



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Notice of a Meeting, to be held in the Council Chamber, Ashford Borough Council on Tuesday, 24th September, 2019 at 7.00 pm.

The Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee are:-

Councillor Ovenden (Chairman)
Councillor Michael (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs. Burgess, Chilton, Farrell, Forest, Howard-Smith, Iliffe, Krause, Ledger, Link and Mulholland

Agenda

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1. **Apologies/Substitutes**
To receive Apologies and Notification of Substitutes in accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2 (c)
2. **Declarations of Interest** 1 - 2
To declare any interests which fall under the following categories, as explained on the attached document:
 - a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI)
 - b) Other Significant Interests (OSI)
 - c) Voluntary Announcements of Other InterestsSee Agenda Item 2 for further details
3. **Minutes of the previous Meeting** 3 - 6
To approve the Minutes of the Meeting of this Committee held on 23rd July 2019
4. **Budget Scrutiny - Presentation**
An introduction to the Budget Scrutiny process (presentation)
5. **Quarter 1 Performance Report 2019/2020** 7 - 24

This report summarises performance against the council's suite of key performance indicators (KPIs) for Quarter 1 (1st April to 30th June) 2019/20. It also provides an overview of key developments in the delivery of the council's corporate plan priorities over the same period.

6. **Overview & Scrutiny Task Group review into WYE3 Masterplan process - final report** 25 - 36

This report summarises the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group's findings from its review into the WYE3 Masterplan development and consultation; and provides 12 recommendations for endorsement to Cabinet.

7. **Future Reviews and Report Tracker and Topic Selection Flowchart** 37 - 42

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Declarations of Interest (see also “Advice to Members” below)

- (a) **Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI)** under the Localism Act 2011, relating to items on this agenda. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared, and the agenda item(s) to which it relates must be stated.

A Member who declares a DPI in relation to any item will need to leave the meeting for that item (unless a relevant Dispensation has been granted).

- (b) **Other Significant Interests (OSI)** under the Kent Code of Conduct relating to items on this agenda. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared, and the agenda item(s) to which it relates must be stated.

A Member who declares an OSI in relation to any item will need to leave the meeting before the debate and vote on that item (unless a relevant Dispensation has been granted).

However, prior to leaving, the Member may address the Committee in the same way that a member of the public may do so.

- (c) **Voluntary Announcements of Other Interests** not required to be disclosed under (a) and (b), i.e. announcements made for transparency alone, such as:

- Membership of amenity societies, Town/Community/Parish Councils, residents' groups or other outside bodies that have expressed views or made representations, but the Member was not involved in compiling or making those views/representations, or
- Where a Member knows a person involved, but does not have a close association with that person, or
- Where an item would affect the well-being of a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc. but not his/her financial position.

[Note: Where an item would be likely to affect the financial position of a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc.; OR where an item is an application made by a Member, relative, close associate, employer, etc., there is likely to be an OSI or in some cases a DPI. ALSO, holding a committee position/office within an amenity society or other outside body, or having any involvement in compiling/making views/representations by such a body, may give rise to a perception of bias and require the Member to take no part in any motion or vote.]

Advice to Members on Declarations of Interest:

- (a) Government Guidance on DPI is available in DCLG's Guide for Councillors, at https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5962/2193362.pdf
- (b) The Kent Code of Conduct was adopted by the Full Council on 19 July 2012, and a copy can be found in the Constitution alongside the Council's Good Practice Protocol for Councillors dealing with Planning Matters. See <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/media/2098/z-word5-democratic-services-constitution-2019-constitution-of-abc-may-2019-part-5.pdf>
- (c) Where a Member declares a committee position or office within, or membership of, an outside body that has expressed views or made representations, this will be taken as a statement that the Member was not involved in compiling or making them and has retained an open mind on the item(s) in question. If this is not the case, the situation must be explained.

If any Member has any doubt about any interest which he/she may have in any item on this agenda, he/she should seek advice from the Director of Law and Governance and Monitoring Officer, or from other Solicitors in Legal and Democracy as early as possible, and in advance of the Meeting.

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of a Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **23rd July 2019**.

Present:

Cllr. Ovenden (Chairman);
Cllr. Michael (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Burgess, Chilton, Farrell, Forest, Howard-Smith, Iliffe, Krause, Ledger, Mulholland.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Buchanan, Wright.

Communications & Marketing Manager, Head of Environment and Land Management, Grounds Maintenance Operations Manager, Director of Finance and Economy, Senior Policy and Scrutiny Officer, Member Services and Ombudsman Complaints Officer.

93 Declarations of Interest

Cllr. Chilton made a Voluntary Announcement as he owned a small news company.

94 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of this Committee held on the 25th June 2019 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

95 Ashford for You Review

The Communications and Marketing Manager introduced this item. He said he would provide a brief review of the Ashford for You magazine, as well as discussing the wider context of how the Council communicated with residents. He went on to give a presentation which covered:

- Details of the varied ways in which the Council communicated with residents and the public, including external and internal methods.
- In-house teamwork to create branding and concept for Aspire Landscape Management, including vehicle artwork and uniforms. Also, devising the

vehicle artwork for waste and recycling lorries, local elections promotion and branding for market stalls events.

- Upcoming support for the Town Centre team to deliver key high-profile town centre projects.
- Working with national and international media and a national external PR agency.
- Reacting to the evolving methods of communicating with residents and the public including ABC News Hub, social media and the Ashford for You magazine, which was delivered to every household in the Borough.
- Communication with Members via media updates, and contributions to the weekly Members' Newsletter etc.

The Chairman opened up the item and the following questions/comments were raised:

- Members considered that Ashford for You was an excellent magazine, but felt there could be more coverage of issues in rural areas. A Member suggested that the Communications Team should contact rural Parish Councils to see if they had any issues to contribute, and, in particular, speak to editors of Parish magazines. The Communications and Marketing Manager said he would take this on board.
- A Member asked how the external PR company had been chosen. The Communications and Marketing Manager explained that this had been done via a tender and interview process.
- In response to a question about the cost of producing the Ashford for You magazine, the Communications and Marketing Manager responded that each edition yielded approximately £3,700 in advertising income. This did not cover the cost of producing each edition, which was roughly £10,000, including print and postage costs. The major expense was in staff time.
- A Member asked what measures were in place to gauge the effectiveness and value for money of delivering the magazine. The Communications and Marketing Manager said that residents had been asked specific questions via a survey to understand how effective the magazine was in communicating with residents. The survey results had been very positive.
- In response to a question about what methods provided the best value and benefit, the Communications and Marketing Manager replied that it depended on the audience and that a number of different types of communication channels were required to reach the maximum audience. The magazine was an important communication tool, as were social media and the more traditional media channels.

- A Member asked about the editorial structure of the magazine and how the content was derived. The Communications and Marketing Manager replied that the whole Communications and Marketing team was involved in the magazine production, although there was an overall editor. The team liaised with Officers, Management Team and members of the public for material, but they were always looking for suitable content. He emphasised that this was a lifestyle magazine, and was particularly suitable for families and older residents.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

96 Performance and Development of Aspire Landscape Management

The Head of Environment and Land Management introduced this item and highlighted the key points within the report. She explained the background to the establishment of the service and plans for the future. She said the Aspire service had been hugely successful, and worked across large areas of the Borough, providing contracted in-house work as well as landscape management. An appraisal had been undertaken to explore potential commercial income generating opportunities, but the main driver was to continue to provide excellent service across the Borough and this should not suffer at the expense of income generation. It was also important to avoid competing in markets where self-employed, sole trader residents were likely to be operating.

The Chairman opened up the item for discussion and the following questions/comments were raised:

- Members agreed that the Aspire team provided an excellent service. A Member asked whether it would be possible to deliver services at Chilmington. The Head of Environment and Land Management replied that the Chilmington Management Organisation would put out their land management requirements to tender, and this would be an opportunity for the Aspire team to put in a competitive bid.
- A Member asked about the pros and cons of a Trading Company. The Head of Environment and Land Management drew Members' attention to the table under paragraph 1 of her report, which provided this information.
- In response to a question about restrictions on commercial income generating work for local authority trading companies, the Director of Finance and Economy explained that there were measures in place to ensure that any local authority entering the market would act competitively in the market place.
- A Member asked about the regime of verge cuts. The Grounds Maintenance Operations Manager responded that highway verges were part funded by KCC, who paid for 6 annual cuts. The Council provided another 6 annual cuts. There were 12 cuts to amenity land. There were 16 – 18 annual cuts on gateways and roundabouts.

