



CABINET

Notice of a Meeting, to be held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford, Kent TN23 1PL on **Thursday, 24th February, 2022 at 7.00 pm.**

The Members of the Cabinet are:-

Councillor Clarkson – Leader of the Council
Councillor Bartlett – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Port Health
Councillor Bell – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development
Councillor Buchanan – Portfolio Holder for Environment and Land Management
Councillor Clokie – Portfolio Holder for Housing
Councillor Feacey – Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing
Councillor Forest – Portfolio Holder for Culture, Leisure and Tourism
Councillor Iliffe – Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Corporate Property
Councillor Pickering – Portfolio Holder for Human Resources and Customer Services
Councillor Shorter – Portfolio Holder for Finance and IT

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC ABOUT THIS MEETING

Members of the Press and public are permitted to attend this meeting in person. Anyone attending will be requested to follow the measures introduced by the Council in order to manage the risk of COVID-19. This includes wearing face coverings until seated and not attending the meeting if you are displaying any symptoms of, or have tested positive for, COVID-19. You may also wish to consider taking a Lateral Flow Test no longer than 24 hours before attending the meeting.

NB: Under the Council's Public Participation Scheme, members of the public can submit a petition to the Cabinet if the issue is within its terms of reference or ask a question or speak concerning any item contained on this Agenda (Procedure Rule 9 refers)

Agenda

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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 Interests

See Agenda Item 2 for further details

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19. **To Consider Passing the Following Resolution to Exclude the Public**

That pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item as it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure of exempt information hereinafter specified by reference to Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

16 February 2022

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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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Cabinet

Minutes of a Meeting of the Cabinet held in the Council Chamber, Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford on the **27th January 2022**.

Present:

Cllr. Clarkson (Chairman);
Cllr. Bartlett (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Buchanan, Clokie, Feacey, Forest, Iliffe, Pickering, Shorter

Apologies:

Cllr. Bell, Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Burgess, Harman, Sparks, C Suddards, Wright.

In attendance:

Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer, Head of Finance and IT, Economic Development Manager, Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager, Parking, Highways and Transportation Team Leader, Communications Officer, Member Services Manager.

246 Minutes

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Cabinet held on the 16th December 2021 be approved and confirmed as a correct record.

247 Leader's Announcements

The Leader said that he had two matters he wanted to share with colleagues this evening.

Firstly, he wanted to advise that on the new play area and outdoor gym at Hunter Avenue, South Willesborough was now underway. The Council had used the results from a consultation with residents when the previous park was taken down in February 2020 to put together a new design specification. The new play area, costing some £180,000, would include a fenced area for younger children to play, with a Disability compliant roundabout and a high backed swing chair. Children would also be able to enjoy a 25m long zip wire, a larger junior multi-play unit,

double width mound slide, swinging area and mini football goals for informal kick about. New seating and picnic tables would be installed to provide a communal space, accessible for all, to enjoy the outdoors. Additionally there would be a brand new outdoor gym area to improve free access to health and wellbeing activities for the local community. Once the new play area was installed, Aspire Landscape Management would block out areas for meadow grass to grow, to encourage and improve biodiversity in the area. Hunter Avenue, combined with the Council's recent, Cabinet approved, announcement of £1.1 million investment in another three key play areas, meant that thousands more residents would have access to high-quality, outside recreation. These installations would contribute to fitness and wellbeing and provide space for communities to mingle and friends and family to spend quality time together.

In addition he advised that earlier that day, Holocaust Memorial Day, he was pleased to have been at The Green, at Woodchurch to assist the Mayor and Ashford's MP the Rt. Hon. Damian Green, to plant one of the 80 native oak trees being planted in Great Britain, to honour the people and places that symbolise the contribution made to British life by refugees who escaped from Nazi Europe. In 1939, Great Engeham Farm in Woodchurch established a camp for housing Jewish refugee Kindertransport children. Combined productive agriculture training was coupled with education there, and some 300 to 350 children aged from 13 to 16 passed through the camp before being moved to Devon in November 1939. The dedication service had been both dignified and very poignant.

248 Automatic Number Plate Recognition Installation

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which sought the introduction of an Automatic Number Plate Recognition and barrier system at Park Mall Car Park, operating on a pilot basis as a wholly cashless car park. Subject to the pilot being successful, it was proposed to also implement within Edinburgh Road Car Park.

In response to questions about disabled users and blue badge holders, it was explained that ANPR was an easier method as drivers did not have to search the car park for terminals and it provided a hands-free entry and exit. People could register on-line or pay using the RingGo App. Blue badge holders did have to register their details once a year, but this was seen as a necessary measure to prevent fraud, and Parking Customer Care would be more than happy to assist anyone having problems.

