

## A G E N D A

### COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CABINET ADVISORY BOARD

**Wednesday 25 January 2023 at 6.30 pm**  
**Council Chamber, Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1RS**

---

**Members:** Councillor Fitzsimmons (Chair), Councillors Pope (Vice-Chair), Ellis, Everitt, Fairweather, Funnell, Hill, March, Neville, Ms Palmer and White

**Quorum:** 3 Members

---

- |          |   |                 |
|----------|---|-----------------|
| <b>1</b> | <b>Chair's Introduction</b>   | (Page 5)        |
| <b>2</b> | <b>Apologies for Absence</b><br>To receive any apologies for absence.   | (Page 6)        |
| <b>3</b> | <b>Declarations of Interests</b><br>To receive any declarations of interest by members of the Council in items on the agenda. For any advice on declarations of interest, please contact the Monitoring Officer before the meeting.                               | (Page 7)        |
| <b>4</b> | <b>Notification of Persons Wishing to Speak</b><br>To note any Visiting Members or members of the public wishing to speak, of which due notice has been given in accordance with Council Meeting Procedure Rule 18 and 19, and which items they wish to speak on. | (Page 8)        |
| <b>5</b> | <b>Minutes of the meeting dated Wednesday 9 November 2023</b><br>To approve the minutes of a previous meeting as a correct record. The only issue relating to the minutes that can be discussed is their accuracy.  | (Pages 9 - 11)  |
| <b>6</b> | <b>Forward Plan as at 12 January 2023</b>   | (Pages 12 - 24) |
| <b>7</b> | <b>Borough Partnership Plan: Building a Better Borough</b>  | (Pages 25 - 39) |
| <b>8</b> | <b>Temporary Suspension of the Housing Register</b>   | (Pages 40 - 46) |
| <b>9</b> | <b>Household Recycling and Waste Collection Service</b>   | (To Follow)     |

**10 Urgent Business**

(Page 47)

To consider any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent, for the reasons to be stated, in accordance with Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

**11 Date of the Next Meeting**

(Page 48)

The date of the next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 8 March 2023.

---

**Democratic Services Team**

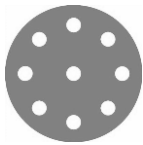
**Tel:** (01892) 554413

**Email:** [Committee@TunbridgeWells.gov.uk](mailto:Committee@TunbridgeWells.gov.uk)

**Town Hall**

**ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS**

**Kent TN1 1RS**



**mod.gov app – go paperless**

Easily download, annotate and keep all committee paperwork on your mobile device using the **mod.gov** app – all for free!.

Visit [www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/modgovapp](http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/modgovapp) for details.



### **Options that the Cabinet Advisory Board Can Consider**

The Cabinet Advisory Board is asked to consider each report and in each case come to a consensus and advise the Cabinet which one of the three options identified below it supports:

- 1) The Cabinet Advisory Board supports the recommendation(s) in the report.  
or
- 2) The Cabinet Advisory Board supports the recommendation(s) subject to the issues it has identified being taken into account by the Cabinet (any issues identified should be stated and recorded).  
or
- 3) The Cabinet Advisory Board does not support the recommendation(s) on at least one of the following grounds
  - 3.1 Inadequate consultation with stakeholders; and/or
  - 3.2 Inadequate evidence on which to base the decision; and/or
  - 3.3 Insufficient consideration of legal and financial information; and/or
  - 3.4 Another reason, as decided by the meeting of the Cabinet Advisory Board.

In each case the final Cabinet report will be amended to outline the option selected by the Cabinet Advisory Board and explain why this option was selected.

## Attending Meetings

Meetings are held in the town hall and are webcast live online.

Any member of the public may attend to watch/listen in person or online live via our website on the relevant committee's meeting page. A recording of the meeting will also be available shortly after the end of the meeting.

All meetings and agenda are open to the public except where confidential information is being discussed. The agenda of the meeting will identify whether any meeting or part of the meeting is not open to the public and explain why.

## Speaking at Meetings

Members of the public are encouraged to participate and may speak to the Council directly on any item on the agenda for up to 3 minutes. Members of the public (and any members of the Council who are not members of the committee) will need to register with Democratic Services in advance. Please see the agenda item titled **Notification of Persons Registered to Speak** for more details.

## Coming to the Town Hall

All visitors attending a public meeting at the Town Hall should report to Reception via the side entrance in Monson Way no earlier than 15 minutes before the start of the meeting.

Seating will be allocated on a first-come-first-serve basis. The Council may alter the number and location of available seats if necessary on safety or public health grounds.

The public proceedings of this meeting will be recorded and made available for playback on the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council website. Any other third party may also record or film meetings, unless exempt or confidential information is being considered, but are requested as a courtesy to others to give notice of this to the Clerk before the meeting. The Council is not liable for any third party recordings.

Further details are available on the website [www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/meetings](http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/meetings) or from Democratic Services.

If you require this information in another format, please contact us, call 01892 526121 or email [committee@tunbridgewells.gov.uk](mailto:committee@tunbridgewells.gov.uk)

## Chair's Introduction

For Planning Committee on Wednesday 25 January 2023

---

### Procedural Item

To receive any announcements on procedural matters.

## Apologies for Absence

For Communities and Economic Development Cabinet Advisory Board on Wednesday 25 January 2023

---

### Procedural Item

To receive any apologies for absence.

## Declarations of Interest

For Communities and Economic Development Cabinet Advisory Board on Wednesday 25 January 2023

---

### Procedural Item

To receive any declarations of interest by members in items on the agenda in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct. For any advice on declarations of interest, please contact the Monitoring Office before the meeting.

## Notification of Persons Registered to Speak

For Communities and Economic Development Cabinet Advisory Board on Wednesday 25 January 2023

---

### Procedural Item

To note any Visiting Members or members of the public wishing to speak, of which due notice has been given in accordance with Council Procedure 18 or 19, and which item(s) they wish to speak on.

---

### Information for members of the public wishing to speak.

Members of the public are encouraged to participate and those wishing to comment on an agenda item will need to register with Democratic Services in advance. Registration opens when the agenda is published and closes at 4pm on the last working day before the meeting.

There may be up to 4 speakers per agenda item and speakers have up to 3 minutes each.

Places are allocated on a first come first serve basis except that if there are several speakers from the same group they may be asked to nominate someone to represent their collective view.

Once registered, speakers will need to attend the meeting in person. Comments should be in the form of a statement giving your opinion on the matter. Members of the committee may not answer questions or get into debate with you.

Full details on speaking at meetings is available on our website at:  
[tunbridgewells.gov.uk/meetings](https://tunbridgewells.gov.uk/meetings)

Registrations may be sent by email to [committee@tunbridgewells.gov.uk](mailto:committee@tunbridgewells.gov.uk) during the registration period. The deadline for registering to speak at this meeting is: 4pm on Tuesday 16 November 2021.



## TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL

### COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CABINET ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES of the meeting held at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1RS, at 6.30 pm on Wednesday, 9 November 2022

**Present: Councillor Wendy Fitzsimmons (Chair)**  
**Councillors Pope (Vice-Chair), Ellis, Fairweather, Funnell, Hill, March, Neville and Ms Palmer**

**Officers in Attendance:** David Candlin (Head of Economic Development and Property), Mark O'Callaghan (Scrutiny and Engagement Officer) and Emer Moran (Democratic Services Officer)

**Other Members in Attendance:** Councillors

### CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

COM19/22

### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

COM20/22 Apologies were received from Councillor White.