- A Member asked about mapping of ditches in the Borough and the team's ditch clearing workload. The Head of Environment and Land Management said that there were in the region of 20 drainage systems that the Aspire service now maintained. However, the team were not taking on any work from new developments, but were concentrating on attending to those identified as priority and already in the Council's ownership.
- There was a question about the storage location for the team's tools and machinery. The Head of Environment and Land Management explained that these were kept at the depot in Cobbs Wood. An open day had been arranged for 4th October, and Members were invited to attend and find out more about the team and their work.
- Members congratulated the Head of Environment and Land Management and the Grounds Maintenance Operations Manager on the quality of the team's work and their success to date.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

97 Future Reviews and Report Tracker and Topic Selection Flowchart

The Senior Policy and Scrutiny Officer introduced this item. He explained that the Tracker provided the standing commitments for the year, as well as items for future consideration.

He advised that he was currently trying to arrange Budget Scrutiny training sessions for Members of the Committee in advance of the budget scrutiny process commencing.

A Member requested that an item be added to the Tracker covering the current and future financial situation at Ashford College. The Senior Policy and Scrutiny Officer said he would speak to Officers about bringing this to a future Committee meeting.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

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Agenda Item No:	
Report To:	Overview and Scrutiny
Date of Meeting:	24 September 2019
Report Title:	Quarter 1 2019/20 Performance Report
Report Author & Job Title:	Will Train Senior Policy and Scrutiny Officer
Portfolio Holder	Cllr. N Bell
Portfolio Holder for:	Finance and IT

Summary:	This report summarises performance against the council's suite of key performance indicators (KPIs) for Quarter 1 (1 st April to 30 th June) 2019/20. It also provides an overview of key developments in the delivery of the council's corporate plan priorities over the same period.
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Key Decision: No

Significantly Affected Wards: None

Recommendations: Overview and Scrutiny is asked to:-

- I. **Note the performance data for quarter 1 2019/20 (Appendix 1)**

Policy Overview: A review of the council's performance monitoring arrangements was undertaken during the latter half of the 2017/18 municipal year to reconcile key performance indicators, service level performance data and the council's existing programme management processes. The revised performance framework and monitoring arrangements will allow for Heads of Service to more readily integrate performance data into programme management and the service planning process.

Financial Implications: None

Legal Implications None

Equalities Impact Assessment Not required as the report presents information on past council performance and does not recommend any change to council policy or new action.

Other Material Implications: None

**Exempt from
Publication:**

No

**Background
Papers:**

None

Contact:

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Report Title: Quarter 1 2019/20 Performance Report

Introduction

1. This report seeks to provide an overview of performance against the council's key performance indicators for quarter 1 2019/20. The council's performance framework captures key performance data from across the organisation as it relates to the council's Corporate Plan.

Background

2. A review of the council's performance monitoring arrangements was undertaken during the latter half of the 2017/18 municipal year to reconcile key performance indicators, service level performance data and the council's existing programme management processes.
3. A revised performance framework was endorsed by Cabinet in at the end of 2017/18, with recording against the new key performance indicators beginning in April 2018. The new monitoring arrangements will allow for Heads of Service to more readily integrate performance data into programme management and the service planning process.

Quarter 1 Performance

4. Commentary on individual performance indicators is included within the appendix to this report. Performance against the majority of key performance indicators for quarter 1 is above target, however in some areas performance is below target. Directors and Heads of Service are aware of these drops in performance and work is ongoing to address any underlying issues.

Quarter 1 Corporate Plan developments

Enterprising Ashford

5. Quarter 1 saw continued recognition of the council's success in reviving Ashford town centre, with Communities Secretary James Brokenshire MP praising Ashford, which has bucked the trend of falling high street footfall. Building on the success of last year's 'Splashes of Summer' campaign in the town centre, quarter 1 also saw the permanent addition of table tennis tables to Park Mall to add to the existing family games area.
6. This quarter also saw key developments in the town centre's offer, with the opening of the Curious Brewery and the announcement of new tenants for Elwick Place including the award-winning Kentish independent food and drink brand, Macknade, signing up to occupy the largest unit. Guy Hollaway Architects' design for Elwick Place was also selected as a finalist in the 'Retail and Leisure Architect of the Year' category at the 2019 Building Design Architect of the Year Awards.

7. Strategic property investment in the town continued in quarter 1, with the council acquiring Matalan to secure commercial income; and the acquisition of the HomePlus site for redevelopment by A Better Choice for Property Ltd.

Living Ashford

8. The re-opening of the Danemore sheltered housing scheme in Tenterden marked a major landmark in the multi-million pound modernisation plans for the council's sheltered housing schemes. The new look Danemore provides 34 homes for affordable rent for older people, together with four chalet bungalows to be sold on the open market.
9. Quarter 1 also saw further work to tackle tenancy fraud with the council participating in a key amnesty organised by the Kent Tenancy Fraud Forum; the council securing a court injunction to address anti-social behaviour in areas of Tenterden; and the start of consultation on Rolvenden Parish Council's submitted Neighbourhood Plan.

Active and Creative Ashford

10. The council provided funding to enable the Ashford One You shop to relocate to a larger unit within Park Mall. Since opening in February 2017, the One You shop has provided support to Ashford communities in tackling their health and wellbeing concerns, with more than 4,000 people having visited the One You shop to date.
11. Public consultation also took place on the council's Cycling and Walking Strategy 2019-2029. As part of a wider strategy to improve overall sustainable transport, in particular making the town centre more accessible, the Cycling and Walking Strategy will bring benefits in health, transport and the economy.
12. Cultural development of the town was also boosted in quarter 1 with the announcement that the Jasmin Vardimon Company had secured a grant of over £3 million from Arts Council England; and the approval of the development of a disused site on Henwood Industrial Estate to provide the dance company, which has had its base in Ashford for the past seven years, with a self-financing, energy-efficient, bespoke, new-build home in Ashford.

Attractive Ashford

13. New artworks appeared in Ashford in quarter 1, with the appearance of a large pair of colourful wings on the frontage of the former Mecca Bingo Hall, created by a local artist in partnership with LoveAshford's Town Centre Regeneration Team. The Newtown Road underpass was also revitalised with two striking murals and new lighting installed following a design competition held at Ashford's North School.
14. In celebration of 2019 being the Year of the Environment, Ashford Borough Council also teamed up with art students of Ashford College to create a flower garden scene using single use plastics either collected by those involved in the project or through council litter picks. This plastic sculpture was displayed prominently in the town centre.

Conclusion

15. Quarter 1 shows a continuation of strong performance in a number of key areas and further delivery against the aims of the council's corporate plan. Most indicators where performance fell below target in quarters 3 and 4 of the previous financial year have seen improvement in quarter 1, whilst other areas are being closely monitored and work is ongoing to address any underlying issues.

Portfolio Holder's views

- 16.

Contact and Email

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Quarter 1 2019/20 Performance

KPI status key	
	Not meeting target – under performance
	Target not met but within acceptable threshold
	Target met or exceeded performance
	Status unknown
	Data Only – no target set

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2018/19			Q4 2018/19			Q1 2019/20			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
Page 12 KPI01 Park Mall Vacancy Rates	No. of vacant units within Park Mall - collected quarterly through survey carried out by Economic Development	3	0		3	0		2	0		At 6.3%, this is the lowest vacancy rate across all areas in town (Town Centre streets – 9.3%, County Square – 7.3%, Elwick Place – 80%). Overall town centre vacancy is at 10.9% with 35 units vacant out of 322 which is a fall from 11.5% in April (2 units have been filled since). This is in line with research that shows national retail vacancy rates are at 10%-16% (Duff & Phelps and Springboard – Retail Gazette).
KPI02 Ashford Town Centre Car Park Usage	No. of vehicles parking in Ashford town centre car parks as recorded by Parking Services	164,745	N/A		184,593	N/A		177,236	N/A		Usage across Ashford town centre car parks in quarter 1 is up 17% on quarter 1 2018/19. Whilst the quantum of parking available in Ashford town centre increased quarter 3 2018/19, usage of Elwick Place car park in quarter 1 equalled 70% of the year on year total increase in usage (18,178 users).