Resolved:

- That (i) the installation of an Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) and barrier system within the Park Mall Car Park be approved and it be operated on a pilot basis as a cashless car park.**
- (ii) expenditure of up to £53,000 be approved from the previously agreed capital budget to deliver the ANPR solution within the Park Mall Car Park.**

- (iii) **authority be delegated to the Head of Community Safety and Wellbeing, in consultation with their Portfolio Holder, to effect and complete all necessary steps for the implementation of ANPR at Park Mall Car Park.**
- (iv) **further update reports be received as necessary prior to potentially introducing a similar system and payment arrangements within Edinburgh Road Car Park.**

249 Parking Charges for Edinburgh Road Car Park and Park Mall Car Park

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report with sought agreement on new parking charges for Edinburgh Road and Park Mall Car Parks. A reduction in the basic parking charges had been proposed to promote use of the car parks and thus support the vitality of the Town Centre. A revision to the minimum parking period was also recommended. The charges included absorbing the 'Pay-by-Phone' convenience fee into the basic parking charge, rather than there being an additional cost for using that service.

Resolved:

- That**
- (i) **reduced parking charges be approved for both Edinburgh Road and Park Mall Car Parks, incorporating the 'Pay-by-Phone' convenience fee that will be absorbed by Ashford Borough Council.**
 - (ii) **a minimum parking period of one hour at Edinburgh Road and Park Mall Car Parks be approved.**
 - (iii) **the Head of Community Safety and Wellbeing, in consultation with their Portfolio Holder, be authorised to implement changes to the proposals contained within the report, including amendments to the Off Street Parking Places Order, undertaking the statutory public notices, consultation and dealing with any responses.**

250 Extension of Electric Vehicle Charger Provision

The report sought approval for the installation of Electric Vehicle Charging Points and to approve the release of funds to install in locations that were ineligible for funding through the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) scheme. This would utilise the Council's Climate Change Reserve Fund.

In response to a question the Parking, Highways and Transportation Team Leader advised that this formed Phase 2 of the Council's overall strategy. Phase 1 would utilise OLEV funding and confirmation of this funding was expected the following week.

A Member said he fully supported the proposals but wanted to ensure that there was enough capacity on the network and that UK Power Networks were encouraged to keep the infrastructure up with those ambitions.

Resolved:

- That (i) **the release of £164,000 from the Climate Change Reserve Fund be approved to install 15 Electric Vehicle Charging Points.**
- (ii) **authority be delegated to the Head of Community Safety and Wellbeing, in consultation with their Portfolio Holder, to effect and complete all necessary steps to install in total 44 charging points as listed in the report.**
- (iii) **the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer be authorised to negotiate, finalise and complete all necessary legal agreements and other documents to give effect to the above.**

251 Health and Safety Policy for Ashford Borough Council

The Portfolio Holder for HR and Customer Services introduced the report which sought agreement of the revised Health and Safety Policy, which was due for review. The Policy had been revised and updated to provide additional clarity relevant to Officer responsibilities and to further strengthen governance of health and safety within the Council. The revised policy also streamlined arrangements to enable the organisation to respond quickly to anticipate changes to legislation. He thanked Officers for their work in pulling the revised policy together.

Resolved:

- That (i) **the revised Health and Safety Policy be agreed.**
- (ii) **the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer be authorised to negotiate, finalise and complete all necessary legal agreements and other documents to give effect to the above.**

252 Revenues and Benefits Recommended Write-Offs Schedule

The Portfolio Holder introduced the report which proposed the formal write-off of £321,056.74, The proposals were in line with the Council's Revenues and Benefits Service Write-Off Policy. The Deputy Chief Executive (Section 151 Officer) had been consulted along with Heads of Service for relevant areas. The Portfolio Holder wanted to stress how thoroughly the team pursued debts owed to the Council and he was satisfied that the proposals in the report were correct and pragmatic.

Resolved:

- That (i) the action that accounts totalling £40,060.70 had been written off under delegated powers (Financial Regulations 11.1) be noted.
- (ii) the write-offs listed in the Exempt Appendices totalling £280,996.04 be approved.

253 Greater Ashford Borough Environment and Land Mapping Commission – Notes of 7th December 2021

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meeting of the Great Ashford Borough Environment and Land Management Commission held on the 7th December 2021 be received and noted.

254 Joint Transportation Board – 14th December 2021

Resolved:

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Joint Transportation Board held on the 14th December 2021 be received and noted.

255 Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board – 22nd December 2021

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meeting of the Civic and Ceremonial Programme Board held on the 22nd December 2021 be received and noted.

256 Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group – 2nd December 2021

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meeting of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group held on the 2nd December 2021 be received and noted.

257 Schedule of Key Decisions to be Taken

Resolved:

That the latest Schedule of Key Decisions as set out within the report be received and noted.

258 Exclusion of the Public

Resolved:

That pursuant to Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item, as it is likely in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure of exempt information hereinafter specified by reference to Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Act, where in the circumstances the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

259 Newtown Works

The Leader and Portfolio Holder introduced the exempt report. The Leader clarified that the recommendations were for Full Council to resolve.

Recommended:

- That**
- (i) subject to negotiation and the completion of appropriate due diligence, the purchase of shares within the Development Company, for up to a figure as stated in the confidential report, be agreed.**
 - (ii) it be agreed in principle that a Loan Facility be made available to the Development Company for the construction of residential property in line with existing planning permission, for the figure stated in the confidential report. This is subject to the completion of the due diligence process.**
 - (iii) responsibility for finalising the deal and sign-off be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Executive Leader, subject to satisfactory oversight of a Due Diligence Working Group which will include the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny and the Portfolio Holders for Finance and IT and Regeneration and Corporate Property.**
 - (iv) the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer be authorised to negotiate, finalise and complete all necessary legal agreements and other documents to give effect to the above.**

260 Regeneration, Infrastructure and Improvement Co-Ordination Board – 17th December 2021

Resolved:

That the Notes of the Meeting of the Regeneration, Infrastructure and Improvement Co-Ordination Board held on the 17th December 2021 be received and noted.

