sleepers					
Action		Outcomes	Lead	Timescale	Update Feb 2022
4.1	Continue the roll out of the Housing First Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More households accommodated through housing first • Seek funding to continue the programme of providing on-going support to those accommodated. 	Housing and Inclusion Manager	December 2019	Completed
4.2	Seek post 2020 funding for the outreach service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of service post April 2020 	Housing and Inclusion Manager	March 2020	Completed and on-going – RSI funding package underway for years 5-8
45					
4.3	Work with the various voluntary groups to ensure a coordinated approach to tackling rough sleeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced numbers of rough sleepers in the district • Increase in cohesive services • Multiagency approach to the most complex i.e. Blue Light 	Housing and Inclusion Manager	On-going	Completed
4.4	Explore ways of acquiring suitable move-on accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A viable pathway from the assessment centre to settled living can be achieved and sustained 	Accommodation Manager	On-going	Trinity and our Homefinder scheme has recently been reviewed to ensure we can meet the needs of single homeless

4.5	Develop the social enterprise for rough sleepers in partnership with One Maidstone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board mobilised and shop opened. • Service users have co-produced the model and ideas with staff • Shop becomes self-operational 	Outreach Services Manager	August 2020	This is a priority for Trinity once open. The Homeless Navigators are working towards this.
4.6	Seek to work with soup kitchens and other charitable services to provide a cohesive support offer to rough sleepers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular meetings • Standard support offer to rough sleepers • Reconnection for those with no local connection 	Outreach Services Manager	March 2019	Work continuing on this.

APPENDIX 2 - Action Plan – additional actions 2022 - 2024

Objective 1: Prevention					
Action	Outcomes	Lead	Timescale	Comments	
1.1	Creation of a robust Floating Support model and offer	· Fewer private sector evictions · Reductions in RP evictions	Housing and Inclusion Manager	Mobilised by end of 2022	
47 1.2	Development and mobilisation of prevention activities in Trinity including tenancy training, employment, training and educational courses, Domestic Abuse seminars and general workshops	· Fewer tenancy failures. · Engagement in positive social networks and meaningful activities.	Housing and Inclusion Manager	Currently being mobilised. Review in December 2022	
1.3	To create a predicative analytics programme that specifically targets single homeless people.	· Identify partners to work. · Creation of appropriate data sharing/sets.	Housing Advice Manager	July 2023	
1.4	Progress the IH protocol within KHOG and other district and county partners.	· County wide decrease in the issuing of IH decisions. · Continue to keep MBC's number low.	Housing Advice Manager	On-Going - review in Summer 2023	
1.5	The creation of a drop in and hub service for people facing homelessness; to include debt advice and support, floating support and signposting.	· Location identified and developed. · Staff are working outside of the office to ensure maximum engagement with the community · Increase in digital inclusion	Housing and Inclusion Manager	April 2020	Trinity will be offering our "front door" service to all Housing Departments in Maidstone. Partnership development with other agencies to offer activities and interventions.

Objective 2: Accommodation					
Action		Outcomes	Lead	Timescale	Comments
2.1	Deliver phase five of temporary accommodation strategy within the borough and reduce reliance on nightly paid accommodation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce use of bed and breakfast accommodation Reduce costs to the authority 	MBC	March 2023	Purchase and Repair phase four is underway
2.2	Develop an MBC floating support service for those assisted into accommodation, using new funding streams.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More households are being supported through the traditional floating support model - this to be needs lead and not dictated by a timeframe. 	Housing and Inclusion Manager	August 2020	Partially completed and work continuing towards a robust Floating Support service via RSI funding.
2.3 48	Creation of specific accommodation for different cohorts including those suffering with severe mental illness, domestic abuse survivors and young people.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the KHC accommodation/support portfolio and work with partners to create new concepts within the funding envelope. 	Housing and Inclusion Manager	March 2023	
2.4	Engage with key stakeholders to influence the outcome of the decommissioning of KCC Homeless Connect service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure adequate and appropriate supported accommodation is maintained. 	Head of Housing & Community Services	September 2022	