Quarter 1 2019/20 Performance

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2018/19			Q4 2018/19			Q1 2019/20			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI03 Ashford Town Centre Car Park Income	Income for Ashford town centre car parks - cash, card and mobile transactions combined	£398,692.87	N/A		£430,761.38	N/A		£420,166.73	N/A		Income across Ashford town centre car parks in quarter 1 increased by more than £45,000 on quarter 1 2018/19. It should be noted that the quantum of parking available in Ashford town centre increased in quarter 3 2018/19 with the opening of Elwick Place car park, income for which in quarter 1 2019/20 totalled £41,653.60.
KPI04 Ashford Town Centre Car Park average spend	Average spend per visit - Ashford town centre car parks	£2.42	N/A		£2.33	N/A		£2.37	N/A		Average spend per user has increased slightly from quarter 4, however performance is down from quarter 1 2018/19, where the average spend was £2.48.
KPI05 Tenterden Car Park Usage	No. of vehicles parking in Tenterden car parks	119,171	N/A		112,903	N/A		114,786	N/A		Usage of Tenterden car parks across quarter 1 is around 4% lower than the same period in 2018/19, however usage has increased on the previous quarter in line with historic trends.
KPI06 Tenterden Car Park Income	Income for Tenterden car parks - cash, card and mobile transactions combined	£236,555.22	N/A		£219,690.93	N/A		£220,273.75	N/A		Income from Tenterden car parks has increased marginally on quarter 4's takings, however income is down by more than £15,000 on quarter 1 2018/19.
KPI07 Tenterden Car Park average spend	Average spend per visit - Ashford town centre car parks	£1.99	N/A		£1.95	N/A		£1.92	N/A		As a consequence of increasing usage but only a marginal increase in takings in Tenterden's car parks in quarter 1, average spend has fallen marginally against quarter 4 performance. Compared to quarter 1 2018/19, average spend for the last quarter is down by around 4%.

Quarter 1 2019/20 Performance

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2018/19			Q4 2018/19			Q1 2019/20			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI08 New Businesses Supported	No. of pre-start and start up businesses supported by Ashford Borough Council through service level agreement with Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce	19	36		24	36		6	36		Activity in quarter 1 was low from direct enquiries to the hub, but has likely also been impacted due to changes in the Chamber of Commerce website which resulted in the removal of a 'one to one' booking form and the lack of an obvious route to register for a call back. KICC say the situation has been rectified and it is expected that quarter 2 figures will show improvement.
KPI13 Business Rates Collection	% of national non-domestic rates collected by the council - cumulative figure per month	82.11%	99%		99.13%	99%		30.25%	24.75%		Business rates collections have exceeded target for quarter 1. It should be noted that the target for collections is 99% across the financial year, with a quarterly projection of collection rates set as target for each quarter.
KPI14 Social rent void loss	Rent loss on void social rent properties as a % of the rent roll for HRA social properties	0.28%	0.3%		0.24%	0.3%		0.21%	0.3%		<p>Q1 2019/20 Social Rents</p> <p>Total rent Loss = 9,592</p> <p>Debit Raised = 4,569,912</p> <p>No. Properties = 37</p> <p>RENT LOSS = 0.21%</p> <p>Void rent loss has steadily reduced from quarter 1 2018/19, where it stood at 0.36% of the rent roll.</p>

Quarter 1 2019/20 Performance

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2018/19			Q4 2018/19			Q1 2019/20			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI14A Affordable rent void loss	Rent loss on void affordable rent properties as a % of the rent roll for HRA affordable rent properties	0.96%	1%		1.06%	1%		0.93%	1%		<p>Q1 2019/20 Affordable</p> <p>Total Rent Loss = 9,028</p> <p>Debit Raised = 972,027</p> <p>No. Properties = 30</p> <p>TOTAL AFFORDABLE = 0.93%</p> <p>Void rent loss has steadily reduced from quarter 1 2018/19, where it stood at 1.42% of the rent roll.</p>
KPI15 Council Affordable Housing - New Build	No. of additional new build affordable homes delivered by council housing	12	N/A		34	N/A		0	N/A		<p>There are two projects (Weavers in Biddenden and Ragstone Hollow in Aldington) which the council is still to complete on. These are expected to be handed over at the end of Q3 2019/20. All other projects are in the planning system currently, or are being tendered, so the figure for Q1, and Q2 will remain at 0 for this KPI.</p>
KPI15A Council Affordable Housing - On-Street Purchases	No. of additional on-street purchase affordable homes delivered by council housing	2	N/A		2	N/A		0	N/A		<p>There have been no on-street purchases as yet in 2019/20. This is because we are awaiting details from finance on year-end budgets and also information regarding available 1-4-1 monies that need spending before we resume our programme.</p>

Quarter 1 2019/20 Performance

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2018/19			Q4 2018/19			Q1 2019/20			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI16 Registered Provider Affordable Housing Page 16	No. of new affordable homes delivered by registered providers	16	N/A		32	N/A		16	N/A		<p>16 homes have completed thus far (these were 3 x 2-bed flats and 7 x 1-bed flats) - West Kent took receipt of these units at the Smallhythe Road site in Tenterden (part of the TENT1 development).</p> <p>A further 6 x 2-bed flats have been completed by Orbit in Jemmett Road in Ashford.</p> <p>Please note that the council is acquiring 2 x 2-bed affordable rent, and 2 x 2-bed shared ownership homes on a site being built out by Jarvis in Shadoxhurst. We stepped in as no other RP came in for these s106 homes. There is an outside possibility that these homes may come forward by the end of Q1 but it is likely these will come forward in Q2 and will be reported then.</p>
KPI17 B&B Accommodation	No. of households placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation	2	0		5	0		2	0		As at end of quarter 1. Usage remains low - of the two households in bed & breakfast at quarter end, one family is moving imminently and one was an eviction that the council had no prior knowledge of. For comparison, 15 households were in bed & breakfast accommodation at the end of quarter 1 2018/19.
KPI18 Nightly Paid Accommodation	No. of households placed in Nightly Paid accommodation as at the end of the reporting period	66	N/A		77	N/A		88	N/A		As at end of quarter 1. Placements have risen slightly across quarter 1 due to a lack of move on accommodation and continuing use of nightly paid as an alternative to bed & breakfast placements.

Quarter 1 2019/20 Performance

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2018/19			Q4 2018/19			Q1 2019/20			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI19 Other Temporary Accommodation	No. of households placed in Other Temporary accommodation	70	N/A		70	N/A		48	N/A		As at end of quarter 1. Placement numbers have fallen through the quarter through converting tenancies in our own 'Other Temporary' stock to introductory tenancies and so discharging our homelessness duties. We are no longer using the emergency "crash pad" facility at Homegroup due to a change in KCC contracts, and have had a few of the PSL properties handed back to the landlord.
KPI20 Homelessness Presentations	No. of homelessness presentations	368	N/A		435	N/A		391	N/A		April saw the highest ever number of approaches per month, however numbers have dropped off through the rest of the quarter, and approaches historically slow down into the summer. Total approaches are down year on year, with 430 approaches made in the same period in 2018/19.
KPI21 Homelessness Preventions	No. of households where homelessness was prevented	71	N/A		69	N/A		64	N/A		Preventions increased each month through quarter 1, however staff shortages and increases in the number of approaches made (see KPI20) reduced the amount of time available to complete dedicated follow up casework in April. Many people presenting do not respond to callbacks or attend interviews, and the team are receiving presentations from people with more complex needs.