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Agenda Item No: 6
Report To: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: 24 February 2022
Report Title: Report of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group
Report Author & Job Title: Abi Moffatt
Policy and Scrutiny Officer
Portfolio Holder Cllr. N Shorter
Portfolio Holder for: Finance and IT



Summary: The Overview and Scrutiny Budget Scrutiny Task Group has scrutinised the council's draft 2022/23 budget over four meetings. The Task Group have made a number of recommendations to Cabinet to consider when making final budget proposals to recommend to Council.

Key Decision: NO

Significantly Affected Wards: None specifically

Recommendations: **The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends to the Cabinet that:**

- I. The council's draft budget for 2022/23 is sound and that mitigation plans are in place for any increases to borrowing interest rates during 2022/23.
- II. The council's reserves position is sufficient to manage the economic risks to the 2022/23 budget.
- III. The Task Group support Cabinet's recent decision to have regular monitoring of delivery against Service savings targets, through the quarterly budget monitoring reports in 2022/23.
- IV. It be noted that the Task Group have concerns over the ability to deliver the savings target in the Planning and Development Service for the next budget year
- V. It be noted that delivery of the Henwood project needs to be timely in order to meet the savings targets in the next financial year

- VI. It be noted that the Task Group supports the invest-to-save approach regarding homelessness prevention proposals following the service review in 2021/22.

Policy Overview:	Under the council's Constitution the O&S Committee has a duty to scrutinise the council's draft Revenue and Capital Budgets.
Financial Implications:	As noted in the report
Legal Implications	As Policy Overview above
Equalities Impact Assessment	Not required as appended to main budget report
Other Material Implications:	As noted in the report
Exempt from Publication:	NO
Background Papers:	Draft 2022/23 budget , report to Cabinet 25 November 2021 O&S Budget Scrutiny Task Group Minutes for the following dates: 01/12/21, 20/12/21, 21/12/21, 11/01/22
Contact:	Abi Moffatt, Policy and Scrutiny Officer abi.moffatt@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330394

Report Title: Report of Budget Scrutiny Task Group

Introduction and Background

1. In accordance with the council's Constitution, it has a duty to scrutinise the council's draft Capital and Revenue Budgets. The Committee constituted a Task Group made up of five Members to undertake this work, and presents its findings of the draft Budget for 2022/23 within this report.

Report of the Chairman of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group

2. The draft budget documents were considered by the Task Group and detailed how the council intends to fund its services and initiatives for the next municipal year. Although there may be some financial uncertainties during the next year, sufficient reserves were identified to mitigate the potential risks.
3. Members raised concern regarding the proposed savings targets, in particular for the Planning and Development Service. In light of this, savings targets should be looked at prudently when reviewed in the quarterly budget monitoring reports.
4. I would like to thank the Members of the Task Group and all of the Officers who were involved with scrutinising the proposed budget for 2022/23. The Group were grateful for the hard work and time that officers had taken to prepare various presentations and reports regarding their service. I would also like to thank the Portfolio Holders and other Members who attended the meetings.

Summary

5. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee would like to thank all the Officers, Portfolio Holders and Lead Members who attended the Task Group meetings. The sessions yielded much information on the financial and resource challenges facing the authority and the Task Group focused on a number of key risks relating to the achievability of next year's budget.
6. The draft budget for 2022/23 was presented to the Task Group at its first meeting; this included all service budgets and financial risks. The purpose of this session was to assist Members in determining which areas to dedicate additional scrutiny time, these included the following:
 - a. The Port Health Service
 - b. The council's reserves positions and forecast
 - c. Savings and recharges
 - d. Planning and Development Service and the achievability of their savings target.
 - e. Details on expected borrowing interest rate increases.

- f. Housing Service and delivery of savings target.
- g. The risks around the maintenance of assets.
- h. Risks linked to the commercial property portfolio.

Consultation

7. The council’s Management Team have since seen the recommendations made by the Task Group and a summary of their advice to the Cabinet has been tabled below:

No.	Recommendation	Summary	Management Team Advice
I	The council’s draft budget for 2022/23 is sound and mitigation plans are in place for any increases to borrowing interest rates during 2022/23.	The Task Group agreed that at this current time the council’s draft budget is sound. It was advised that increases to borrowing interest rates were expected next year and some increases were factored into the budget. Members were confident that increases above forecast could be mitigated by flexing the borrowing strategy.	MT support the recommendation.
II	The council’s reserves position is sufficient to manage the economic risks to the 2022/23 budget.	Members were informed that the council were in a good position with its reserves going forward but there was a need to be mindful. Sufficient reserves were in place to mitigate different risks including economic risk. Additionally, reserves will look to be increased over the 2022/23 year.	MT support the recommendation.
III	The Task Group support Cabinet’s decision to have regular monitoring of Service savings targets through the quarterly budget monitoring reports in 2022/23.	<p>It was advised that most savings had been delivered up to now, however, some savings originally identified for 2022/23 may not be delivered as intended, although it is necessary to still deliver these savings to support the MTFP. Therefore, the Task Group agreed that the savings target does pose some risk to the budget.</p> <p>Members supported the recent Cabinet decision in the draft budget report to review progress of savings targets within the quarterly budget monitoring reports.</p> <p>Members were also advised that the economic resilience reserve will cover risks related to the delivery of savings, although this should be seen as the last resort.</p>	MT support the decision to monitor savings targets during the year.