Objective 3: Support for Vulnerable People					
Action		Outcomes	Lead	Timescale	Comments
3.2	Continued support for victims of domestic abuse through: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sanctuary 2. MARAC 3. One Stop Shop 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · MBC taking leadership of the DA offer in Maidstone · Link the service into Trinity · Host courses and seminars to support those survivors and perpetrators of DA 	DA and Safeguarding coordinator	On-going review in March 2023	
3.1	Rough Sleeper service to be continued for a further three years until 2024	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · RSI funding to be sought and agreed by DLUCH · Team mobilised and reviewed to meet our changing needs 	Housing and Inclusion Manager	May 2022	
3.2 49	Seek to provide a specific mental health provision for individuals in mental health crisis who do not meet the threshold for services via KCC.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Specific provision · Seek to work with KMPT and other local clinical services. 	Housing and Inclusion Manager	April 2023	
3.3	Trinity to develop an open-door service for those approaching who require not only housing support, but interventions in terms of education, training and employment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Development of an activity timetable · Collaborative approach to work programme · Service users participating in activities 	Housing and Inclusion Manager/ Outreach Services Manager	Review December 2022	
3.4	Work collaboratively with key stakeholders, including Health to ensure that services are maintained or developed to support vulnerable persons.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Mitigate the negative impact of the decommissioning by KCC of the Homeless Connect Service on vulnerable households. 	Head of Housing & Community Services	September 2022	

Objective 4: Rough Sleepers					
Action		Outcomes	Lead	Timescale	Comments
4.1	Seek to prevent rough sleeping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Zero street count · Clear process developed and published for sofa surfers to access support and accommodation 	Housing and Inclusion Manager	On-going Annual review	
4.2	Reduce the numbers of people needing to be accommodated via SWEP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Clear process developed and published for sofa surfers to access support and accommodation 	Outreach Services Manager and Housing Advice Manager	Annual winter	
4.3	Interventions via Trinity and Outreach to reach those before they are at risk of rough sleeping.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Seek to further develop training and information sessions for the general public · Welcome schools and clubs into Trinity · 	Outreach Services Manager and Housing Advice Manager	Review in Dec 2022	
4.4	Support the continued clinical interventions for rough sleepers and those insecurely accommodated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Services delivered from KMPT and KCHFT still provided · CCG agrees to continuation of funding 	Housing and Inclusion Manager	April 2022 and 2023	

**COMMUNITIES, HOUSING &
ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

1 March 2022

Housing Strategy 2022-2027 Consultation

Final Decision-Maker	CHE 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

To provide members with a summary of responses to the recent consultation with stakeholders and the public on the draft Housing Strategy 2022-2025, which was undertaken between October and December 2021.

Purpose of Report

Noting

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. To note the outcome of the consultation and next steps towards adopting a new Housing Strategy.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
CHE Committee	01-03-2022

Housing Strategy 2022-2027 Consultation

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place • Accepting the recommendations will materially improve the Council's ability to achieve the Homes & Communities priority. 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report recommendation supports the achievement of the cross cutting objectives.</p>	Head of Housing & Community Services
Risk Management	Not applicable	Head of Housing & Community Services
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation. 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing. 	Head of Housing & Community Services

Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no legal implications arising from the report. 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Privacy and Data Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendation will not impact on the personal information the Council processes. 	Head of Housing & Community Services
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 will have a neutral impact on Crime and Disorder. The Community Protection Team have been consulted and mitigation has been proposed. 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not applicable 	Head of Housing & Community Services
Biodiversity and Climate Change	<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 October 2021 the CHE Committee approved a draft Housing Strategy for consultation. The survey was carried out by the Council's Consultation & Engagement Team and was open between 12th November and 31st December 2021. The questionnaire was promoted online through the Council's website and our social media channels. Residents who have signed up for consultation reminders were notified and sent an invitation to participate in the consultation.
- 2.2 The responses from residents were weighted and the unweighted response includes other stakeholders e.g. Housing Providers and Partners, Businesses and Parish Councils. The total including unweighted responses were 709 and weighted responses 664.