Quarter 1 2019/20 Performance

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2018/19			Q4 2018/19			Q1 2019/20			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI22 Homelessness Reliefs	No. of households where homelessness was relieved	89	N/A		37	N/A		43	N/A		April and May saw an increase in people approaching as homeless on the day with no prior approaches and an increase in presentations made late in the day. Increases are also being seen in approaches from 18+ care leavers due to changes in commissioning services.
KPI23 Refugee Households Resettled	No. of households resettled in the Borough under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme	2	N/A		3	N/A		1	N/A		Numbers remain dependent on availability of affordable property in the private rented sector. Already 2 confirmed families next quarter with others yet to be confirmed
KPI24 Refugee Persons Resettled	No. of refugees resettled in the Borough under the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme	8	N/A		14	N/A		2	N/A		Numbers remain dependent on availability of affordable property in the private rented sector. 13 people so far confirmed next quarter.
KPI25 RTB2 28 day processing time	Average time taken to process an RTB2 form with 28 day target time admitting or denying the right to buy	7.5	28		9.92	28		11	28		Average turnaround of right to buy applications for the last quarter well within the 28 day target. Average processing time has increased from quarter 4, however this is in line with historic trends and is improved on quarter 1 2018/19
KPI25A RTB2 56 day processing time	Average time taken to process an RTB2 form with 56 day target time admitting or denying the right to buy	0	56		9	56		12	56		Average processing time has increased from quarter 4, however average turnaround of right to buy applications for the last quarter remains well within the 56 day target

Quarter 1 2019/20 Performance

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2018/19			Q4 2018/19			Q1 2019/20			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI26 Disabled Facilities Grants Administered	No. of disabled facilities grants administered by the council	15	N/A		36	N/A		13	N/A		Quarter 1 performance is lower than quarter 4 (in line with historic trends) due to grant works being completed in March to coincide with close of financial year; however performance is improved on quarter 1 2019/20, where 8 grants were administered in the same period.
KPI27 Disabled Facilities Grant Spend	Average spend per disabled facilities grant administered	£203,441.40	N/A		£397,962.91	N/A		£158,838.66	N/A		April's spend is £0 due to financial year end and the team closing off works utilising the previous year's budget. Spend for May and June is in line with anticipated levels of demand, and total spend for quarter 1 is increased on the same period in the previous year (£139,592.12)
KPI30 Private Rented Sector Condition Complaints	No. of complaints received regarding poor conditions in the private rented sector	72	N/A		75	N/A		60	N/A		The figure represents a broad range of issues, mainly around heating, hot water, general disrepair and damp and mould. Complaint numbers for quarter 1 are up slightly on the same period last year, but are not at unexpected levels.
KPI31 Informal Private Rented Sector Condition Complaint Resolutions	No. of complaints regarding poor conditions in the private rented sector resolved informally	8	N/A		20	N/A		19	N/A		Complaint resolutions in quarter 1 were slightly down on the same period in 2018/19 however several complaints have been challenging to resolve and have required landlords to undertake works to properties. As such complaints have been left open for a longer period to allow for sufficient time to complete identified works.

Quarter 1 2019/20 Performance

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2018/19			Q4 2018/19			Q1 2019/20			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI32 Formal Action Private Rented Sector Complaint Resolutions	No. of complaints regarding poor conditions in the private rented sector resolved with formal action	4	N/A		0	N/A		2	N/A		Only two complaints in quarter 1 were resolved with formal action. In one case an improvement notice was issued to the owner of a block containing four self-contained flats, which required works related to improving fire precautions to be undertaken. In the other case a community protection warning notice was issued to address an unsightly long-term empty property. The notice required the owners to tidy the garden and undertake works to improve the appearance of the property.
KPI32A Gas Safety Certificates	% of ABC properties with up to date gas safety certificates	99.78%	100%		99.91%	100%		99.87%	100%		At the end of this quarter, only two properties remained outstanding, one HRA and one PSL. The HRA property was 5 days overdue at time of report, and was in fact a decanted property awaiting demolition - the gas has now been capped off so this property is compliant. The PSL property was awaiting decision from the landlord because it is vacant and needs a lot of work before re-letting. This property has now been removed from contract (as at 12 July) so will not be included in our stats going forward. 15 outstanding properties were cleared during quarter 1.
KPI33 Food Hygiene Rating	% of businesses in the borough with a food hygiene rating above 3*	98.1%	98.5%		98.25%	98.5%		98.62%	98.5%		The team has reduced the number of non-compliant premises to 16 at the end of quarter 1.

Quarter 1 2019/20 Performance

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2018/19			Q4 2018/19			Q1 2019/20			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI34 Lifeline Call Answer Speed	% of lifeline calls answered within 60 seconds	99.74%	97%		99.84%	97%		99.81%	97%		Performance against this KPI continues to be above target
KPI37 Planning Application Approvals	% of planning applications approved	93%	90%		91%	90%		92%	90%		Planning application approval rates in quarter 1 are lower than for the corresponding period in 2018/19 but remain above target.
KPI38 Speed of Major Planning Application Decisions	% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks (or within such extended period as agreed in writing between the applicant and the local authority)	67%	60%		66.67%	60%		53%	60%		The Planning Guarantee is Governments tool for monitoring speed and quality of decisions. The speed element assesses a 24 month period between October 2017-September 2019 rather than monthly performance. Speed of major decisions within this period up to the end of Q1 19/20 is currently 69%. Whilst monthly performance may fluctuate, the performance over the assessment period is the key performance indicator with a national threshold set at 60% for major decisions.
KPI39 Speed of Non-Major Planning Application Decisions	% of minor and other planning applications determined within 8 weeks (or within such extended period as has been agreed in writing between the applicant and the council).	51%	65%		68.94%	65%		87%	70%		The Planning Guarantee is Governments tool for monitoring speed and quality of decisions. The speed element assesses a 24 month period between October 2017-September 2019 rather than monthly performance. Speed of non-major decisions within this period up to the end of Q1 19/20 is currently 81%.

Quarter 1 2019/20 Performance

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2018/19			Q4 2018/19			Q1 2019/20			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI40A Quality of Major Planning Application Decisions	% of major planning application decisions overturned at appeal	NEW PERFORMANCE MEASURE FOR 2019/20						4%	10%		Quality performance is that at the end of the quarter but final figures will not be known until December 2019. Assessment period is April 2017 - March 2019 with a 9 month lag period.
KPI40B Quality of Non-Major Planning Application Decisions	% of non-major planning application decisions overturned at appeal	NEW PERFORMANCE MEASURE FOR 2019/20						0.58%	10%		Quality performance is that at the end of the quarter but final figures will not be known until December 2019. Assessment period is April 2017 - March 2019 with a 9 month lag period.
KPI41 Planning Contraventions Resolved Informally	% of planning contraventions resolved without the need for formal action	38%	37%		33.67%	37%		45.33%	37%		Quarter 1 performance has returned above target from a drop in quarter 4, and is slightly up on performance for the same period in 2018/19 (44.33%)
KPI43 Council Tax Collection Rate		86.48%	98.25%		98.11%	98.25%		30.38%	24.57%		Collection rates for quarter 1 are on target to deliver the annual target collection (98.25% by year end). Note for 2019/20 annual target has been projected equally across each quarter.
KPI44 Benefit Change of Circumstance Processing	Average time taken to process a benefit change of circumstance in no. days	2.9	10		2.6	10		2.82	10		Benefit change of circumstance processing times remain well within target limits for quarter 1.
KPI45 Benefit New Claim Processing Time	Average time taken to process a new benefit payment claim in no. days	23.62	28		23.42	28		25.63	28		Processing times for quarter 1 remain within target and are slightly improved on the same period in 2018/19 (26.11 days)

Quarter 1 2019/20 Performance

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2018/19			Q4 2018/19			Q1 2019/20			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI48 % of tourism related contacts to Ashford TIC made in person	% of Ashford TIC contacts made in person	75.17%	N/A		64.47%	N/A		55.55%	N/A		The share of in person visits has fallen in quarter 1, however the current share is broadly in line with performance in quarter 1 2018/19.
KPI52 Recycling Rate	% of borough waste recycled or composted	52.67%	50%		48%	50%		54.5%	50%		Recycling performance has risen back above target in quarter 1 after a drop below 50% in quarter 4.
KPI53 Refuse Collection Success Rate	% of successful refuse collections per 100,000 refuse collections made.	99.97%	99.97%		99.96%	99.97%		99.97%	99.97%		Collection success rate is in line with target for quarter 1. Performance against this KPI has remained steady, either at or within 0.01% of target since quarter 1 2018/19.
KPI55 FOI Response Rate	% of freedom of information requests responded to within 20 working days	96.5%	95%		98.25%	97%		95.5%	97%		218 Freedom of Information requests were completed in quarter 1, of which 10 were completed beyond the statutory 20 working day deadline.
KPI56 Major Personal Data Breaches	Number of major personal data breaches recorded (as required to be reported to the Information Commissioner's Office)	0	0		2	0		1	0		6 incidents were logged internally in Quarter 1, of which one was reported to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO). The ICO advised that there would be no further action taken in regard to this incident.