Councillor Everitt was not present.

### DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

COM21/22 No declarations of interest were made.

### NOTIFICATION OF PERSONS WISHING TO SPEAK

COM22/22 There were no members of the public or visiting Members of the Council registered to speak.

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED WEDNESDAY 12 OCTOBER 2022

COM23/22 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting dated Wednesday 12 October 2022 be taken as a true record.

### FORWARD PLAN AS AT 18 OCTOBER 2022

COM24/22 **RESOLVED:** That the Forward Plan as at Tuesday 18 October 2022 be noted.

### CIVIC AWARD 2022

COM25/22 Mark O'Callaghan, Overview and Scrutiny presented the report as per the agenda.

**Discussion and questions from Members and Officer clarification included:**

- i. The report was taken as read.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the recommendations to Cabinet as set out in the report be supported.

## RURAL ENGLAND PROSPERITY FUND

COM26/22 David Candlin, Director of Economic Development and Property presented the report as set out in the report.

### Discussion and questions from Members and Officer clarification included:

- i. In terms of the funding, Members were advised that it was a use it or lose it situation, with an expectation that you would spend the money in that financial year and a potential review at the end of the year.
- ii. The carbon reduction at the Weald had a budget, however there were additional funds that were required but that had not been budgeted for.
- iii. It was confirmed that the funds were for projects that benefited the rural community and those did not necessarily have to be new.
- iv. It was meant to build on the leader program however it was not the same priorities or interventions under that program and did not replicate the money available under leader.
- v. It was confirmed that the post at West Kent was an additional post and the budget for that was funded through funds retained by the West Kent Partnership budget retained for rural intervention.
- vi. Members understood the need for the Weald project to go ahead however they were concerned about the funds being used to assist in a shortfall in the decarbonisation of the Weald Leisure Centre rather than used for new projects levelling up in rural Communities.
- vii. Members were advised that although the Council owned the Leisure Centre, it provided a service to the Community.
- viii. It was suggested that a note went to Cabinet that Members were not convinced about the allocation of funds to the Weald project.

### RESOLVED:

1. That the recommendations to Cabinet would be supported subject to a particular issue being addressed, that Members agreed with the Kent wide approach but not the allocation of funds outlined in the report for year 1 and year 2.

## URGENT BUSINESS

COM27/22 There was no urgent business for consideration.

## DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING WEDNESDAY 25 JANUARY 2023

COM28/22 The date of the next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 25 January 2023.

## EXEMPT APPENDICES TO CIVIC AWARD 2022

COM29/22 **RESOLVED** – The decision was made in public session and the exempt information was taken as read.

NOTES:

The meeting concluded at 7.09 pm.

---

# FORWARD PLAN

---

[www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/forwardplan](http://www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/forwardplan)



## Notice of Key Decisions / Notice of Private Meetings

Pursuant to the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

This Plan gives at least 28 days notice if the Cabinet of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council intends to make a key decision<sup>1</sup> or make a decision in private<sup>2</sup>. Other decisions by the executive are also included on the Plan wherever possible.

Relevant documents can be downloaded from the Council's website or are available on request from: Democratic Services, Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1RS or [committee@tunbridgewells.gov.uk](mailto:committee@tunbridgewells.gov.uk). Documents may be submitted to the decision maker via Democratic Services.

If it is necessary to hold a meeting in private, the reasons for this are stated alongside the decision. These reasons are prescribed by Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) and summarised at the back of this Plan.

Representations against the intention to make a decision in private can be submitted in writing to Democratic Services no less than ten working days before the meeting date.

If the Council is unable to give 28 days notice, it will publish the reasons for this on its website and at its offices.

---

**Councillor Ben Chapelard**  
**Leader of the Council**

**Publication Date: 12 January 2023**  
The most recent version of the Plan supersedes all previously issued versions  
Guidance notes are provided at the back of this document

# Members of the Cabinet and their respective Cabinet Responsibilities

## **Councillor Ben Chapelard Leader of the Council**

- Communications and public relations
- Consultations and engagement
- Strategic policy

## **Councillor Wendy Fitzsimmons Leisure, Wellbeing and Culture**

- Culture, Leisure and the Arts
- Assembly Hall Theatre and the Ice Rink
- The Amelia Scott
- Events
- Sports and Leisure Centres
- Grounds Maintenance
- Health
- Customer Access

## **Councillor Justine Rutland Tunbridge Wells Town and Local Areas**

- Royal Tunbridge Wells, Southborough and Rusthall
- Economic Development
- Tourism
- Business Engagement
- Town Centre
- Transportation
- Parking (on and off street)

## **Councillor Nancy Warne Deputy Leader and Rural Communities**

- Rural Communities
- Parish Charter
- Community Safety and CCTV
- Community Centres and Hubs
- Community Partnerships
- Assets of Community Value
- Younger and Older People
- Equalities and Equal Access
- Community Grants
- Cost of Living Crisis

## **Councillor Luke Everitt Environment, Sustainability and Carbon Reduction**

- Parks
- Cemetery and crematorium
- Recycling and waste collection
- Street cleansing and littering
- Environmental Protection
- Environmental Health
- Corporate Health and Safety
- Licensing
- Sustainability and Carbon Reduction

## **Councillor Hugo Pound Housing and Planning**

- Planning Policy
- Strategic Sites and Delivery
- Development Management
- Heritage and Conservation
- Planning Enforcement
- Land Charges
- Building Control
- Housing (incl Private Sector and Housing Needs)
- Homelessness Prevention

## **Councillor David Hayward Governance and Transparency**

- Democratic Services
- Transparency
- ICT Demand
- Legal Services
- Freedom of Information and Data Protection
- Complaints
- Constitution
- Alternative Service Delivery
- Procurement Policy and Strategy
- Devolution

## **Councillor Christopher Hall Finance and Performance**

- Finance
- Revenues and Benefits
- Internal Audit and Risk Management
- Mid Kent Services
- Property and Estates
- Facilities
- Human Resources
- Performance and Project Management
- Technology and Digital Transformation

## Leader of the Council – Councillor Ben Chapelard

Date of decision/ Decision maker	Full Council	Advisory Board	Report Title, Summary and Ward	Consultation Details	Relevant Officer	Key? <sup>1</sup>	Private? <sup>2</sup>
09/02/23 Cabinet	Full Council 1/3/23	23/01/23 Communities and Economic Development Cabinet Advisory Board, Finance and Governance Cabinet Advisory Board, Planning and Transportation Cabinet Advisory Board	<b>Borough Partnership Plan: Building a Better Borough</b> To agree the Borough Partnership Plan and refer the document to Full Council for approval as a new corporate strategy document. <i>(All Wards)</i>	The Cabinet Advisory Boards will be consulted.	Jane Clarke, Head of Policy and Governance	No	Open