- 2.3 Overall, the stakeholder respondents were more likely to answer positively when asked if the draft priorities for the Housing Strategy were appropriate and relevant (with 82% answering this way), compared to 64% of resident respondents.
- 2.4 Residents and Stakeholders differed in what they thought of as the most important priority. Stakeholders placed 'Prevent homelessness and enable vulnerable people to access appropriate housing and support' as the most important. While residents placed 'Ensure existing homes are safe, sustainable, of good quality and support residents' health and wellbeing' as first.
- 2.5 When asked what was missing from the priorities, the most common theme that came up was infrastructure with respondents feeling that this needs to be improved to cope with additional housing.
- 2.6 The top element for residents on delivering new homes was 'increasing the number of homes which can be purchased via low-cost home ownership schemes'. Stakeholders placed 'increasing the number of homes that can be rented below market rent as first and placed the element on home ownership as third.
- 2.7 In exploring ways to make more homes available both residents and stakeholders rated 'identifying and bringing back into use empty homes' as the most important element; and 'building larger homes (4+ bedrooms) as the least important element.
- 2.8 When asked about building new homes residents rated 'improving the design of housing and neighbourhoods through the creation and maintenance of open space areas, energy efficiency and parking standards' as the most important element. Stakeholders placed this element second and rated 'providing attractive and energy efficient homes' first. Both stakeholder and residents ranked 'building larger homes (4+ bedrooms)' as last in importance.
- 2.9 When asked about making the best use of existing homes residents ranked 'bringing empty homes back into use' as the most important element while stakeholder ranked 'ensuring homes are ward and energy is affordable' as most important. Both residents and stakeholder ranked 'do more to address property conditions in the private sector'.
- 2.10 In relation to supporting communities and creating neighbourhoods' residents ranked 'green space' as being the most important element. Stakeholders ranked this element as third placing 'parking provision' as most important.
- 2.11 Working with partners - both residents and stakeholder ranked 'ensuring services are joined up with others who support the health and wellbeing of residents as most important. Both groups also ranked 'identifying more land for Gypsy and Traveller site to be developed as part of the Local Plan process' as least important in this section of the survey.
- 2.12 The response from the 18 to 34 years group was low and the views of minority groups deviated the most from the overall result. This group

account for 4.2% of survey respondents – less than the proportion of minority groups in Maidstone overall. Although weighting brings the representation of this group in the survey data up to 8.5%.

2.13 Only three responses were received from Housing Association Partners. Due to the important relationship between the Council’s Housing Strategy and the delivery of affordable housing by our key housing partners, it is proposed to undertake a further round of consultation with stakeholders through a focus group.

2.14 The information gleaned from the consultation will be considered for inclusion in the final draft of the Housing Strategy 2022-25.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 The report is for noting.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Members are asked to note the outcome of the Housing Strategy consultation.

5. RISK

5.1 The consultation is an important part in the development of the new Housing Strategy and will help inform the production of the final document.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

6.1 The full detailed outcome of the consultation is over 40 pages in length and to avoid unnecessary printing an digital version is available upon request.

6.2 It is proposed to consult in more detail with our housing association partners to help further inform the delivery of affordable housing in the context of the recently produced government White Paper on ‘levelling up’.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 Once the further discussion has taken place with key stakeholders, and officers have had the opportunity to fully understand the implications of the Levelling Up White Paper, it is intended that the draft Housing Strategy is presented in June via the new governance arrangements, to then be recommended for adoption by the Council thereafter.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

- None

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Draft Housing Strategy for Consultation, presented to the CHE Committee October 2021.

Communities, Housing and Environment Committee

1 March 2022

River Len Local Nature Reserve

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	High Street Ward

Executive Summary

Within the heart of Maidstone’s town centre lies the River Len Local Nature Reserve (LNR). This valuable site not only provides a green corridor from the countryside and Mote Park in the west to the River Medway, but it is also home to several rare and priority species.