Quarter 1 2019/20 Performance

Code & Short Name	Description	Q3 2018/19			Q4 2018/19			Q1 2019/20			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
KPI64 Average Speed of Customer Service Calls Answered	Average wait time for customer service calls - to be benchmarked with results across Kent	0h 01m 33s	0h 01m 38s		0h 01m 25s	0h 01m 38s		0h 01m 34s	0h 01m 38s		<p>FTE in April was 4.82. We have one csa on long term sick and lost another 19.5 days due to sickness. 12 csa's took leave totalling 21 days.</p> <p>FTE in May was 4.11. We have one csa on long term sick. 10 csa's took leave totalling 163.5 hrs.</p> <p>FTE in June was 5.40. 3 csa's took sick leave totalling 119 hours. 10 csa's took annual leave totalling 229 hours.</p>

Agenda Item No:



Report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Overview and Scrutiny Task Group review into WYE3 Masterplan process – final report

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

1. Endorse the findings the Task Group
 2. Commend the recommendations of the Task Group to Cabinet
-

Date of O&S meeting: 24 September 2019

Chair of O&S Task Group: Cllr N Iliffe

Chair of O&S Committee: Cllr N Ovenden

Relevant Portfolio(s): Cllr N Shorter (Planning and Development)

Summary: At its meeting of 13 September 2018 Cabinet resolved to defer the adoption of the WYE3 Masterplan pending the clarification of two points related to consultation responses and the view of Kent County Council on a traffic assessment commissioned by the Parish Council.

It was felt by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that an examination of the processes followed to develop and consult on the Masterplan for WYE3 would be beneficial ahead of Cabinet reconsidering the masterplan adoption.

This report summarises the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group's findings from its review into the WYE3 Masterplan development and consultation; and provides 12 recommendations for endorsement to Cabinet.

Exempt from Publication: **NO**

Background Papers: Adoption of the draft WYE3 Masterplan – report to Cabinet, 13 September 2018

Contact: William.train@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330394

Report Title: Overview and Scrutiny Task Group review into WYE3 Masterplan process

Foreword from the Task Group Chairman

1. The Overview and Scrutiny Task Group has conducted an in-depth and objective review of the processes and practices followed in developing and consulting on the WYE3 Masterplan. Planning and development proposals, particularly for key sites such as those contained within WYE3, can be highly emotive and impactful for communities and as such it is imperative that effective consultation and engagement processes are carried out, and that clear communication with stakeholders is maintained throughout.
2. This review has shown that areas for improvement in the council's masterplanning and engagement processes exist, and the recommendations made by the Task Group aim to enable improvements in the provision of essential services which will ultimately improve outcomes for residents, and I am pleased to commend them to the Committee. I would also like to express the gratitude of the Task Group membership to all witnesses who so willingly gave up their time to participate in this review and inform its findings and recommendations, and to the officers of the council who have given up their time to attend and assist with the meetings of the Task Group.

Introduction and Background

3. At its meeting of 13 September 2018 the Cabinet was asked to adopt the WYE3 Masterplan. At this same meeting concerns were raised by Wye with Hinxhill Parish Council in regard to the masterplan development and consultation processes. Cabinet resolved to defer the adoption of the masterplan pending the clarification of two points related to consultation responses and the view of Kent County Council in regard to a traffic assessment commissioned by the Parish Council.
4. In reviewing the forward plan for the Cabinet, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted that the masterplan was due to be considered again for adoption in the autumn. It was felt by the committee that an examination of the processes followed to develop and consult on the masterplan for WYE3 would be beneficial ahead of Cabinet reconsidering the masterplan adoption, with any recommendations regarding the development or consultation considered at the same juncture.

Scope of the Review

5. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee assembled a five member task group, chaired by Councillor Nathan Iliffe, to conduct this review. At its first meeting, the Task Group agreed the scope of its investigations as the two conditions for deferral of the decision to adopt not related to the content of the masterplan (A, B) As well

as the concerns raised by the Parish Council's representative at the Cabinet meeting of 13 September 2018 (C-K):

- A.** A satisfactory response with no impediment to the Masterplan being received from KCC Highways on the MLM traffic assessment.
 - B.** Officers checking that all written points made to the Council as part of the formal consultation on the draft Masterplan have been considered.
 - C.** The Masterplan fundamentally departs from the adopted Wye Neighbourhood Plan.
 - D.** Consultation on the masterplan closed on 8th May, however response papers only started to emerge from 30th August.
 - E.** Public responses were missing from the council's schedule of consultation responses.
 - F.** The MLM traffic review was submitted to the council in May but was not sent to KCC for review until the day before the Cabinet meeting.
 - G.** The Masterplan development process did not reflect the Wye Neighbourhood Plan Examiner's report in considering a wider range of options to be considered, particularly with regard to the potential use of the ADAS site.
 - H.** The developer dismissed attempts to raise other options (point 7) and as such the Parish Council consider that the consultation was not meaningful or transparent.
 - I.** The engagement events held produced little to show for the large commitment of public time and money.
 - J.** The consultation process had not met the core aims of the Statement of Community Involvement in respect of having 'clear concise documents' and having 'kept people informed', in that traffic and drainage reports were retrofitted to support the developer's original layout and quantum, and as such key constraints in these areas did not inform the initial workshops and exhibitions.
 - K.** A lack of response forms in the public library ignored the needs of Wye's elderly population and the approximately 20% of residents with no internet access.
6. Due to the need for technical expertise and the relatively short timescale available to conduct and complete the review, it was agreed that the relative merits and content of the masterplan would not be reviewed by the Task Group. Per the limits of Overview and Scrutiny's powers and responsibilities, the review did not examine any live planning applications.
7. Overview and Scrutiny exists to be a 'critical friend' to the Cabinet, and to provide an objective examination of the council's work to ensure that it delivers the best possible outcomes for all residents of the borough.

8. The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group in conducting this review is therefore twofold – first, to review the masterplan development and consultation processes to establish the veracity of any claims of process failures, and secondly to provide recommendations for improvements in process that will be of benefit for the future.

Task Group process

9. Following an initial meeting to agree the scope of the review, the Task Group conducted separate witness sessions with the members of the tri-partite WYE3 steering group, namely:
 - Representatives of the owner/developer of the WYE3 site (Telereal Trillium) and their agents (Turley; Hobbs Parker)
 - Representatives of Wye with Hinxhill Parish Council (who also provided written submissions)
 - Representatives of Ashford Borough Council's Planning and Development service (the Head of Planning and Development, Policy Manager, Principal Urban Designer and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development)
10. Having met with and questioned representatives of all members of the tri-partite working group and considered all submissions, the Task Group met to agree its findings and recommendations. The Task Group would like to extend their gratitude to all those who gave up their time to take part in and contribute evidence to this review.