## Finance and Performance - Councillor Christopher Hall

Date of decision/ Decision maker	Full Council	Advisory Board	Report Title, Summary and Ward	Consultation Details	Relevant Officer	Key? <sup>1</sup>	Private? <sup>2</sup>
09/02/23 Cabinet	Full Council 1/3/23	24/01/23 Finance and Governance Cabinet Advisory Board	<b>Procurement Process and Policy Updates</b> Proposed changes to Contract Procedure Rules, and introduction of a Sustainable Procurement Policy and Modern Slavery Statement for the Council. <i>(All Wards)</i>	The Finance and Governance CAB will be consulted.	Dan Hutchins, Procurement Manager	No	Open
09/02/23 Cabinet		24/01/23 Finance and Governance Cabinet Advisory Board	<b>Property Transaction Report July to December 2022</b> This report informs Cabinet of the property transactions completed under delegated authority between 1 July 2022 and 31 December 2022. <i>(All Wards)</i>	The Finance and Governance CAB will be consulted	David Candlin, Head of Economic Development and Property	No	Part
09/02/23 Cabinet	Full Council 1/3/23	24/01/23 Finance and Governance Cabinet Advisory Board	<b>*Asset Management Plan 2023/24</b> To recommend to Full Council the revised Asset Management Plan following public consultation. <i>(All Wards)</i>	Public Consultation January 2023. The Finance and Governance CAB will be consulted.	David Candlin, Head of Economic Development and Property	No	Open
09/02/23 Cabinet	Full Council 1/3/23	24/01/23 Finance and Governance Cabinet Advisory Board	<b>*Budget 2023/24 and Medium Term Financial Strategy</b> To recommend to Full Council the Council's budget and the revised Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2023/24 following public consultation (Stage 4 of 4 in setting the forthcoming year's budget). <i>(All Wards)</i>	The Finance and Governance CAB will be consulted.	Lee Colyer, Director of Finance, Policy and Development (Section 151 Officer)	No	Open
09/02/23 Cabinet	Full Council 1/3/23	24/01/23 Finance and Governance Cabinet Advisory Board	<b>*Treasury Management Policy and Strategy</b> To recommend to Full Council the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy to set the parameters and key information regarding the Council's treasury activity, with specific regards to investments and cash flow. <i>(All Wards)</i>	The Finance and Governance CAB will be consulted.	Clare Hazard, Accountancy Manager	No	Open

## Finance and Performance - Councillor Christopher Hall

Date of decision/ Decision maker	Full Council	Advisory Board	Report Title, Summary and Ward	Consultation Details	Relevant Officer	Key? <sup>1</sup>	Private? <sup>2</sup>
09/02/23 Cabinet	Full Council 1/3/23	24/01/23 Finance and Governance Cabinet Advisory Board	<b>*Capital Strategy</b> To recommend to Full Council the Council's Capital Strategy for 2023/24. (All Wards)	The Finance and Governance CAB will be consulted.	Clare Hazard, Accountancy Manager	No	Open
09/02/23 Cabinet		24/01/23 Finance and Governance Cabinet Advisory Board	<b>Disposal of Land and Public Conveniences in Brenchley and Matfield</b> Approval is sought for the potential transfer of two public convenience sites in Brenchley and Matfield to Brenchley and Matfield Parish Council (BMPC). Since 2010 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council have transferred six public convenience sites to Town and Parish Councils around the Borough. BMPC have submitted a suitable business case which states the Parish wish to continue running these two public convenience buildings. The transfer of these two sites will reduce the Borough Council's maintenance liability and will allow the Parish Council to manage and operate these property assets within their locality. (Brenchley & Horsmonden)	The Finance and Governance CAB will be consulted.	Max Horgan	No	Open
23/03/23 Cabinet		07/03/23 Finance and Governance Cabinet Advisory Board	<b>Consideration of a new lease or freehold disposal of land at Tunbridge Wells Rugby Club</b> Tunbridge Wells Rugby Club have requested that the Council grant them a new longer lease or land or consider a freehold disposal of land at the Rugby Club. (Pantiles & St Mark's)	The Finance and Governance Cabinet Advisory Board will be consulted.	Max Horgan	No	Full



## Finance and Performance - Councillor Christopher Hall

Date of decision/ Decision maker	Full Council	Advisory Board	Report Title, Summary and Ward	Consultation Details	Relevant Officer	Key? <sup>1</sup>	Private? <sup>2</sup>
23/03/23 Cabinet		07/03/23 Finance and Governance Cabinet Advisory Board	<b>Performance Summary Quarter 3</b> To consider an outline of the Council's performance against key strategic indicators. Measures prescribed by central government through the Single Data List (SDL) and the progress against each of the strategic projects as at end of December 2022. <i>(All Wards)</i>	The Finance and Governance CAB will be consulted.	Pamela Grover-Morgan, Performance and Governance Manager	No	Open
23/03/23 Cabinet		07/03/23 Finance and Governance Cabinet Advisory Board	<b>Revenue Management Report Quarter 3</b> To receive the financial position as at the end of December 2022. <i>(All Wards)</i>	The Finance and Governance CAB will be consulted.	Jane Fineman, Head of Finance and Procurement	No	Open
23/03/23 Cabinet		07/03/23 Finance and Governance Cabinet Advisory Board	<b>Capital Management Report Quarter 3</b> To receive the financial position as at the end of December 2022. <i>(All Wards)</i>	The Finance and Governance CAB will be consulted.	Jane Fineman, Head of Finance and Procurement	No	Open
23/03/23 Cabinet		07/03/23 Finance and Governance Cabinet Advisory Board	<b>Treasury and Prudential Indicator Management Report Quarter 3</b> To receive the financial position as at the end of December 2022. <i>(All Wards)</i>	The Finance and Governance CAB will be consulted.	Jane Fineman, Head of Finance and Procurement	No	Open

## Deputy Leader and Rural Communities - Councillor Nancy Warne

Date of decision/ Decision maker	Full Council	Advisory Board	Report Title, Summary and Ward	Consultation Details	Relevant Officer	Key? <sup>1</sup>	Private? <sup>2</sup>
23/03/23 Cabinet	Full Council 5/4/23	08/03/23 Communities and Economic Development Cabinet Advisory Board	<b>*Community Safety Partnership 2023/24</b> To recommend to Full Council the annual Community Safety Partnership Plan for approval. The Plan presents data on crime and anti-social behaviour within Tunbridge Wells Borough and provides an update on solutions provided to ensure the safety of residents. (All Wards)	The Communities and Economic Development CAB will be consulted.	Terry Hughes, Community Safety Manager	No	Open

## Tunbridge Wells Town and Local Areas – Councillor Justine Rutland

Date of decision/ Decision maker	Full Council	Advisory Board	Report Title, Summary and Ward	Consultation Details	Relevant Officer	Key? <sup>1</sup>	Private? <sup>2</sup>
23/03/23 Cabinet		08/03/23 Communities and Economic Development Cabinet Advisory Board	<b>Economic Development Strategy</b> An updated Economic Development Strategy is being prepared and will be consulted on before adoption. <i>(All Wards)</i>	Public Consultation Mid Feb-April 2023. The Communities and Economic Development CAB will be consulted.	Hilary Smith, Economic Development Manager	No	Open