This report outlines the work being undertaken to protect the site and the threats it faces including anti-social behaviour and water pollution.

Purpose of Report

Noting

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. To note the work being undertaken in the River Len Local Nature Reserve.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Communities, Housing and Environment Committee	01/03/2022

River Len Local Nature Reserve

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>The protection and maintenance of the River Len Local Nature Reserve supports the Council's objective for a safe, clean and green environment.</p>	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report seeks to highlight the role the River Len LNR plays in enhancing and protecting biodiversity. The LNR provides a range of habitats for several priority species.</p>	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Risk Management	<p>The report identifies several risks to the site including water pollution and anti-social behaviour. The purpose of this report is to highlight to the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee the importance this LNR has in wildlife and habitat protection in an inner-urban area and what measures can be taken to further protect it for the future.</p>	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Financial	<p>The report is for noting only. The cost of ongoing maintenance of the site is already</p>	Head of Environment

	included in the Parks and Open Spaces revenue budget.	and Public Realm
Staffing	The report is for noting only.	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Legal	The report is for noting only.	Interim Team Leader (Contentious and Corporate Governance)
Privacy and Data Protection	No implications as the report is for noting only.	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	No implications as the report is for noting only.	Equalities and Communities Officer
Public Health	The report is for noting only.	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	The report is for noting only.	Head of Service or Manager
Procurement	No implications as the report is for noting only.	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Biodiversity and Climate Change	The River Len LNR supports biodiversity and habitat protection in the urban environment. The habitat management plan for the site seeks to further enhance biodiversity and protect habitats for several priority species and a number of invertebrates and is fully aligned with MBC's Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan	Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The River Len Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is a 2.54 hectare inner-urban site owned by Maidstone Borough Council and managed for the benefit of nature conservation, flood water storage and local residents. Natural England formally agreed that the Council could declare the site as a reserve in 2014/15 and has since be managed by volunteers along with support from the Council's Parks and Open Spaces Team.
- 2.2 The map below shows the definitive boundary of the River Len LNR, which extends from Wat Tyler Way in the West, to the edge of Turkey Mill and Mote Park in the East.



- 2.3 In addition to the site's own intrinsic landscape and amenity value, it also provides a significant wildlife habitat on a County-side scale and a vital green corridor link between the Town Centre and Mote Park.
- 2.4 The nature reserve comprises of open water habitats, woodland, species rich damp grassland with spring-line seepages, scrub and diverse wetland habitats including the sedge and reed-mace lined river channel and crack willow or alder carr. The reed bed and damp grassland at the South-west extent of the site is of considerable invertebrate interest.
- 2.5 The site is widely recognised for its abundance in rare wildlife. Two legally protected UK and Kent priority species have been recorded here; Desmoulin's whorl snail [*Vertigo moulinsiana*] and the water vole [*Arvicola amphibius (terrestris)*]. Other key invertebrate species identified here include the crane fly [*Tipula maxima*], white-legged damselfly [*Platycnemis pennipes*], large red damselfly [*Pyrrhosoma nymphula*], banded demoiselle [*Calopteryx splendens*], short-winged conehead cricket [*Conocephalus dorsalis*] and the soldier beetle [*Silis ruficollis*].
- 2.6 On average, the Council spends around £5,950 per annum on maintenance in the nature reserve. This includes grass cutting alongside the pathway, hedge pruning, waste removal, maintenance and inspections of water safety equipment, needle sweeps and arboriculture work.
- 2.7 There is a Habitat Management Plan for the site prepared by the management committee which outlines actions for 6 specific areas of the

nature reserve. This has been included in Appendix 1. This is due for updating.