Review findings

11. In conducting its review, the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group has considered a range of written and oral evidence regarding the development of and consultation on the draft WYE3 Masterplan.
12. The Task Group were advised that this masterplan process represented the continuation of a long period of local engagement over planning and development within Wye following the development of the Wye Neighbourhood Plan (and the Imperial College masterplan prior to this) and that the high level of justifiable public interest in the future development of a key site within Wye warranted a more collaborative approach than may otherwise have been taken for a masterplanning exercise. The Task Group finds that in this regard, the effective continuation of the tri-partite steering group was an appropriate choice for co-ordinating this process.
13. Whilst not attributable to a single point in time or element of the masterplan development and consultation, it is evident that there were failings in trust between partners, and a breakdown in relationships as the masterplanning process progressed; however through the review the Task Group has found that assertions of improper behaviour by officers are unfounded.
14. The Task Group wish to record its observation that, balancing an unusually and unexpectedly intensive and time-bound masterplanning process with the demands of other significant work including the preparation of the Local Plan to 2030 and the

largest development in the Borough's history; and working at a time of significant strain on departmental resources, the officers of the Council worked exceptionally hard under very difficult circumstances hampered by the breakdown in the relationship between the partners of the steering group.

15. The Task Group noted the dedication of Wye Parish Council and the work they had undertaken in the preparation of the Wye Neighbourhood Plan. The Task Group felt that the frustrations that had arisen for the Parish Council during the masterplanning process relating to a lack of inclusion and potential miscommunication around the role of the Parish Council were regrettable.
16. The Task Group identified a number of recommendations which are detailed below by theme.

Traffic

17. The views of Kent County Council's Highways and Transportation Development Planning Team (KCC Highways) on the MLM traffic assessment were reported to the 25 October 2018 meeting of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group (LPPPTG), where it was confirmed in the minutes of that meeting (reported to Cabinet on 8 November 2018) that "*KCC Highways had concluded that the transport assessment that supported the Wye3 Masterplan was sound*" and the LPPPTG considered that "*the Council should adhere to the advice of the Highways Officers.*"
18. The Task Group extended an invitation to KCC Highways to attend a witness session and speak to their analysis of the MLM traffic assessment, however this was declined, with KCC Highways noting that they had already made a clear recommendation to the Borough Council on the submitted masterplan in their role as a statutory consultee. KCC Highways also noted that it was not their role to comment on third party submissions, and that these need to be reviewed by the Borough Council in its role as the local planning authority.
19. Taken in conjunction with the report to the 25 October 2018 meeting of the LPPPTG, this response was of concern to the Task Group as it seemed to imply that what assessment of the MLM review had been undertaken by KCC Highways had been limited to determining whether the MLM review raised any methodological issues with the assessment completed by the developer's consultant, Transport Planning Practice Ltd (TPP).
20. Concern was expressed that whilst both the TPP and MLM studies were assumed to both be methodologically sound, their findings with regard to traffic volumes differed due to the reported difference in the parameters of each study. Whilst neither assessment could therefore be said to give an **inaccurate** picture of traffic in Wye within its own parameters, the lack of reconciliation of the differing assessments has evidently contributed to the loss of trust by the representatives of local stakeholders on the steering group.
21. The Task Group were advised that the parameters (and resultant findings) of the TPP study were a particular point of contention for the Parish Council in regard to scope point C, as the Wye Neighbourhood Plan had been predicated on the concept of a 'walkable village' and recognised the village's traffic constraints.

Concern over the conclusions of the TPP study and the assumed historic use of the college it was based on had led the Parish Council to commission its own study through MLM and submit this to the Council to highlight what the Parish Council saw as inaccuracies in the conclusions of the TPP study.

22. Whilst the view of KCC Highways had validated the TPP study as the basis for the masterplan, the comment to the Task Group by KCC that it was not their role to comment on third party submissions but the Borough Council's was of concern to the Task Group, as it suggested that an independent view should have been sought on the MLM study.
23. The Task Group felt that the seeming failure to effectively review the conclusions of the MLM study in comparison to the TPP study and the lack of a clear verdict on the findings of the MLM study as a counterpoint to the TPP study had contributed significantly to the dissatisfaction of the Parish Council with the masterplan development process. The Task Group felt that an independent, third party assessment of both traffic studies should therefore be sought to resolve this matter:

Recommendation 1: That in light of the seeming failure of KCC to review the MLM study fully, the Council engage an independent transport consultant to review, assess and determine the validity of the traffic assessments submitted in relation to the Masterplan by both Telereal Trillium and Wye Parish Council.

24. The Task Group were disappointed that KCC Highways did not take up its invitation to participate in the review, particularly given the close partnership that exists between the Borough and County Councils. In view of the response provided by KCC Highways and the concerns outlined in paragraphs 17-23, the Task Group felt that it would be both beneficial and prudent for the Borough Council to source its own advice on traffic assessments in the future in order to provide assurance to stakeholders:

Recommendation 2: That the Council engage an independent transport consultant or a suitably qualified member of the Council's staff to review, assess and determine the validity of all future traffic assessments for planning applications.

Resourcing and Governance

25. As noted in paragraphs 12 and 13, the Task Group felt that criticism of the conduct of officers in regard to the masterplan process was unwarranted. Whilst delays in the process represented a source of frustration to both the developer and Parish Council, these must be seen in the context of a masterplan process that, by admission of the steering group partners, garnered a level of public interest and engagement far in excess of the norm for similar (and indeed larger) exercises carried out.
26. The Task Group noted that the council had not allocated a specific budget to support the masterplanning process, or any additional officer/administrative support to the case officer. Whilst the case officer had led the process, chaired and co-ordinated the tri-partite steering group, the required extent of the case officer's involvement exceeded what was expected and the resources of the developer needed to be utilised in areas (such as the production of exhibition materials) to

enable elements of the process to proceed in line with the identified timescale for the masterplan process.

27. Whilst officers reported that this use of the developer's resources was necessary in order to deliver the masterplan in a timely fashion with the limited resources available to the council; the Parish Council advised that they had felt excluded from the preparation of exhibition materials and other key documents. The Task Group felt that the Parish Council's view of this as a failing of the collaborative approach was a consequence of a move away from collaboration towards a developer-driven masterplanning exercise.
28. The Task Group noted as well that officers balanced the delivery of this process against a very large 'day job' workload, and felt that the provision of dedicated administrative support for case officers leading on masterplanning exercises would be of benefit:

Recommendation 3: That specific budgetary allocations and additional administrative support for case officers be committed for any future masterplanning exercises.

29. Officers advised the Task Group that in recognition of the longstanding public interest and involvement of the resident and business population in planning for Wye, the decision had been taken to conduct a more collaborative masterplan development process, utilising the previous tri-partite steering group model as the vehicle to co-ordinate the masterplan process, focus decision making and jointly agree communication on the masterplan.
30. The Task Group heard that this had been welcomed at the start, however as the masterplanning had progressed, there had been a breakdown in the relationship between the members of the steering group and this had been problematic from a perspective of managing the masterplan development process.
31. Across the witness sessions it became clear that there were contradicting viewpoints in regard to the feasible options for, and inclusion or exclusion of, certain composite parts of the WYE3 Masterplan site – such as the exclusion of Withersdane Hall, which was noted separately as having been agreed by all partners early in the process, and an outstanding issue. Witnesses also disagreed on the time taken to deliver the masterplan – some felt that the process had been unduly delayed by the actions of partners, whilst others felt it had moved too quickly at times and the quality of the masterplan had suffered.
32. The Task Group felt that this whilst there had been delay from the original timescale outlined by ABC, this had been largely unavoidable given the pressures outlined earlier; however it was felt that the initial timetable may have been too ambitious given the ongoing work on the Local Plan to 2030 and other key developments such as Chilmington. Given the above, the Task Group felt that jointly agreeing and recording a clear timetable and scope at the outset of masterplanning exercises would be beneficial in future:

Recommendation 4: That a clearly defined scope and timeline be agreed at the commencement of any future masterplanning exercises.

33. In discussing the masterplan process with witnesses the Task Group noted that there was a seeming lack of clarity among the members of the tri-partite steering group as to the relative roles of each partner.
34. Officers noted that they had envisaged the following roles at the outset: ABC as the facilitator but not the producer of the masterplan, with the developer holding responsibility for producing documents and bringing forward ideas and the Parish Council, as the main representative of the local community, feeding the views of the residents and local community into the process.
35. Whilst these may have been the roles envisaged, it was apparent from the witness sessions held by the Task Group that there was an expectation within the Parish Council of more collaborative preparation of proposals by the tri-partite steering group that had not materialised. Consequently, the Parish Council reported that they did not feel the masterplan was truly collaborative, and lost faith in the integrity of the process.
36. The Task Group recognised that while it would never be possible to produce a development blueprint that was universally approved, the possibility existed that clearer definition of partner roles and the steering group terms of reference may have been conducive to a more productive collaborative process:

Recommendation 5: That, where masterplanning exercises are to be carried out collaboratively with a steering group, clearly defined terms of reference for the steering group including the roles of each partner to the steering group are jointly agreed prior to the commencement of any future masterplanning exercise.