## Environment, Sustainability and Carbon Reduction – Councillor Luke Everitt

Date of decision/ Decision maker	Full Council	Advisory Board	Report Title, Summary and Ward	Consultation Details	Relevant Officer	Key? <sup>1</sup>	Private? <sup>2</sup>
Not before 21/10/21 Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and Tourism			<b>Release of S106 funding, allocated to support the ongoing expansion of the Car Club</b> The Tunbridge Wells Co-Wheels Car Club currently has 5 cars in it's fleet and is extremely popular, with membership and use of the car club having grown rapidly. To ensure car club members are able to access a car as and when they need it, it is essential to add additional cars to the fleet. The car club is managed as a concessions contract and at no cost to the Council. S106 from developers contribution has been set aside specifically to support the expansion of the car club, as part of a mobility mix alongside public transport, walking, cycling and taxis. With car clubs supporting air quality improvements, carbon reduction and reducing traffic impacts such as congestion and parking pressure. <i>(Broadwater; Culverden; Pantiles &amp; St Mark's; Park; Southborough &amp; High Brooms; St James'; St John's)</i>	Report to be published before decision is made.	Karin Grey, Sustainability Manager	No	Open
09/02/23 Cabinet		08/03/23 Communities and Economic Development Cabinet Advisory Board	<b>Household Recycling and Waste Collection Service</b> A report to consider changes to the collection vehicle fleet, associated contract issues and payments. <i>(All Wards)</i>	The Communities and Economic Development CAB will be consulted.	Gary Stevenson, Head of Housing, Health and Environment	No	Open
23/03/23 Cabinet		08/03/23 Communities and Economic Development Cabinet Advisory Board	<b>Draft air quality Action Plan for Hawkhurst AQMA</b> To approve and finalise the draft action plan for the Hawkhurst AQMA. <i>(Hawkhurst &amp; Sandhurst)</i>	The Communities and Economic Development CAB will be consulted.	Stuart Maxwell, Senior Scientific Officer	No	Open

## Housing and Planning - Councillor Hugo Pound

Date of decision/ Decision maker	Full Council	Advisory Board	Report Title, Summary and Ward	Consultation Details	Relevant Officer	Key? <sup>1</sup>	Private? <sup>2</sup>
Not before 16/10/20 Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation			<b>TWBC Response to Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government consultation on 'Planning for the Future - White Paper' (August 2020)</b> The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is consulting on proposed long term changes to the national planning system. This report sets out the Council's response to this consultation. (All Wards)	Report to be published before decision is made.	Stephen Baughen, Head of Planning Services	No	Open
09/02/23 Cabinet		25/01/23 Communities and Economic Development Cabinet Advisory Board	<b>Temporary Suspension of the Housing Register</b> To obtain Cabinet approval to close the housing register for one month from 1 June 2023 to 1 July 2023 or dates close to those so that the new IT system can be implemented. (All Wards)	The Communities and Economic Development CAB will be consulted.	Stuart Clifton, Housing Services Manager	Yes	Open
09/02/23 Cabinet		23/01/23 Planning and Transportation Cabinet Advisory Board	<b>Horsmonden Neighbourhood Development Plan</b> The Horsmonden Neighbourhood Development Plan (HNDP) has been successful at examination, with the independent examiner recommending that the HNDP should proceed to referendum, subject to a number of recommended modifications. (Brenchley & Horsmonden)	The Planning and Transportation CAB will be consulted.	Deborah Dixon, Principal Planning Officer	No	Open
23/03/23 Cabinet	Full Council - Date to be confirmed	06/03/23 Planning and Transportation Cabinet Advisory Board	<b>*Main Modifications Consultation of Local Plan 2020-2038, and Sustainability Appraisal</b> To consult on the Main Modifications of the emerging Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Local Plan and Sustainability Appraisal for a 6 week period. (All Wards)	A statutory period of 6 weeks consultation is required. Dates to be confirmed. The Planning and Transportation CAB will be consulted.	Carlos Hone, Head of Planning	Yes	Open

## Leisure, Wellbeing and Culture - Councillor Wendy Fitzsimmons

Date of decision/ Decision maker	Full Council	Advisory Board	Report Title, Summary and Ward	Consultation Details	Relevant Officer	Key? <sup>1</sup>	Private? <sup>2</sup>
23/03/23 Cabinet		08/03/23 Communities and Economic Development Cabinet Advisory Board	<b>The Ice Rink</b> The report is intended to give Cabinet information to make a decision on whether to continue to support the provision of an ice rink in Tunbridge Wells. <i>(All Wards)</i>	The Communities and Economic Development CAB will be consulted.	Dawn Gabriel, Operations and Events Manager	No	Open
23/03/23 Cabinet		08/03/23 Communities and Economic Development Cabinet Advisory Board	<b>Grounds Maintenance Contract Extension</b> This report will seek approval to extend the existing contract for a period of 3 or 4 years. It will set out proposed changes to the service to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from the operations and to avoid significant increases in costs. <i>(All Wards)</i>	Information will be drawn from previous consultations and current consultations in relation to the budget and Dunorlan car park charges. The Communities and Economic Development CAB will be consulted.	Gary Stevenson, Head of Housing, Health and Environment	Yes	Part

Governance and Transparency - Councillor David Hayward

Date of decision/ Decision maker	Full Council	Advisory Board	Report Title, Summary and Ward	Consultation Details	Relevant Officer	Key? <sup>1</sup>	Private? <sup>2</sup>
-------------------------------------	--------------	-------------------	--------------------------------	----------------------	------------------	-------------------	-----------------------

There were no items within the designated timeframe

## Guidance Notes

### Note 1: KEY DECISIONS

A “key decision” means a decision which is to be taken by the executive of the Council which is likely to:

- (a) result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are over £250,000 as well as otherwise being significant having regard to the Council’s budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- (b) be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the Borough of Tunbridge Wells.

### Note 2: REASONS A MEETING MAY BE HELD IN PRIVATE

In accordance with section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), the public may be excluded from a meeting on the grounds that it may involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12A of the Act. The exemption must be by virtue of one or more specified paragraphs which are shown on the meeting agenda (giving 5 days notice) and, in the case of the Cabinet, on the Forward Plan (giving 28 days notice). The exemptions are summarised as follows:

Paragraph (1) - Information relating to any individual.

Paragraph (2) - Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

Paragraph (3) - Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

Paragraph (4) - Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office-holders under, the authority.

Paragraph (5) - Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

Paragraph (6) - Information which reveals that the authority proposes –

- (a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
- (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.

Paragraph (7) - Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

#### QUALIFICATIONS:

(8) Information falling within paragraph (3) above is not exempt information by virtue of that paragraph if it is required to be registered under –

- (a) the Companies Act 1985;
- (b) the Friendly Societies Act 1974;
- (c) the Friendly Societies Act 1992;
- (d) the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts 1965 to 1978;
- (e) the Building Societies Act 1986; or
- (f) the Charities Act 1993.

(9) Information is not exempt information if it relates to proposed development for which the local planning authority may grant itself planning permission pursuant to regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992.

(10) Information which –

- (a) falls within any of paragraphs 1 to 7 above; and
- (b) is not prevented from being exempt by virtue of paragraph 8 or 9 above,

is exempt information if and so long as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.