Current Challenges

- 2.8 The location of this valuable site within the Town Centre also offers several challenges to its protection. The secluded nature of the site unfortunately attracts anti-social behaviour, particularly gatherings of individuals taking drugs or drinking alcohol and there have been small encampments in the past. This has resulted in littering and drug paraphernalia affecting the site and impacting key habitats, wildlife as well as visitors to the site. There have also been reports of illegal night-fishing in the river which can impact on the natural flora and fauna of the nature reserve.
- 2.9 These matters have been referred to the Community Protection Team and a meeting was held last year with the Police to discuss the concerns raised. There have also been requests for additional Police foot patrols to improve visibility of the area and make any necessary interventions.
- 2.10 There have also been incidences of the site and particularly the river being subject to sewage leaks which have reportedly affected wildlife and aquatic vegetation. These incidences were reported to the Environment Agency to investigate. They have advised that whilst all incidents are assessed, they are reducing the number of low-level risk environmental incidents that they act upon.
- 2.11 In respect of the pollution incidents reported to the Environment Agency on 25 July 2021 and 2 November 2021, both were assessed as having a low overall risk to the environment, in line with previous reports. On both occasions, Environment Agency officers passed on the reports to Southern Water Services Ltd (SWS), who owns and is responsible for maintaining and managing the foul sewer network, to advise them of the incidents and to request appropriate action in response, including a clean-up of any sewage debris. They are unable to confirm whether any action was taken by SWS.
- 2.12 Typically, discharges from the foul sewer network are caused by hydraulic overload after periods of heavy rainfall, when highly dilute sewage may overflow from manholes; and/or by blockages caused by items inappropriately flushed into the sewers (e.g. sanitary products, wet wipes, fats, and oils), or tree root incursion. The Environment Agency are aware that this sewer line has a history of incidents caused by hydraulic overload and the environmental impact, whilst unsightly, is considered generally low, with little or no ammonia detected in the watercourse. As part of ongoing investigations SWS will be undertaking a CCTV survey to establish whether there are issues restricting flows which may be exacerbating the overflows.
- 2.13 The Environment Agency are encouraging any further incidents to be reported as it will ensure they are aware of any emerging or escalating environmental threats. They use this information to prioritise work, monitor the environmental impact of incidents and support their regulatory activity. The information helps to identify trends and make planned interventions where required, particularly at permitted facilities.

Local Plan Review

- 2.14 The Local Plan Review, through its Spatial Objectives, places an emphasis on the need for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and the protection and promotion of rivers and other watercourses. Specifically, Spatial Objective 4 states that having dependable wastewater infrastructure for the removal of sewerage and wastewater is key to achieving the Councils vision.
- 2.15 A range of policies in the plan review seek to address the need for new development to protect the borough's water resources. Policy SP14(a) Natural Environment requires that new development should control pollution to protect ground and surface waters where necessary and mitigate against the deterioration of water bodies and adverse impacts on Groundwater Source Protection Zones. Additionally, the policy requires the incorporation of measures to improve the ecological status of water bodies as appropriate. Relating to specific types of development that may give rise to water runoff pollution, policies CD5 and CD7 seek to control runoff from agricultural and equestrian development so as to protect watercourses. These policies have been subject to consultation with Southern Water and other interested parties throughout the development of the Local Plan Review.
- 2.16 Particular regard is given to the European sites which are considered through the HRA, including the Medway Estuary and Stodmarsh, as Natural England has placed a stricter test on plans and development which affect those. This stricter test requires the council to deliver development that is nutrient neutral and enables the council to seek greater mitigation for any effects of development on those sites.
- 2.17 In determining the need for additional wastewater infrastructure arising from the plan review, MBC has liaised extensively with Southern Water to establish suitable growth locations and to identify areas where additional capacity will need to be delivered by Southern Water. The Spatial Planning team has engaged with Southern Water throughout development of Southern Waters Drainage and Waste Management Plan (DWMP). This DWMP will identify areas within the Southern Water operating area where improvements to drainage and environmental water quality should be focussed.