37. As noted above, officers advised that the level of case officer involvement required in undertaking the masterplan development process increased as the masterplanning progressed, with the officer's role encompassing not only the usual case officer duties for the development, but also including the assessment of all consultation responses, collating and writing up all engagement event feedback and chairing and co-ordinating the steering group. On this basis, Members felt that as well as administrative support (recommendation 3), the engagement of a steering group chair independent from the masterplan development process would have reduced the demands on the case officer:

Recommendation 6: That, where masterplanning exercises are to be carried out collaboratively with a steering group, an independent chair should be engaged to lead the steering group.

38. It was noted in relation to this that the council had constituted a councillor led WYE3 Task Group in 2013 which had met once and been decommissioned. Had the council reconstituted this task group to provide oversight of the masterplan process, the Task Group felt that this group could have provided both additional member support to the process as the breakdown of relationships created difficulties, and may have also provided a practical means to identify a chair for the steering group:

Recommendation 7: That future masterplanning exercises be supported and overseen internally by a member led task group, the membership of which to

include the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development and the relevant Ward member(s).

Consultation and Communication

39. A point of consensus within the witness sessions was that the first workshop session was productive and benefitted from the engagement of the independent facilitator, jointly funded by the Council and the Parish Council.
40. Owing to factors beyond the control of the council the facilitator could not be retained for the second workshop, and whilst understandable the Task Group felt that this was a missed opportunity to build further consensus given that the worth of an independent facilitator was demonstrated in the overall positive reaction of the partners to the first workshop:

Recommendation 8: That an independent external facilitator be retained for all workshop elements of any future masterplanning exercises.

41. The Task Group were also advised that the attendance at the workshops was limited due to constraints in the size of the room available at the Wye College site. Whilst this was raised by the Parish Council as a criticism, the Task Group concur with officers that to hold the workshop off site would have been the wrong choice, even if it had enabled a slightly increased attendance.
42. Concern was also raised by the Parish Council that the invitee lists also varied between the first and second workshops. Whilst some variation was to be expected in order to ensure that the best mix of local and expert knowledge was available in the second workshop in response to the detailed issues under discussion, members felt that enabling consistency of attendance as far as possible would be beneficial:

Recommendation 9: That, in order to ensure continuity as far as possible throughout future masterplanning exercises, a single list of invitees should be maintained for all workshop events.

43. Both the developer and the Parish Council advised that there had been periods in the masterplan development process where a lack of communication from the council had been a source of frustration. The Task Group noted the workload pressure of the case officer, but felt that in processes such as the masterplan development a vacuum could arise from a lack of communication over progress that could lead to speculation and damage public trust in the process.
44. One example cited by the Parish Council as evidence of the masterplan deviating from the Wye Neighbourhood Plan was the downgrading of the masterplan status from an SPD to internal guidance. Whilst there may be valid reasons for this change, the failure to communicate clearly the rationale for this had contributed to a perceived failing in the masterplanning process.
45. In addition, the Task Group noted that there had been no obvious communication with the public at large over the status of the masterplan since Cabinet's decision to defer the adoption of the masterplan in September 2018. A large amount of correspondence had been submitted to the Council in the intervening time which

raised the same broad concerns around housing allocation numbers for the WYE3 site. It was not possible to say definitively that this arose from a lack of communication, however additional officer time was required to contact all respondents regarding the inaccuracies in the correspondence:

Recommendation 10: That the Council ensure it provides clear, regular updates on the development of any masterplan to stakeholders throughout any future masterplanning exercise.

46. In speaking with the Task Group, the developer and their agents raised concerns that as the relationships between the steering group members had deteriorated, the provision of consistent communication had been strained, and that members of the Parish Council had sought to influence residents participating in the exhibition events counter to the agreed plan of the steering group. At the subsequent witness session, one of the Parish Council's representatives confirmed that they had spoken with residents outside the exhibition venue as they believed that the exhibition was misleading.
47. The Task Group noted that disagreements between the steering group partners were to be expected, but given that the tri-partite steering group was intended to collaboratively drive the masterplan development process, it was incumbent on the partners to come to an agreement where possible. As noted in recommendation 7, oversight and support by a member led task group may be beneficial in resolving any disputes; however it was felt that for consistency throughout the process a single contact point should be maintained:

Recommendation 11: That the Council maintain a single point of contact throughout any future masterplanning process for the gathering and dissemination of any and all information related to the masterplanning exercise.

48. Officers confirmed that subsequent to the September 2018 Cabinet meeting, the Parish Council had provided details of three respondents to the consultation that it was alleged had not been responded to by virtue of not being included within the schedule of responses provided as background to the September 2018 Cabinet report.
49. Whilst officers were able to confirm that the points raised by these respondents had been addressed through the responses to issues contained within the background documentation to the September 2018 Cabinet report (and so did not raise any matters not previously considered), it is understandable that this seeming omission would have contributed to misgivings in the process.
50. The Task Group were also advised that anonymised consultation responses had been passed to the developer to complete thematic grouping of responses. Whilst officer advised that this was a necessary step to complete the assessment of the 2000 individual comments made in the consultation on the masterplan, and the developer advising that despite requesting they had not been allowed to comment on the responses, the Task Group felt that consultation responses should only be handled by the Council:

Recommendation 12: That the Council ensure that any and all responses to consultation or engagement exercises conducted on masterplanning be submitted directly to the Council.

Recommendations

Recommendation 1: That in light of the seeming failure of KCC to review the MLM study fully, the Council engage an independent transport consultant to review, assess and determine the validity of the traffic assessments submitted in relation to the Masterplan by both Telereal Trillium and Wye Parish Council.

Recommendation 2: That the Council engage an independent transport consultant or a suitably qualified member of the Council's staff to review, assess and determine the validity of all future traffic assessments for planning applications.

Recommendation 3: That specific budgetary allocations and additional administrative support for case officers be committed for any future masterplanning exercises.

Recommendation 4: That a clearly defined scope and timeline be agreed at the commencement of any future masterplanning exercises.

Recommendation 5: That, where masterplanning exercises are to be carried out collaboratively with a steering group, clearly defined terms of reference for the steering group including the roles of each partner to the steering group are jointly agreed prior to the commencement of any future masterplanning exercise.

Recommendation 6: That, where masterplanning exercises are to be carried out collaboratively with a steering group, an independent chair should be engaged to lead the steering group.

Recommendation 7: That future masterplanning exercises be supported and overseen internally by a member led task group, the membership of which to include the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development and the relevant Ward member(s).

Recommendation 8: That an independent external facilitator be retained for all workshop elements of any future masterplanning exercises.

Recommendation 9: That, in order to ensure continuity as far as possible throughout future masterplanning exercises, a single list of invitees should be maintained for all workshop events.

Recommendation 10: That the Council ensure it provides clear, regular updates on the development of any masterplan to stakeholders throughout any future masterplanning exercise.

Recommendation 11: That the Council maintain a single point of contact throughout any future masterplanning process for the gathering and dissemination of any and all information related to the masterplanning exercise.

Recommendation 12: That the Council ensure that any and all responses to consultation or engagement exercises conducted on masterplanning be submitted directly to the Council.