## Borough Partnership Plan: Building a Better Borough

For Cabinet on 9 February 2023

### Summary

**Lead Member:** Cllr Ben Chapelard – Leader of the Council

**Lead Director:** Lee Colyer – Director of Finance, Policy and Development

**Head of Service:** Jane Clarke – Head of Policy and Governance

**Report Author:** Jane Clarke – Head of Policy and Governance

**Classification:** Public document (non-exempt)

**Wards Affected:** All

Approval Timetable	Date
Management Board	14 December 2022
Cabinet member	14 December 2022
Overview and Scrutiny Committee	16 January 2023
Cabinet Advisory Boards	23-25 January 2023
Cabinet	9 February 2023
Full Council	1 March 2023

### Recommendations

Committee recommendations as supported by the Cabinet member:

1. That the Borough Partnership Plan at appendix A is noted and referred to Full Council on 1 March 2023.

## 1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's key strategic priorities have historically been set out within its Five-Year Plan. The most recent Five-Year Plan ran from 2017-2022. Work was initiated in 2019 to update and refresh it but this work was put on hold due to the need to focus attention on responding to the Covid-19 Pandemic and then to allow any long-term consequences to become apparent and the Council's operating context to become clearer. At the elections in May 2022, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council experienced a change of political control with 'The Borough Partnership' forming a new political administration. The Borough Partnership is made up of Liberal Democrat, Tunbridge Wells Alliance (TWA) and Labour councillors alongside the independent councillor for Paddock Wood (East). From this Partnership the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group was elected as Leader of the Council and he formed a Cabinet made up of Liberal Democrats, TWA and Labour members.
- 1.2 Given the continued uncertainty facing the Council (no long-term financial settlement from central government, Covid-related changes to the high street and working practices, inflationary pressures, the cost-of-living crisis and frequent changes to central government policies - including on planning), the Borough Partnership has agreed to set out an interim Plan setting out the priorities and direction of travel of the Borough Partnership.
- 1.3 Since the establishment of the Borough Partnership, Cabinet members have been working to understand the detail of their cabinet areas and to establish a common set of priorities and a direction of travel for agreement at Full Council. The attached Plan: 'Building a Better Borough' sets out the strategic direction of the Borough Partnership, highlights the administration's political priorities alongside some priority actions for achieving those priorities, and explains the revised operating principles for how the Council will deliver excellent services for residents of the Borough over the next two years.
- 1.4 The Plan will also assist Council staff to plan services effectively, ensuring that they are in line with the political priorities of the Administration, and that the limited resources available are prioritised to ensure both best value for the Council taxpayer and the best outcomes for residents. The Plan sits alongside a number of other plans and strategies including both the Local Plan and the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.
- 1.5 Once agreed, work will begin on the production of a longer-term Strategic Plan setting out challenges and priorities over the medium-term. Work will also take place to produce a 'People Strategy' that will ensure that staff resources, structures and working practices support the overarching objectives of the Council and reflect the wider operating environment in which the Council exists.

## 2. Focus on Five

2.1 The Administration has five key priorities, called 'Focus on Five'. These are:

- Safeguarding Finances
- Vibrant and Safer Towns and Villages
- Carbon Reduction
- Genuinely Affordable Housing and Social Rental Housing
- Digital Access, Transparency and Local Democracy

2.2 These are the overarching priorities that the Administration believes will provide the best outcomes for residents. Whilst there is no ranking between the Focus on Five priorities, it is clear that Safeguarding Finances underpins the other four priorities and acts as an enabler for sustainable and deliverable projects and services.

## 3. Operating Principles

3.1 The Borough Partnership have outlined a number of operating principles which will ensure that services are delivered in the most effective way:

- Being an outward-looking Council
- Valuing staff
- Being a learning Council
- Digital First

3.2 Alongside these operating principles, an approach to managing finances to help reduce the budget deficit in a responsible way has been developed:

- User pays
- Enabling
- Carbon Reduction
- Preventing future costs
- Delivering (good) growth
- Being opportunistic

3.3 There is more detail in the Plan at Appendix A around to explain these operating principles more fully.

## 4. Priority Actions

4.1 The last section of the Plan sets out the priority actions that are and will be taken to achieve the political priorities of Focus on Five. These actions are listed under the political priority they meet, and as such each political priority may include responsibilities for more than one Cabinet Member.

- 4.2 Some actions have already been completed by the Borough Partnership, such as the in-year Budget Review, which reduced the Council's in-year 2022-23 budget deficit and reduced the magnitude of the ongoing deficit, a Cost of Living Summit, which brought together a range of local groups to assess how the Council and partner organisations can support those struggling as a result of increased utility and other costs, the Big Green Week which sought to raise awareness of the Council's declared climate emergency and practical ways in which residents can make a difference and a series of Cabinet Roadshows which took Cabinet meetings to a variety of locations across the Borough with an opportunity for local residents to ask questions and engage.

## 5. Preferred Option and Reason

### **Agree the Borough Partnership Plan and refer to Full Council**

- 5.1 The preferred option is for Cabinet to agree the Borough Partnership Plan and refer the document to Full Council for approval as a new corporate strategy document.
- 5.2 Agreeing a Plan that sets out the key political priorities and direction of travel for the Council ensures that staff can plan services and budgets in an effective way which supports the political priorities of the Council and delivers on the key actions that Councillors believe will improve the lives and wellbeing of the residents of the Borough.

### **Not Agree the Borough Partnership Plan**

- 5.3 The Borough Partnership does not have to agree a strategic Plan and could decide to run Council services without setting political priorities or a direction of travel. However, this would risk services or projects being delivered in a way that does not meet political expectations or deliver on any outcomes that will improve the lives of residents in the Borough. The Council is also a Best Value authority and must always consider how its actions and projects deliver the best possible value for the taxpayer. Without an agreed Plan and approach to delivery, there is a risk that Best Value will not be achieved.

## 6. Consultation on Options

- 6.1 The Borough Partnership Plan has been informed by a range of consultation activity including online surveys and engagement at 'Cabinet Roadshow' events. Whilst not bespoke to the Plan itself, this has enabled the Cabinet to create a direction of travel within this Plan that can be the focus of further engagement going forwards.

## Recommendation from Cabinet Advisory Board

- 6.2 The Cabinet Advisory Boards were consulted on 23-25 January 2023 and agreed the following:

 *TBC following advisory board meetings*

## 7. Implementation

- 7.1 Following a positive decision at Full Council, the Borough Partnership Plan will provide the template for delivery of further engagement and actions that will achieve the political priorities of the Borough Partnership.
- 7.2 The Borough Partnership Plan will be monitored on a quarterly basis through the Cabinet Advisory Board and Cabinet and will be amended and added to as appropriate to reflect changing circumstances. Following business case and budget approvals, projects that result from the Borough Partnership Plan will be monitored through the Council's Project Management Office, and a quarterly update provided on the RAG status of each project through the quarterly performance summary.

## 8. Appendices and Background Documents

Appendices:

- Appendix A: Borough Partnership Plan

## 9. Cross Cutting Issues

### A. Legal (including the Human Rights Act)

Each local authority has a statutory duty to "make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness". The Borough Partnership Plan demonstrates compliance with that duty.

There are no consequences arising from the recommendation that adversely affect or interfere with individuals' rights and freedoms as set out in the Human Rights Act 1998.

*Claudette Valmond, Head of Legal Partnership, 16 November 2022*

### B. Finance and Other Resources

The Borough Partnership Plan is a new strategy document that is not currently accommodated within the budget or the Medium -erm Financial Strategy (MTFS). Once the priorities and direction of travel are set, the Council can then develop business cases for any actions of projects that aim to deliver on the priorities, and if these are agreed, the budget and MTFS will be amended accordingly.

Any new projects that may be proposed as part of a public consultation, or through further consideration of the Plan would need to be considered as part of a robust business case for the financial viability and affordability to the Council.