IV	<p>It be noted that the Task Group have concerns over the ability to deliver the savings target in the Planning and Development Service for the next budget year.</p>	<p>Members were concerned over the ability of the Planning Service to deliver the savings target of £100,000 relating to the new system implementation included in the budget for 2022/23. The Task Group highlighted that there was a risk to the quality of service provided in light of the pressures around achieving savings targets this year.</p> <p>Members recognised an ongoing risk around recruitment of senior professional planners, with competition coming from the private sector.</p> <p>The use of consultants were a significant cost to the service for both 'specialist' and 'day to day' support although generally funded from existing budgets and salary savings.</p>	<p>MT note the concerns from the Task Group regarding savings targets. MT agreed that options for income growth will be explored.</p>
V	<p>It be noted that delivery of the Henwood project needs to be timely in order to meet the savings targets in the next financial year.</p>	<p>The Task Group identified some risk around delivering the Henwood project linked to ongoing issues at Stodmarsh. Members were informed that options were being considered regarding Stodmarsh, however, assurance was given that the scheme would be delivered within set timescales.</p>	<p>MT agreed that the delivery of the Henwood Project was a priority for the Housing Service.</p>
VI	<p>It be noted that the Task Group supports the invest-to-save approach regarding homelessness prevention proposals following the service review in 2021/22.</p>	<p>Members were advised of the Housing Service's intention to focus on homelessness prevention which will help achieve further savings.</p>	<p>MT endorse the council's approach toward homelessness prevention.</p>

Wrap Up

8. To conclude the Budget Scrutiny sessions, the Chairman of the Budget Scrutiny Task Group gave the opportunity for Members to discuss any outstanding issues regarding the budget and a summary presentation was shown to Members to relay some of the key findings of the last few budget scrutiny meetings.

Conclusion

9. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends to the Cabinet that:

- I. **The council's draft budget for 2022/23 is sound and that mitigation plans are in place for any increases to borrowing interest rates during 2022/23.**
- II. **The council's reserves position is sufficient to manage the economic risks to the 2022/23 budget.**
- III. **The Task Group support Cabinet's recent decision to have regular monitoring of delivery against Service savings targets, through the quarterly budget monitoring reports in 2022/23.**
- IV. **It be noted that the Task Group have concerns over the ability to deliver the savings target in the Planning and Development Service for the next budget year**
- V. **It be noted that delivery of the Henwood project needs to be timely in order to meet the savings targets in the next financial year**
- VI. **It be noted that the Task Group supports the invest-to-save approach regarding homelessness prevention proposals following the service review in 2021/22.**

Contact and Email

10. **Abi Moffatt, Policy and Scrutiny Officer
abi.moffatt@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330394**

Ashford Borough Council: Notes of a Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – 20th December 2021 (Budget Scrutiny 2)

Present:

Cllr. Ovenden (Chairman);

Cllrs. Chilton, Harman, Ledger.

Apology:

Cllr. Shorter

Also Present:

Cllrs. Bartlett, Blanford, Burgess

Head of Finance and IT, Head of Service Port Health, Head of Planning, Port Health Manager, Accountancy Manager, Policy and Scrutiny Officer, Member Services Officer.

1 Declaration of Interest

1.1 Cllr Bartlett declared an Interest since he lived close to the Inland Border Facility.

2 Port Health Presentation

2.1 The Head of Service Port Health gave a presentation to the Task Group, which outlined the purpose of the Border Control Post (BCP) and provided detailed information on the types of products checked, fees set, calculation of charges and IT systems in place.

2.2 The item was opened up to the Task Group and the following responses were given to questions/comments:

- The Chairman asked how long the Government subsidy funding was expected to be available for. The Head of Service Port Health confirmed that they were beholden to government, who were promising to underwrite all of the funds. The lease for the BCP building had been agreed with a peppercorn rent and a bid had been submitted for another funding round. The risks to budget were more probable in years 2 and 3 when the BCP would be fully operational. A reserve had been built into the budget.
- The Official Controls Regulation (OCR) provided the opportunity to set charges on a sliding scale between low tonnage up to 44 tonnes. The intention was to encourage hauliers to be more efficient and load to the full 44 tonnes. The timeframe for decanting the Lorries had been accounted for and had no cost implications, only breaking the freight could result in

extra costs. Extra time would be required for sampling but the goods would then be released away from Sevington under a Customs Bond, and the owner would be responsible for arranging the transport in that situation.

- In response to a query regarding an upcoming plastic tax on all imported goods, it was confirmed that the checks for this would come under HMRC Customs Control.