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 This report is presented for information only and has no direct risk management implications.
- 5.2 However, it is recognised within the report that there are risks to the nature reserve, however the Parks Team continue to work with the Management Committee and other key agencies to identify improvements and capital investment in the nature reserve to help protect it.
- 5.3 Antisocial behaviour in the LNR will continue to be reported to the Community Safety Unit to monitor and act where possible.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 The concerns about the River Len Local Nature Reserve have been previously discussed at Committee as part of wider discussions on biodiversity and the protection of our green spaces. Specific work has been identified in the Park's Delivery Plan for Biodiversity for this site which was agreed at the November meeting of the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 The Parks Manager will continue to engage with the Management Committee to identify further opportunities to protect the site whilst enabling local residents to benefit from its location in the heart of the town centre.
- 7.2 Any further incidences of water pollution will be reported to the Environment Agency for investigation.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

None

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

Agenda Item 19

Communities, Housing and Environment

1 March 2022

Brenchley Gardens Fencing Proposal

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	High Street Ward

Executive Summary

This report provides the Committee with a progress update following their decision in November 2021 to pursue the night-time closure of Brenchley Gardens. The report seeks the approval of the Committee for the next steps to the project, specifically approving the proposed location to enable planning permission to be acquired, gaining the views of the immediate community who live alongside the park and agreeing funding for the installation and daily locking of the gates.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Committee agrees the proposal to install fencing and gates between Maidstone Museum and St Faith's Church, as set out at point 2.4, to enable planning consent to be sought.
2. That the Committee agrees the funding of the additional capital and revenue costs from existing budgets as outlined in points 2.5 and 2.6.
3. That the Committee agrees that a full consultation is undertaken with the residents of McKenzie Court whilst planning consent is acquired.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Communities, Housing and Environment Committee	Tuesday 1 March 2022

Brenchley Gardens Fencing Proposal

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

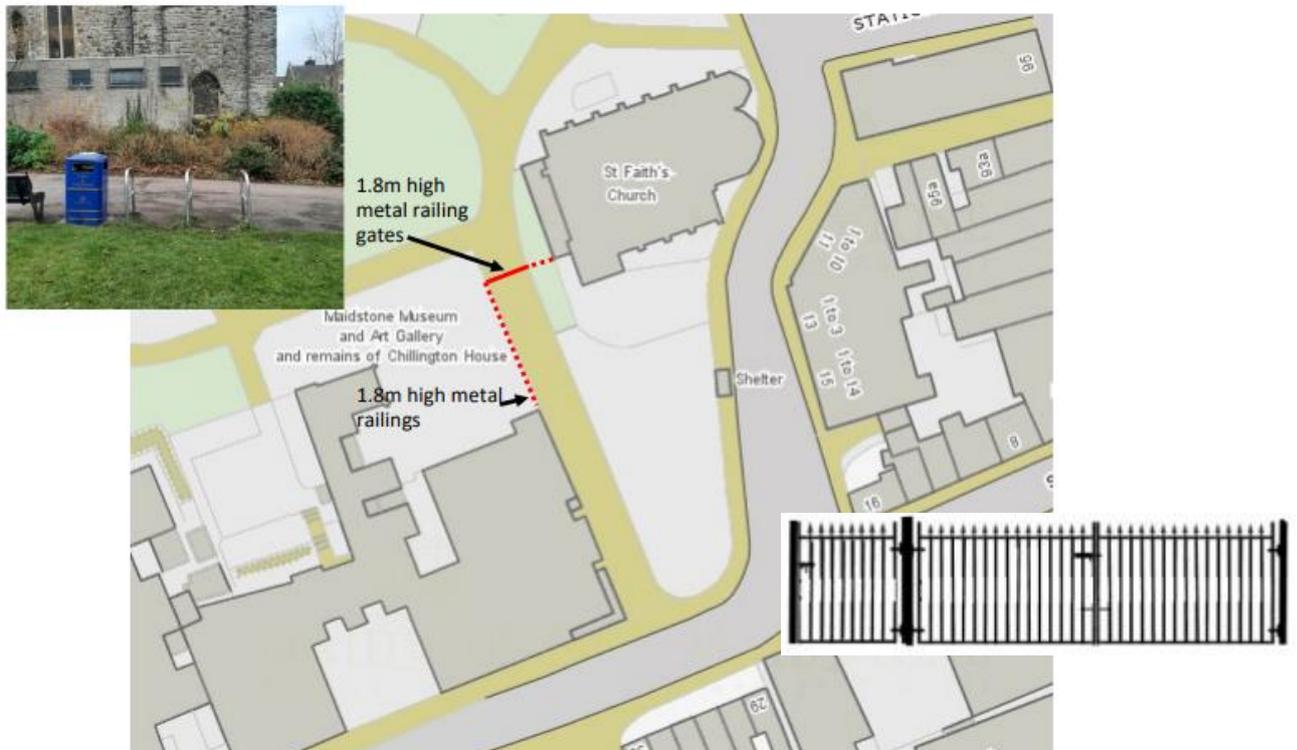
Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <p>The proposal to extend fencing around the perimeter of Brenchley Gardens will enable the Park to be locked at night and is intended to reduce anti-social behaviour. This will support the achievement of a Safe, Clean and Green Borough.</p>	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The proposal has been designed to ensure the heritage of the park is respected whilst protecting it from anti-social behaviour.</p>	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Risk Management	The key risks associated with this proposal are outlined in Section 5.	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Financial	Accepting the recommendations will demand new capital spending of £30k and an increase in revenue costs of £11k per annum. Funding from the existing Parks Capital budget is available to fund the installation of the fencing and the additional revenue costs will be met from existing budgets.	Section 151 Officer & Finance Team