*Lee Colyer, Director of Finance, Policy and Development, Section 151 Officer, 16 November 2022*

### C. Staffing

This report outlines the strategic work to be undertaken over the medium term, and as such provides information on some of our future staffing requirements.

The HR Strategy, and other HR processes and procedures will take into account the requirements within the Plan to assess the level of need for skills and take account of any other HR and staffing issues that need to be addressed.

*Nicky Carter, Head of HR, Communities and Customer Contact, 16 November 2022*

## D. Risk Management

Risks associated with Council services are contained in separate risk registers, and managed through the Council's strategic risk management procedures, and in accordance with its risk management strategy.

Any new projects that are approved through the Council's decision-making processes, will need to show comprehensive business case and project planning, which will include identification of risks.

*Jane Clarke, Head of Policy and Governance, 16 November 2022*

## E. Environment (inc. Biodiversity) and Sustainability

Carbon reduction is a key political priority within the Plan, and as such there is the potential for the actions within the Plan to make a positive impact on the environment, biodiversity and sustainability.

Alongside this, a Climate Emergency Impact Assessment must be undertaken at the start of any new project as part of project planning to ensure decision-makers are fully aware of the environmental impacts of the proposed decision.

*Gary Stevenson, Head of Housing, Health and Environment, 16 November 2022*

## F. Community Safety

Whilst there are no direct impacts on community safety as part of the decisions in this report, it is clear that the Borough Partnership Plan provides the Council with an opportunity to positively impact on the areas of community safety, crime and disorder. As individual decisions and projects are brought forwards, relevant actions should show how they positively or negatively affect community safety through the project planning and decision-making process.

Section 17, Crime and Disorder Act 1998

*17(1) Without prejudice to any other obligation imposed on it, it shall be the duty of each authority to which this section applies 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.*

*Jane Clarke, Head of Policy and Governance, 16 November 2022*

## G. Equalities

There are no impacts identified on any protected characteristics as part of this report. The Council and decision-makers will need to consider any relevant impacts as part of its project planning processes, as and when new projects and decisions are considered through the Plan.

Section 149, Equality Act 2010

*149(1) A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to –*

*(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;*

*(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;*

*(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.*

*Jane Clarke, Head of Policy and Governance, 16 November 2022*

## H. Data Protection

There are no impacts on data protection considerations as a result of the decisions within this report.

Article 5, General Data Protection Regulation 2016

*1. Personal data shall be:*

*(a) processed lawfully, fairly and in a transparent manner in relation to the data subject;*

*(b) collected for specific, explicit and legitimate purposes and not further processed in a manner that is incompatible with those purposes;*

*(c) adequate, relevant and limited to what is necessary in relation to the purposes for which they are processed;*

*(d) accurate and, where necessary, kept up to date;*

*(e) kept in a form which permits identification of data subjects for no longer than is necessary for the purposes for which the personal data are processed;*

*(f) processed in a manner that ensures appropriate security of the personal data, including protection against unauthorised or unlawful processing and against accidental loss, destruction or damage, using appropriate technical or organisational measures.*



Jane Clarke, Head of Policy and Governance and Data Protection Officer, 16 November 2022

## I. Health and Safety

There are no health and safety considerations as a result of the decisions within this report.

Jane Clarke, Head of Policy and Governance, 16 November 2022

## J. Health and Wellbeing

Whilst there are no direct impacts on health and wellbeing as part of the decisions in this report, it is clear that the Borough Partnership Plan provides the Council with an opportunity to positively impact on the areas of health and wellbeing listed below. As individual decisions and projects are brought forwards, relevant actions should show how they positively or negatively affect the health and wellbeing of residents in the Borough through the project planning and decision-making process.

1. *Areas of deprivation: Will the proposal have an impact (positive or negative) on those living in areas of deprivation within the borough (40% most deprived in the country). These are Sherwood, Southborough and High Brooms, Broadwater and Rusthall.*
2. *Healthier lifestyle opportunities: Will residents be more or less able to make healthier lifestyle choices such as physical activity (e.g. active travel, access to green spaces or access to leisure facilities), healthy eating (e.g. proximity or access to take away shops, allotments, food stores) and being smokefree*
3. *Social and Community networks: Will the proposal make it easier for people to interact with one another e.g. encouraging community engagement*
4. *Living and Working Conditions: does the proposal improve work or home environments, increase job, education or training opportunities, improve access to health services or housing*
5. *General Socioeconomic, cultural and environmental conditions: Are there any other factors that may impact the above*

Jane Clarke, Head of Policy and Governance, 16 November 2022

## Building a Better Borough

### Introduction

In May 2022 a new political administration took responsibility for running Tunbridge Wells Borough Council. The Borough Partnership is a cross-party administration made up of the Liberal Democrat, Tunbridge Wells Alliance, and Labour groups, and one of the independent councillors.

The Borough Partnership administration has one single and only objective: *doing the best for our residents and our Borough*. Whilst our administration, like most of local government, is operating in challenging circumstances, we are committed to working for the benefit of all our residents.

This document sets out our administration's plans for 2022 – 2024:

- Our *Focus on Five* priorities
- The context in which we operate
- Our operating principles
- Our key projects and our future work programme

Cllr Ben Chapelard  
**Leader of the Council**

## Context

Tunbridge Wells, the Council, local government and the country have had to deal with a decade of austerity, the consequences of Brexit, a once-in-a century pandemic, a war in mainland Europe and a cost-of-living crisis.

For Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, these external events and the Government's response to them have resulted in greater demands on council services. At the same time the Council has had reduced financial resources with which to deliver its services.

## Priorities: Focus on Five

The Borough Partnership has set itself five priorities called the *Focus on Five*. These are:

- Safeguarding finances
- Vibrant and safer town and villages
- Carbon reduction
- Genuinely affordable housing and social rental housing
- Digital access, transparency and local democracy

Responsibility for delivering the *Focus on Five* priorities lies with the eight Borough Partnership Cabinet members who each have individual areas of responsibility.

The Cabinet is supported by four champions who also have specific projects to deliver.

This document contains details of our key priorities, projects and initiatives in relation to our *Focus on Five* priorities.

## Operating Principles

In delivering the *Focus on Five* priorities, the Council will abide by several key operating principles. These are:

- **Being outward-looking** – we will be community- and partnership-focused, leveraging social capital where possible.
- **Valuing staff** – we recognise the vital importance of staff in delivering our services and will ensure that we remain an employer of choice to attract, retain and develop our employees.
- **A learning council** – we will gather feedback from residents and service users, seek best practice from elsewhere and learn from our mistakes.
- **Digital first** – ensuring that the widest range of residents and users can access our services digitally (whilst recognising that this will not be possible for everyone).

We will be seeking to reduce the budget deficit in a responsible manner by adopting the following principles:

- **User pays** – a recognition that users of services should pay for the cost of those services rather than all council taxpayers.
- **Enabling** – exploring areas where others might be better placed to lead on facilities or service delivery.
- **Carbon reduction** – taking opportunities and decisions that contribute to our climate emergency goals.
- **Preventing future costs** – taking opportunities to reduce future costs through preventative spending.
- **Delivering (good) growth** – Delivering sustainable growth through the implementation of the Local Plan, raising income to deliver services and ensuring that the Borough is open for business.
- **Being opportunistic** – seeking opportunities for external funding, collaboration or the delivery of our priorities by external partners.