2.3 The Chairman thanked the Head of Service Port Health and Port Health Manager and said that he was confident that there was no current risk to this year's budget from the Service.

Resolved:

That the points discussed above be considered further in formulating the Task Group's final report on its Scrutiny of the Council's Budget for 2022/23.

3 Finance

3.1 The Accountancy Manager introduced the three Finance Reports – Reserves Position & Forecasting, Savings Identified and Recharge Methodology. He gave a brief run through the papers and stated that the Reserves were in a good position and offered protection from different aspects of risk.

3.2 The item was opened up to the Task Group and the following responses were given to questions/comments:

Reserves Position & Forecasting

- The Section 31 Grant showed a decreasing balance by the end of the financial year. A Member asked whether this should be increased in light of possible further Covid restrictions and it was confirmed that more contribution was expected into that reserve at year-end, as Government distribute relief and further Section 31 Grant. This was different to statutory relief that offered exempt business rates periods. The Accountancy Manager said that Reserves were sufficient and would be reviewed in March 2022, and it was helpful to remember that the Council shared responsibility with Government for collection rates.

Savings Identified

- The Accountancy Manager highlighted a possible concern within the savings report - £640,000 was still to be identified. The approach had been agreed that the Council would remain ambitious so inevitably this encompassed risk, and it was felt appropriate to leave it on the budget report as some savings may not necessarily be delivered as originally intended.
- In response to a query asking whether cuts may be necessary in light of the savings for 22/23 having not been met, it was explained that a large portion of the target savings had already been met in 2021/22. Some projects had been delayed owing to Covid and the Management Team had been asked

to look at ways in which they could make shorter-term savings, some of which may roll across different years. In addition Cabinet had made formal recommendations to monitor progress against the savings.

- A Member said that it was important for the Task Group to note that the saving target had not been met and that looking ahead it was inevitable that the Council would need to look at setting reasonable targets, and making additional savings. The Head of Finance added that within the MTFP, no Government grants had been included, so they were confident that from 2023/24 the Council would no longer be reliant on Government funding.
- The Chairman queried what impact not meeting the savings would have. The Economic Resilience Reserve held approx. £9 million set aside to fund the pressures within the MTFP. In addition, plans and ideas for making savings had already been considered by Heads of Service and would be put into action as and when necessary. It would form part of the quarterly budget monitoring reports.
- In response to a query regarding a change to the senior structure of the Council, the Chairman advised that a briefing could be arranged after Christmas for the Task Group.

Resolved:

That the points discussed above be considered further in formulating the Task Group's final report on its Scrutiny of the Council's Budget for 2022/23.

4 Planning and Development

- 4.1 The Head of Planning gave a presentation to the Task Group which covered the four main issues they had highlighted for review, which were risks around recruitment & administration, cost of consultants, digitalisation & the new planning system and major appeals.
- 4.2 The item was opened up to the Task Group and the following responses were given to questions/comments:
- A Member questioned if savings within the Planning budget were realistic, given the challenges that the service had, and still faced. He acknowledged that improvements to the department e.g. the new Planning IT system would take time to bed in before results could be measured.
 - Planning application fees set by Central Government had recently risen. The Head of Planning was keen to focus on the fees that ABC could control for non-statutory parts of the application process, in terms of application and pre-application work, but was mindful that the service to customers also had to improve in line with the fee increase.
 - The enhanced graduate scheme was agreed to be a good scheme for the Council. The aim being that within a couple of years, candidates would be ready to progress up into vacant posts as they became available.

- A Member asked whether the removal of consultants and their fees would enable a higher salary to be paid to permanent staff in the hope of retaining them at ABC. The Head of Planning explained that it was important to acquire the right balance between showing Ashford as a desirable place to live and work, in concurrence with a respectable salary. From a budget perspective, he said that removing Consultants from the equation too soon would only serve to put extra pressure onto the Service and exacerbate the problem of staff retention. He acknowledged that the salary scale did contain limitations, in particular with the ability for senior Officers to progress into higher roles. The Chairman highlighted this concern and identified that this was an ABC wide issue that could be reviewed by the wider O&S Committee in the coming year.
- The cost of training for the new Planning IT system had already been factored in to the whole cost, and training would be made available for all.
- A Member spoke about how the experience of quality of service stayed with the public, and she asked whether there were ways that the workload could be streamlined, to ensure better time management. Part of the approach to open up capacity had already been implemented and some functions had moved across to the Business Support Team; they now had responsibility for validating applications, which freed up time for Planning Officers.
- In response to a question about graduates, the Head of Planning agreed with Members that Officers already working within the Council often already held the local knowledge about the Borough that was so valuable, and he himself had worked his way up to Head of Service. Sourcing the right opportunities for Officers was vital, and retention was just as important as recruitment. The idea of a central pool of graduates across several LA's was suggested, which would increase opportunities and there would be more chance of someone being available for LAs when a position arose.
- Projects could sometimes place a strain on staff, and so it was important to choose involvement wisely. Officers were currently involved with the digital mapping project led by Central Government and had received funding to work on this. The capacity for staff to be involved in all projects was not available, and therefore ABC had to decipher what they would gain from each project before committing to it. Additionally though, it was beneficial to be on the 'inside' of projects to gain knowledge and insight.
- It was confirmed that legal costs, including situations where external legal advice was sought, were re-charged back to Planning.
- The Chairman asked whether there was a maximum number of cases that Officers could have open at any one time, in relation to utilising Consultants to support with everyday work. The Head of Planning advised that it was a delicate balancing act, but an average of fifty cases would be deemed manageable. The Chairman added that it was prudent to continue to use Consultants until the backlog had been cleared and Officers were handling a more manageable range.
- The Chairman highlighted the savings figure in the Planning budget and asked whether this was realistically deliverable. The Head of Planning confirmed that it would be difficult to deliver those savings in the short term. The Service needed to get back on its feet and that would necessitate time and funds, but once this