Conclusion

51. The Task Group have examined thoroughly the masterplan development and consultation processes as related to the scope of the review. These recommendations will enable improvements to the council's processes for future masterplanning and consultation exercises, and the Task Group commend them to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Contact and Email

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Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report Tracker – 24 September 2019

Report Title	Date due to O&S	Reporting Service	Scope of what is to be scrutinised
Wye3 Masterplan	24 September 2019	Planning and Development	Findings of the O&S Task Group's review of the Wye3 masterplan development and consultation.
Quarter 1 Performance	24 September 2019	Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications	Information on what the Council has achieved through its decision making; key performance data and wider contextual information.
Budget Scrutiny	24 September 2019	Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications	An introduction to the budget scrutiny process.
Quarter 2 Performance	22 October 2019	Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications	Information on what the Council has achieved through its decision making; key performance data and wider contextual information.
Ashford College	22 October 2019	Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications	A report into the governance and arrangements for the Council's working relationship with the Ashford College.
MTFP Overview	12 November 2019	Finance and IT	An overview of the medium term financial plan and the assumptions on which the draft budget will be based.
Budget Scrutiny Task Group – Final Report	21 January 2020	Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications/ Finance and IT	Presentation of the findings of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group for discussion and endorsement by the Committee.
Community Safety Partnership	11 February 2020	Community Safety and Wellbeing	A review of the decisions made and action taken in connection with the discharge of crime and disorder functions by the members of the Community Safety Partnership. The Committee operates as the designated Crime and Disorder Committee for the council.

Safeguarding Update	11 February 2020	Housing	Annual update to the committee on the council's work on safeguarding adults and children at risk.
Quarter 3 Performance	11 February 2020	Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications	Information on what the Council has achieved through its decision making; key performance data and wider contextual information.
Items for future consideration			
Staff Resources – Legal & Democratic		Legal and Democratic	Requested to be considered by the Budget Scrutiny Task Group
Void properties		Housing	Requested by the Budget Scrutiny Task Group in regard to work undertaken to address void properties in the PSL sector.
Broadband provision and planning		Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications/ Planning and Development	Requested by the Budget Scrutiny Task Group in regard to the council's work on delivering high-speed broadband to new and existing properties within the borough.
Future plans for public transport		Community Safety and Wellbeing	Requested by the Vice-Chairman in regard to the use of low emission and fit for purpose buses in Ashford
Ashford Waste Water Treatment Works		Community Safety and Wellbeing	Requested by the Leader in regard to odours impacting on the quality of residents' lives in Kennington/Little Burton Farm
Kent Fire and Rescue Service – volunteer support		Community Safety and Wellbeing	Requested by the Committee in regard to a shortage of volunteer support for KFRS being noted at Tenterden.
Accessibility concerns at Elwick Place		Corporate Property and Projects	Requested by the Committee in response to concerns raised by Ashford Access group.

Overview and Scrutiny - Topic Selection assessment

Topic under consideration.....

1. Does the topic represent a key issue for local people and is it likely to result in improvements for local people?

		Yes
		No

2. Is the issue strategic and significant?

		Yes
		No

3. Does the topic fall within a Community or Corporate priority area?

		Yes
		No

4. Is it likely to lead to effective outcomes?

		Yes
		No

Stage 1 (validity) assessment - reject any topic with a 'No' response to any of questions 1 to 4.

5. Will scrutiny involvement be duplicating some other work?

		Yes
		No

Stage 2 (validity) assessment - reject any topic with a 'Yes' response to question 5

6. Is it an issue of concern to partners and stakeholders?

		Yes
		No

7. Is it an issue of community concern or is there a high level of dissatisfaction with the service?

		Yes
		No

8. Are there adequate resources available to do the activity well?

		Yes
		No

9. Is the scrutiny activity timely?

		Yes
		No

Stage 3 (priority) assessment

*Topics with a 'No' response to any of questions 6 to 9 should be deemed **LOW PRIORITY***

*Topics with a 'Yes' response to all of questions 6 to 9 should be deemed **HIGH PRIORITY***

Stage 1 - Validity

Does the topic represent a key issue for the public and is it likely to result in improvements for local people?

Yes



No

Is the issue strategic and significant?

Yes



No

Does the topic fall within a Community or Corporate priority area?

Yes



No

Is it likely to lead to effective outcomes?

Yes



No

Stage 2 - Validity

Will scrutiny involvement be duplicating some other work?

No



Yes

REJECT

Is it an issue of concern to partners and stakeholders?

Yes



No

Is it an issue of community concern or is there a high level of dissatisfaction with the service?

Yes



No

Are there adequate resources available to do the activity well?

Yes



No

Is the scrutiny activity timely?

Yes



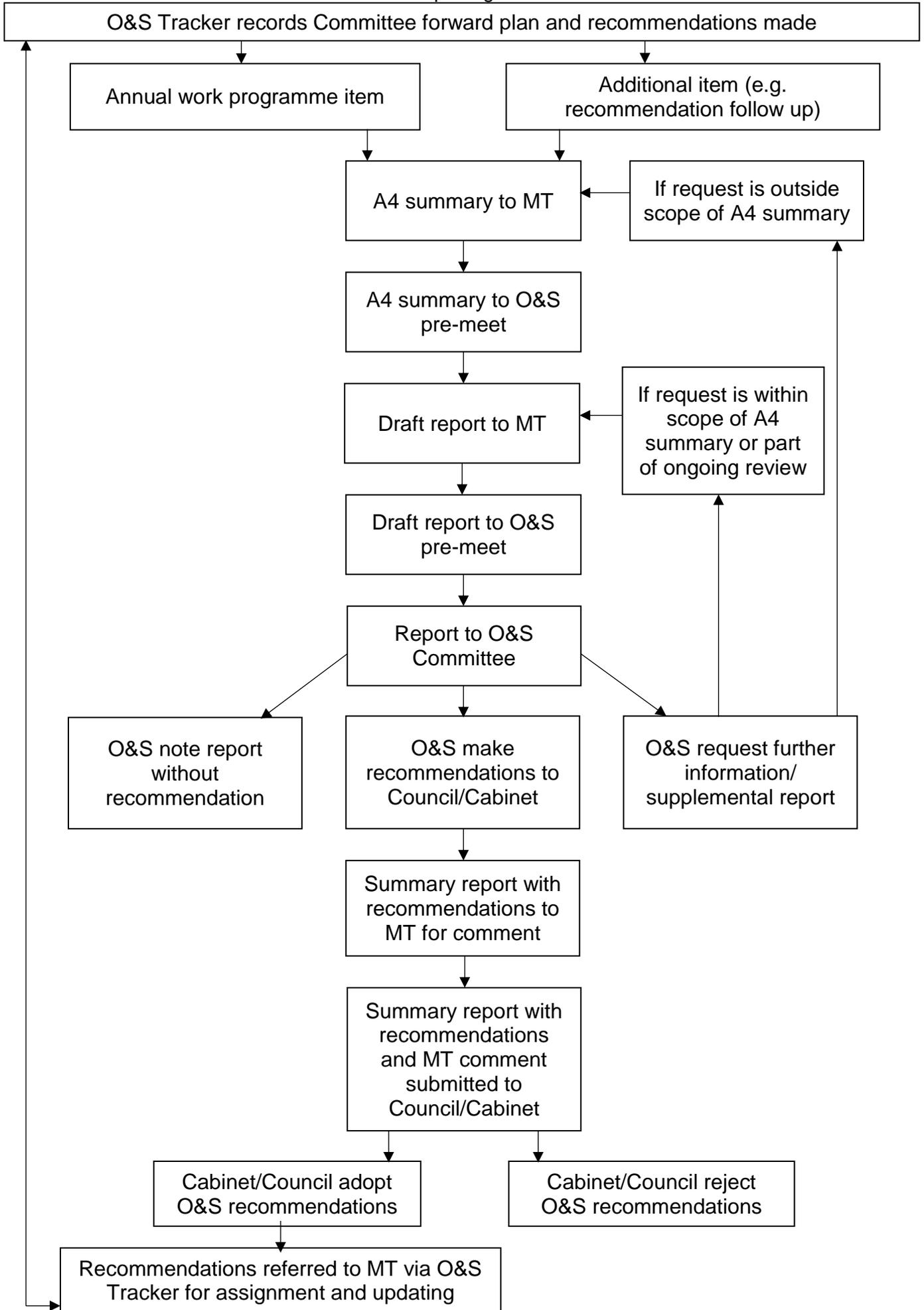
No

Stage 3 - Priority

ADD TO WORK PROGRAMME
High Priority

CONSIDER LOW PRIORITY

O&S Reporting flowchart



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