## Priority actions

### Safeguarding Finances

#### *ACTIONS COMPLETED*

- 2022 In Year Budget Review
- Reduced the previous administration's 2022-23 deficit

#### *FUTURE ACTIONS*

- Town Hall being repurposed for co-working
- Delivery of surplus asset disposals
- Review of fees and charges
- Car parking strategy
- Digital transformation
- Savings plan
- Production of a People Strategy and associated policies to support us in recruiting and retaining high calibre staff

### Vibrant and safer town and villages

#### *ACTIONS COMPLETED*

- Cost-of-living summit and creation of cost-of-living digital hub
- Community Support Fund launched
- Approved UK Shared Prosperity Fund investment plans
- Approved Rural England Prosperity Fund investment plans
- Submitted three priority active travel schemes to Kent Highways under Active Travel Fund Tranche 4
- Creation of business portal on the TWBC website
- Held launch event for the Kent and Medway Business Fund
- Held tourism networking events in partnership with Visit Kent

#### *FUTURE ACTIONS*

- Bring an independent farmers' market to Royal Tunbridge Wells
- Parish chair convention
- Install CCTV in Great Hall, Crescent Road and Torrington car parks
- Publish a new Economic Development Strategy
- Install additional EV chargers in TWBC car parks
- Develop tourism across the Borough
- Begin distributing funding for projects via the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Rural England Prosperity Fund
- Develop a business pack to support the new business portal

## **Carbon reduction**

### *ACTIONS COMPLETED*

- Big Green Week
- Town Hall windows and roof improvements
- Enhanced information and features available on the TWBC Climate Change website
- Expansion of Tunbridge Wells Car Club

### *FUTURE ACTIONS*

- Develop a Pesticide & Herbicide policy to promote biodiversity and wider behaviour change.
- Renew our Biodiversity action plan to protect, enhance and publicise our local environment.
- Review resources to deliver 2030 net zero commitments, seek funding and increase staff capacity.
- Collaborate and consult with residents, partners and businesses as part of a Borough emissions Strategy.
- Expand TWBC's Climate Change web site to promote sustainability and encourage networks.
- Reduce our own emissions by delivering the Weald Sports Centre and Depot SALIX schemes.

## **Genuinely affordable housing and social rental housing**

### *ACTIONS COMPLETED*

- Local Plan submitted
- New Housing Allocations Policy
- New Neighbourhood Development Plans
- Meetings with social housing providers
- Beam Project to address homelessness

### *FUTURE ACTIONS*

- Utilise existing Council land and assets to deliver affordable housing
- Modifications to, and adoption of, Local Plan
- Empty Property strategy and policy
- Progress the RTW Town Centre Development Plan

## **Digital access, transparency and local democracy**

### *ACTIONS COMPLETED*

- Cabinet on Tour
- Increased the number of public consultations
- Undertaken a significant number of public consultations
- Gone 'back to the floor' in council services, such as Recycling and Waste, to understand how residents interact with our services
- TWBC Instagram account set up
- Met all key partner organisations and stakeholders

### *FUTURE ACTIONS*

- Borough-wide Survey
- User friendlier access to the Council's data and information
- Digital transformation plan
- Review of TWBC communications

# Temporary Suspension of the Housing Register

For Cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2023

## Summary

**Lead Member:** Cllr Hugo Pound – Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning

**Lead Director:** Paul Taylor- Director of Change and Communities

**Head of Service:** Gary Stevenson – Head of Housing, Health and Environment

**Report Author:** Stuart Clifton – Housing Services Manager

**Classification:** Public document (non-exempt)

**Wards Affected:** All

Approval Timetable	Date
Housing Advisory Panel	13 <sup>th</sup> December 2022
Management Board	11 <sup>th</sup> January 2023
Communities & Economic Development CAB	25 <sup>th</sup> January 2023
Cabinet	9 <sup>th</sup> February 2023

## Recommendations

Officer recommendations as supported by the Cabinet Member that:

1. Cabinet approves a temporary suspension of the housing register for a period of one month so that the new housing IT system can be implemented in Tunbridge Wells and across Kent.
2. Cabinet approves the recommendation that existing housing register applicants are required to re-apply to the housing register, to enable a reassessment of their application against the Council's new Allocation Scheme.
3. Authority is delegated to the Head of Housing, Health and Environment, to make future decisions, should the date for closure of the housing register need to be any later than 1st June 2023.



## 1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Kent Homechoice (KHC) is a partnership of 13 Local Authorities, 28 Housing Associations and Kent County Council (KCC) set up to provide a Kent wide choice-based lettings system and expanded to provide a housing options IT system. Dover District Council (DDC) are the lead authority.
- 1.2 The KHC Partnership was formed in 2006 to provide a choice-based lettings system for all of Kent, the partnership is made up of the 13 Kent & Medway Local Authorities, KCC and 28 Housing Associations that have stock in Kent. DDC have been the lead authority since 2015.
- 1.3 The day to day running of the partnership is managed by the KHC Partnership Manager whose post is hosted by DDC. Decisions regarding the management are taken by the KHC Project Board which is made up of senior officers at each Local Authority, KCC and the larger Housing Associations.
- 1.4 In July 2022 Cabinet at DDC approved the award of the contract for the Kent wide housing options system to Huume and this was also agreed by the Kent Homechoice Project Board of which we are a member. The new contract was signed and put in place with Huume on 17th September 2022. The contract with our current system provider Locata finishes at the end of July 2023. Work is progressing to have the new system in place ahead of this contract end date.
- 1.5 So that the housing register and housing options IT systems can be moved from the Locata system to the Huume system, ahead of July 2023, it is necessary to temporarily suspend the housing register for a period of one month.
- 1.6 Approval is sought to temporarily suspend the housing register to new applications from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2023 until 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023. This will provide officers across Kent and Medway with sufficient time to allocate and close outstanding shortlists or move them to the new system. It will also provide time to assess the status and banding of new applications and to cleanse any additional data should this be required before a copy of the data is provided to us by Locata.
- 1.7 Locata will provide a copy of all of the data held on their system on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2023 and Huume will upload the required data into their system as soon as possible after this date. This will then provide Huume and the Council's housing team with a further two-week period to correct any issues caused by the data upload so that the housing register can be reopened up on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2023
- 1.8 Property adverts can be prepared on the Huume system from 16<sup>th</sup> June ready to be advertised on 1<sup>st</sup> July. This means that there will only be a two-week period where properties cannot be advertised.
- 1.9 Existing housing register applicants will be required to complete a new application to join the housing register, whereby they will be assessed against the Council's new Allocation Scheme. Asking applicants to re-apply for the housing register is not only a much cleaner process than re-assessing existing applications which may be serval

years old, but also ensures that old data that is no longer required is not being transferred to the new Huume system.