position was achieved then the opportunity would arise to make savings and grow income, hopefully beyond the budget expectations. The Chairman noted that the savings figure within the budget papers was £100k, and other savings (listed as income generating) totaled around £60k. He deduced that the savings were unlikely to be met and asked the Head of Planning whether he thought the budget (without the savings) was sufficient to get the Department back on track and maintain the service at the level it was currently being delivered at. The Head of Planning responded that a slower build was necessary, and he wanted to reach the point where the Service could be reviewed with the new structure in full operation, to be able to ascertain whether further work was required, and budget amendments were required. The Head of Accountancy added that service contingency was available, and it was to the Head of Planning's credit that he had considered alternative ways that savings could be delivered, in line with the current targets. Removal of those targets could run the risk of them being lost for the future, so he felt it better to keep them within the budget to keep them on the radar. The Chairman agreed with the points made, but said that it was important to recognize that there was not always scope to make savings.

Resolved :

That the points discussed above be considered further in formulating the Task Group's final report on its Scrutiny of the Council's Budget for 2022/23.

5. Final Meeting

- 5.1 The Policy & Scrutiny Officer advised that she would compile a slide show for the final wrap up meeting. The Chairman suggested an extra short session would be beneficial, and this could also incorporate the senior staff restructure that had been mentioned earlier in the meeting.

Post Meeting Note: This is now confirmed for Tuesday 11th January 2022 at 6pm.

Councillor Ovenden (Chairman)
Overview & Scrutiny Task Group – Budget Scrutiny

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Ashford Borough Council: Notes of a Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group – 21st December 2021 (Budget Scrutiny 3)

Present:

Cllr. Ovenden (Chairman);

Cllrs. Chilton, Harman, Ledger.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Blanford, Iliffe, Wright.

Head of Finance and IT, Head of Housing, Head of Corporate Property and Projects, Accountancy Manager, Policy and Scrutiny Officer, Member Services Manager.

1 Finance

1.1 The Accountancy Manager introduced his papers which responded to Members questions about current borrowing levels and gave an update on the new Prudential Code and the changes to PWLB funding issued the previous day. The report on borrowing focused on both the Capital Financing Requirement and funding and how to best structure the Council's loan portfolio.

1.2 The item was opened up to the Task Group and the following responses were given to questions/comments: -

- Recent changes in interest rates and base lending rates would increase borrowing costs, but were not considered to be a significant risk to the budget. They were still within the anticipated envelope for 2022/23 and there were always options to switch some of the long term borrowing back in to short term borrowing, in-year, to cut costs and negate exposure.
- “Unsupported borrowing” was a slightly old accounting term, but it basically meant that no other body (including Government) would be supporting that funding – it was purely borrowing from the market or internally, and repayments would not be supported by others.
- It was confirmed that Officers were very mindful of restrictions and consequences moving forward if the Council was to consider ‘debt for yield’ opportunities.

1.3 If Members had any further questions on these papers they were encouraged to contact the Accountancy Manager separately.

2 Housing

2.1 The Head of Housing gave a presentation picking up on the areas of clarification that the Task Group had requested from her draft budget. The focus was on Housing Options and homelessness which were areas that were consistently a pressure on the budget year on year, and the presentation gave details of the wider background, the 2021 review of the Service and the Service Improvement Plan.

2.2 The item was opened up to the Task Group and the following responses were given to questions/comments: -

- The majority of grant funding to fund the three new posts had been confirmed for three years so there was certainly no significant risk to this year's budget. It would be important to use that time to implement the actions identified in the review to drive down the costs of temporary accommodation. It would be a much more sensible long-term strategy to get those costs under control and then the monies could be reinvested into keeping costs at a stable level. Areas in question would be prevention and working with individuals more closely at the beginning of the homelessness process. If grant funding stopped at some stage in the future they would have to 'cut their cloth accordingly' and make decisions at that stage, but having this opportunity now provided a good base to get costs down and spend the money more wisely.
- The facility at Henwood, whilst important, was only one of the measures to help reduce temporary accommodation costs. Increasing prevention work, better procurement, as well as Christchurch House, Christchurch Lodge and the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Project properties and better 'Move-On' arrangements, would all also help to save money. There was a risk with Henwood as it was subject to the planning process and the wider Stodmarsh issue. It was hoped that it would go through planning in early 2022 and, if approved, could be delivered relatively quickly because of its modular nature. Therefore Officers were optimistic that it could begin to deliver significant savings in the second half of the next financial year. There was concern from the Task Group though, as Henwood formed quite a large part of the overall savings for the next financial year.
- The bid for funding for a new post working with Probation Services had been a joint bid with Folkestone and Hythe District Council. Each Authority had its own dedicated worker, but it was a joint bid.
- Ashford had been particularly successful as a Borough at dealing with homelessness at source and placing individuals in to accommodation. It was important though to determine their circumstances and where they had come from. If individuals had come from other areas it may be necessary to relocate them back to their area because Ashford did not

have a duty to them. It was a complex area and a balance between welfare and potentially becoming an 'open door for Kent' and this approach was supported by homelessness legislation.