Staffing	<p>Project management of the installation of the fencing will be delivered with our current staffing.</p> <p>However the closure of the park at night will have staffing implications. It is proposed that the closure is carried out by an external security contractor, the costs of which have been included in this report.</p>	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Legal	<p>By virtue of Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 it shall be the duty of each authority to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment)</p> <p>The proposal relates to a measure which is intended to reduce crime and disorder.</p> <p>However, there are competing interests in relation to the property rights of the residents of McKenzie Court which will need to be fully explored before any final decision can be taken.</p>	Interim Team Leader (Contentious and Corporate Governance)
Privacy and Data Protection	No implications identified	Policy and Information Team
Equalities	<p>The recommendation set out in this report is not a service change as the park will still be available to all visitors, however like other Parks, will be closed at night to reduce the likelihood of anti-social behaviour. The night-time closure of the park will not specifically affect any group of individuals with protected characteristics and therefore a Equality Impact Assessment has not been completed.</p>	Equalities & Communities Officer
Public Health	<p>We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals.</p>	Public Health Officer
Crime and Disorder	<p>The recommendation will have a positive impact on Crime and Disorder. The Community Protection Team have been consulted and mitigation has been proposed</p>	Head of Housing & Community Services

Procurement	A specification has been prepared for the gates and fencing and should planning consent be granted, a tendering exercise will be carried out for the work in line with procurement rules.	Head of Service & Section 151 Officer
Biodiversity and Climate Change	Protecting the park against anti-social behaviour is also likely to have a positive impact on maintaining biodiversity within the park. It will ensure improved oversight of the park enabling work to be undertaken that enhances biodiversity and habitat creation.	Biodiversity and Climate Change Officer

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 30 November 2021, the Community Protection Manager presented the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee with a Follow Up Report on Brenchley Gardens. The report set out several actions intended to disrupt and deter anti-social behaviour within the park, including upgrading CCTV and reinstalling the 'frills' to the Bandstand.
- 2.2 During this meeting, the Committee requested that work to enable the Park to be closed at night was progressed as soon as possible.
- 2.3 Since November, the Parks and Open Spaces Team have been working on proposals to enclose the park in fencing which would enable the park to be fully closed overnight. Five options for fencing were circulated to the Committee Members by email in December 2021 and as no specific feedback was received, the most viable option has been taken forward.
- 2.4 The map below shows the proposed fencing route between Maidstone Museum and St Faith's Church which would enable the closure of the park. Other options including encapsulating the open space opposite Maidstone Museum were considered; however, this route provides the greatest security, avoids existing utilities and is projected to be the lowest cost option.



- 2.5 The proposed design shown above in section 2.4 is anticipated to cost £30,000 to install. This includes a reasonable contingency for archaeological consultants as explained in section 2.9 and potential material price increases. This will be funded from the Parks capital budget.