- 1.10 To ensure that existing customers are not disadvantaged by being required to re-apply to the housing register, customers will be given a 3-month period to submit their new application where they will be able to retain their existing priority date. Existing applicants who re-apply outside of this 3-month period will not be able to retain their previous priority date, except for any applicants able to demonstrate extenuating circumstances which caused them to be unable to re-apply within the specified 3-month period.
- 1.11 Customers will be informed of the steps they are required to take to re-join the Housing Register through a variety of communication, including emails alerts to all existing customers, messaging on the Kent Homechoice website when customers access their account; and on the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council website. Front of house Amelia Scott customer services staff will also be informed to communicate to customers where contact is made.
- 1.12 If customers approach the allocations team and are considered to be vulnerable and in a high housing need, it will be possible for their applications to be added manually to the Huume system during the period that the housing register is closed. Support will also be made available to any vulnerable customers to register if they are unable to complete a new application without support.
- 1.13 If the housing register was not suspended for the month-long period, the data that is extracted from Locata to Huume will not be fully up to date and accurate. There will be a time lag of a few days whilst data is uploaded to the Huume system which would then mean that the data of any new applicants applying during those few days would have to be manually transferred to the Huume system. It would also then prove to be challenging for officers to check through and update the new system whilst new applications also arrived into the system

## 2. Options Considered

- 2.1 **Option A** – To temporarily suspend the housing register for a period of one month and require existing applicants to reapply for the housing register. This will enable the officers within housing to have a short period of time where they close outstanding shortlists. It will also enable all applicants to be assessed against the new Allocation Scheme and so that clean and up to date data can be moved from Locata to Huume on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2023.

This will then allow officers a two-week period to ensure that the data has loaded into the new Huume system correctly before the housing register re-opens to new applicants.

- 2.2 **Options B** – To temporarily suspend the housing register as detailed above, but not require existing applicants to re-apply to housing register to be assessed against the new Allocation Scheme. This would mean transferring a large amount of outdated

data to the new Huume system and will require assessments against the new Allocation Scheme using old application forms, which may be several years old.

- 2.3 **Option C** – Would be not to temporarily suspend the housing register but to upload the data without shortlists having been closed or applications having been assessed. If the housing register was not suspended for the month-long period, the data that is extracted from Locata and sent to Huume will not be fully up to date and accurate. Officer would also need to be working across two systems at the same time to check through and update the new Huume system whilst new applications also arrived into the existing Locata system.

## 3. Preferred Option and Reason

- 3.1 Option A is the recommended option as this will enable the data that is transferred to be in a condition that is easier to upload to a new system and will reduce the number of errors that occur as a part of the data upload. It will also be a much easier process to assess the new applications from existing applicants against the new Allocations Scheme using the new information provided by applicants, than assessing against older applications received which may be several years old and may no longer be accurate.

## 4. Consultation on Options

- 4.1 Consultation has taken place with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning, as well as consulting with the Housing Advisory Panel. Both the Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning and the Housing Advisory Panel are in support of the recommended option to temporarily suspend the housing register for one month to enable the switch of housing systems from Locata to Huume.

## Recommendation from Cabinet Advisory Board

- 4.2 To be added

## 5. Implementation

- 5.1 Should the recommendation be approved by Cabinet to temporarily suspend the housing register for one month from 1st June 2023 to 1st July 2023, applicants will be notified of the temporary suspension of the housing register.
- 5.2 Existing housing register applicants will also be informed of the requirement to complete a new application for the housing register, whereby they will be re-assessed against the Council's new allocations scheme. Customers will be informed of the steps they are required to take to re-join the Housing Register through a variety of communication, including emails alerts to all existing customers, messaging on the

Kent Homechoice website when customers access their account; and on the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council website. Front of house Amelia Scott customer services staff will also be informed to communicate to customers where contact is made.

- 5.3 To ensure that existing customers are not disadvantaged by being required to re-apply to the housing register, customers will be given a 3-month period to submit their new application where they will be able to retain their existing priority date. Existing applicants who re-apply outside of this 3-month period will not be able to retain their previous priority date, except for any applicants able to demonstrate extenuating circumstances which caused them to be unable to re-apply within the specified 3-month period.

## 6. Appendices and Background Documents

Background Papers:

- Record of decision from Dover District Council to award contract of the Kent Homechoice and Housing Options system to Huume - <https://moderngov.dover.gov.uk/ielIssueDetails.aspx?Ild=23447&PlanId=0&Opt=3#AI19907>

## 7. Cross Cutting Issues

### A. Legal (including the Human Rights Act)

The legal implications are detailed within the report and accepting the recommendations will enable the Council's to fulfil its duties more efficiently and effectively under the Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended).

Claudette Valmond, Head of Legal Partnership – 19 December 2022

### B. Finance and Other Resources

There are no additional financial resource implications in closing the housing register as the financing of the transition of the Housing Options system to Huume is within the existing Kent Homechoice budget as agreed by DDC cabinet.

Stuart Clifton, Housing Services Manager, 18 November 2022

### C. Staffing

Requiring existing housing register applicants to reapply will require staffing resources, with there being over 900 applications currently on the housing register. It is expected that not all applicants will reapply, however there will remain a significant number of applications to

assess. The recruitment of two Housing Triage and Allocations Officers and the Allocations Team Leader post, created by the recent restructure to the Housing Options Team, as well as additional support from the wider team, will mean there is sufficient staff resources available.

Stuart Clifton, Housing Services Manager, 18 November 2022

## **D. Risk Management**

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 strategic risk register. We are satisfied that the risks associated are within the Council's risk appetite and will be managed as per Policy.

Stuart Clifton, Housing Services Manager, 18 November 2022

## **E. Environment (inc. Biodiversity) and Sustainability**

A Climate Emergency Impact Assessment has been undertaken which has not identified any negative impact on carbon emissions or the environment.

Stuart Clifton, Housing Services Manager, 18 November 2022

## **F. Community Safety**

The recommendations will have a no impact on Crime and Disorder.

Stuart Clifton, Housing Services Manager, 18 November 2022

## **G. Equalities**

An Equality Impact Assessment has been conducted on the new Housing Allocations scheme, as reported to Cabinet on 27 October 2022. Temporary suspension of the housing register may impact on people with some protected characteristics who may need additional support for, or adjustments to, the reapplication process. Support will be available to manually accept and input applications from vulnerable customers who need to apply to join the Housing Register during the period of temporary suspension and additional support will be made available to assist any existing applicants to reapply. We will also ensure that a range of communication methods are used to inform people of the reapplication process. We will carry out regular monitoring of the reapplication process to ensure that all affected individuals receive communications and are given the opportunity to reapply.

Sarah Lavallie, Corporate Governance Officer, 12 December 2022

## H. Data Protection

A joint Data Protection Impact Assessment has been completed for Kent and Medway Councils. The Data Protection Impact Assessment will ensure that the transfer of the housing register to a new provider will be compliant with the data protection principles and that any risks are mitigated. With regards to the temporary suspension of the housing register, customers will be presented with the necessary privacy information as part of the reapplication process and we will work with the existing and new provider to ensure that secure data migration takes place.

Jan Clark, Head of Policy and Governance, 12 December 2022

## I. Health and Safety

There are no health and safety implications.

Stuart Clifton, Housing Services Manager, 18 November 2022

## J. Health and Wellbeing

There are no identified health and wellbeing implications

Stuart Clifton, Housing Services Manager, 18 November 2022

## Urgent Business

For Communities and Economic Development Cabinet Advisory Board on Wednesday 25 January 2023

---

## Procedural Item

To consider any other items which the Chairman decides are urgent, for the reasons to be stated, in accordance with Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

## Date of the Next Meeting

For Communities and Economic Development Cabinet Advisory Board on Wednesday 25 January 2023

---

## Procedural Item

To note that the next scheduled meeting is Wednesday 8 March 2023.