- Assumptions of homelessness levels for the coming year had been carefully assessed and a lot of work had been targeted around private landlords and tenants already in arrears. They were hoping to make some real headway with their prevention work and had tried not to be too pessimistic, which would massively increase budgets.

Resolved

That the points discussed above be considered further in formulating the Task Group's final report on its Scrutiny of the Council's Budget for 2022/23.

3 Corporate Property and Projects

3.1 The Head of Corporate Property and Projects gave a presentation picking up on the areas of clarification that the Task Group had requested from his draft budget. The presentation was split in to two parts: - the first focusing on Asset Management (Management and Maintenance of the Corporate Estate); and the second focusing on the Commercial Property Portfolio.

Asset Management

3.2 The first part of the presentation introduced the Service, including the different teams within it, the general approach and gave further details of risk areas. This included: - regeneration; procurement and contracts; the recent Service Review and proposed additional resources; the carbon agenda and the large amount of work associated with that; the asset management budget itself; and planned works to 2024.

3.3 This part of the item was opened up to the Task Group and the following responses were given to questions/comments: -

- In relation to the 'just in time' approach that had been adopted, planned maintenance was set yearly and potential projects reviewed on an annual basis and pushed back if unnecessary. They did however have to be aware of their responsibilities and obligations, particularly where tenants were paying rent. Requests were managed via a scoring mechanism in the agreed Asset Management Strategy.
- Carbon neutrality underpinned everything the Service did, from repairs and renewals, improvements, procurement, contract management etc.
- International House had a planned request for £1.25m for roof repairs in 2023/24. A review of this was part of the ongoing Stock Condition Survey work. There was however no impact for the coming financial year.

Commercial Property Portfolio

- 3.4 The second part of the presentation addressed the specific points raised around risks to the Commercial Property Portfolio and performance information.
- 3.5 The Commercial Property presentation was then opened up to the Task Group and the following responses were given to questions/comments: -
- Changing working practices (home/hybrid) and the future need for office space were big considerations. A number of companies were holding over on their leases as a result of this and once things had all become a bit clearer, there would be a need to consider options for longer term use of buildings and/or individual floors. It was an unknown at the moment but if a significant drop in demand did come to pass, there would have to be a wider options appraisal for assets such as International House.
 - In terms of the coming financial year, with the companies holding over, there was always a risk of withdrawals. Early indications were that most would like to retain some office space and there were also other companies still expressing an interest in taking on space if it became available. It was really however too early to have any certainty at this stage. Block B of International House (the DWP) was signed up to 2028 so that income was secure.
 - Debt collection/income from industrial units had remained fairly strong, despite the ongoing pandemic. However the Council was not afraid to intervene if necessary and there had been evictions due to non-payment of rent. It was after all a commercial portfolio.
 - Assets were marketed as widely as possible via local agents and as part of digital transformation work, the Service had created an on-line estate agency window to promote and advertise available space and allow people to express an interest. There was also an element of 'word of mouth' and a good reputation for tenancy management.

Resolved

That the points discussed above be considered further in formulating the Task Group's final report on its Scrutiny of the Council's Budget for 2022/23.

4 Wrap Up

- 4.1 It was confirmed that an extra meeting was going to be arranged in the New Year to undertake the Wrap-Up.

Post Meeting Note: This is now confirmed for Tuesday 11th January 2022 at 6pm.

Councillor Ovenden (Chairman)
Overview & Scrutiny Task Group – Budget Scrutiny

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Ashford Borough Council: Notes of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group Wrap Up meeting – 11th January 2022 (Budget Scrutiny 4)

Present:

Cllr. Ovenden (Chairman);

Cllr. Ledger.

Apologies:

Cllr. Chilton, Harman.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Blanford, Burgess, Clokie, Shorter, Wright.

Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Head of Finance and IT, Accountancy Manager, Development Partnership Manager, Compliance and Data Protection Manager, Policy and Scrutiny Officer, Member Services Officer.

1 HRA Business Plan

- 1.1 The Accountancy Manager introduced this item, following a request by the Task Group Members to review the plan.
- 1.2 In response to a query regarding Other Appropriations and Appropriated Out figures on Page 39, this related to repayment of borrowing and affected the revenue element, so observed repayment of debt.

Recommendation:

The Task Group noted the report.