- 2.6 The daily closure of Brenchley Gardens will also require a security contractor to ensure it is empty before locking the four sets of gates around the park. This will require them to encourage any individuals within the park to leave. Given the anti-social behaviour reported leading to the decision to lock the park overnight, it is not considered appropriate to use the Council's grounds maintenance staff to carry out the closure. A quotation of £11,000 per annum has been provided by a Security Industry Authority (SIA) company for this work. It is proposed to fund this from existing revenue budgets.
- 2.7 There are several challenges to this project. Whilst they are not insurmountable, it is important that the Committee are aware of them when considering the proposal.
- 2.8 The proposed location of the gates and fencing will leave a small area of open space facing Station Road and St Faith's Street open at all times. This is the area opposite the entrance to Maidstone Museum. However, enclosing this area would generate significantly higher costs and would create weak spots in the fencing around the area of the Church. It is possible that congregations of people could occur on this area of land, however it is completely open, is well lit and could be easily accessed by the Police due to its proximity to the road.
- 2.9 Brenchley Gardens sits within an area of archaeological interest and therefore it is possible that during the work items of interest could be uncovered that would delay the work and give rise to increases in cost. The projected cost for this project includes an allowance for this however the extent of any finds and the associated costs are difficult to predict.
- 2.10 Whilst there has been informal dialogue in the past with the residents of McKenzie Court, a formal consultation has not been completed. It is proposed that this is carried out at the same time as planning permission is sought and will ensure any comments from the residents can be considered by the Committee prior to the locking regime being put in place. Whilst the other entrances to the park can be locked and secured, there is no ability to stop the residents of McKenzie Court from access the park at night. This could be seen as a risk, as the park could become a private garden for those residents.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 The Committee could agree to the recommendations set out in this report to enable the night-time closure of Brenchley Gardens for the lowest capital and revenue costs. The delivery timetable seeks to overlay actions wherever possible to shorten the lead-time, however there is a requirement for planning permission and the unknown factors surrounding the area of excavation may impact this.
- 3.2 The Committee could decide that a different approach to the project delivery is employed and that not all of the actions identified including full consultation with residents are necessary.

- 3.3 However, the Committee could decide that an alternative route of fencing should be considered, however this is likely to delay the project and increase the installation costs. The route proposed has been designed to minimise the amount of fencing required and utilise the security provided by the existing buildings.
- 3.4 Alternatively, the Committee could decide that the night-time closure of Brenchley Gardens is no longer required and other measures to reduce anti-social behaviour should be explored.
-

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The preferred option for this project is to seek planning consent for the fencing and gates as outlined in Section 2.4 and to simultaneously carry out a full consultation with residents of McKenzie Court and seek funding from the Policy and Resources Committee. This will minimise the delivery timetable and cost for the project and enable actions to be taken as swiftly as possible. The alternative options will likely delay the project or result in increased costs.
-

5. RISK

- 5.1 The key risks associated with the delivery of these recommendations are highlighted within the body of the report under sections 2.7 to 2.10.
- 5.2 However, there are also risks associated with not delivering this project and the impact the anti-social behaviour is having on the local community, visitors to the park and specifically local young people. These have been outlined in detail in previous reports and as a direct outcome, the Committee has requested that the route of locking the park overnight is progressed.
- 5.3 There is also a risk that whilst the negative behaviours at Brenchley Gardens could be reduced by these measures, the anti-social behaviour might be displaced to another public area rather than ceasing altogether.
-

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 The Committee have discussed the issues associated with Brenchley Gardens previously and as a direct result have requested that this course of action is progressed.
- 6.2 It is proposed that a full consultation with the residents of McKenzie Court is carried out to ensure that any concerns they may have, are not overlooked and can be addressed in this proposal.
-

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

7.1 The next steps should the Committee agree the recommendations are:

- Submit planning application
 - Consultation with residents from McKenzie Court
 - Procure gates / fencing based on specification
-

8. REPORT APPENDICES

None

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None