2 Wrap Up & Recommendations

- 2.1 The Policy and Scrutiny Officer gave a presentation that summarised the key points discussed at each Budget Scrutiny meeting, and listed six recommendations that the Task Group would recommend to Cabinet, and one recommendation for the O&S full Committee.
- 2.2 The item was opened up to the Task Group and the following responses were given to questions/comments:-

- The Deputy Chief Executive discussed the issue of Stodmarsh, and he

explained that ABC had identified the need to deliver approximately thirty hectares of wetland to allow the continuation of planning approvals. The Head of Corporate Property & Projects had been trying to identify sites in the Borough and negotiate with landowners, but had not yet been successful in acquiring any land. The Project Green scheme with an area of land near the Designer Outlet had been identified as a potential location. The problem with procurement of this type of land was that there was not an established market, and therefore prices for land for nutrient neutrality were an unknown, and prices could consequently fluctuate quite drastically. Another complication was that farmland could often be held in family or commercial trust, so the process was often long and drawn out. A number of Members met routinely to monitor the delivery of the mitigation land. The Development Partnership Manager added that the Minister for Housing had been made aware of the Stodmarsh situation and the topic was expected to feature on BBC South East today in the coming weeks.

- A Member highlighted the imminent commissioning of the Planning IT system and the prospect of potential mitigation to that risk. The Chairman agreed but explained that the Head of Planning had stated in his presentation that the new IT system would not deliver the £100k savings outlined in the report. He had gone on to say that some opportunities would arise to create revenue, which would go some way to provide savings, but there was still a shortfall of unidentified savings. This raised concerns that there was a hole in the Planning budget going forward. The Chairman's view was that Planning should have some leeway, although he understood that this could be deemed unfair on other Departments, therefore the recommendation was that the Task Group note the concerns, and note that it was a monitoring budget.
- The Chief Executive mentioned the Senior Staff restructure proposals that were currently out for consultation with staff. This looked at potentially making changes, only once feedback had been received from staff. The Consultation Paper would then have to go to Joint Consultative Committee, Cabinet and then Council, so it was still in the very early stages. It was intended that there would be only minimum pressure on any budgets, and particularly not on the 2022/23 budget resulting from the structure review. Further budget pressures could possibly be felt owing to incremental salary increases, which was often the case in other Local Authorities. The final report would be available for the O&S Committee to review.
- The settlement figure from Central Government had been received, and Ashford had not been awarded any additional funding, but in effect had received a real terms reduction. The Government confirmed that it would compensate for NI contributions, but by compensating for the £200k cost, they had then lowered the Lower Tier Grant, which cancelled out the £200k compensation. As a consequence, ABC now had a pressure on the budget of £500,000 which was proposed to be funded from reserves, since it was a one off pressure for this year only. Ashford

had received more New Homes Bonus (NHB), but this was still within the core spending power, so effectively had just been moved from grants into NHB. No NHB was placed into the budget, and the Leader of the Council agreed this funding be split between the Carbon Reduction Project, and Corporate Projects. ABC would respond to the Consultation to state that they, along with some other Kent Authorities, felt penalized and felt that a number of factors should be considered including the EU exit and introducing the Inland Border Facility, the Syrian Refugee Settlement Scheme and Stodmarsh.

- 2.3 The Policy and Scrutiny Officer confirmed the next step was to write the Final Report, which would be submitted to the next O&S Committee Meeting on 8th February 2022, and then be submitted to Cabinet on 24th February 2022.

Resolved

That the Recommendations be submitted to the next O&S Meeting on 8th February 2022.

Councillor Ovenden (Chairman)
Overview & Scrutiny Task Group – Budget Scrutiny

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Agenda Item No: 7
Report To: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: 24 February 2022
Report Title: Budget 2022/23
Report Author: Lee Foreman
Job Title: Accountancy Manager
Portfolio Holder: Cllr. Shorter
Portfolio Holder for: Finance & IT

Summary:

This report is the culmination of a number of financial planning reports that have been received by Cabinet over the last year. In October Cabinet received a report updating the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan 2022-2027; this informed the draft budget that was presented to Cabinet in November, the draft budget was then put forward to the Overview and Scrutiny Budget Task Group for review, and put out to public consultation.

This paper provides updates from the draft budget presented in November, including provisional funding announcements and presents the final budget for 2022/23 for consideration by Cabinet. Cabinet's recommendations will then be presented to full Council.

This budget has been built against the backdrop of rising inflation and the continued economic uncertainty as we recover from the Covid19 Pandemic, the full impact of the EU Exit is still to be fully understood with changes, including Ashford's own Port Health operation still to be commenced. There is continued uncertainty over the long term Government Funding of Local Authorities and although the Government departments received a multi-year settlement, this only transpired into a single year settlement for the Council as the Governments fair funding and spending reviews continue to be delayed.

This budget has been built to support the Council's New Corporate Plan which has been developed to support the Borough's growth, and supports the Government theme of build back stronger.

The report covers the Housing Revenue Account, which includes an average increase in rents of CPI + 1% in line with government guidance. Where this increase would take properties above the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate then the rent will be capped at that level to ensure it is fully covered by benefits, limiting financial strain on our tenants.

The budget report also reflects the business plan which was presented to Cabinet in December.

A number of strategies and framework documents are included for consideration.

This budget proposes a £5.00 (circa 2.9%) rise in the Borough's annual council tax, with a Band D (the standard council tax band) charge moving to £177.50 for the year. Ashford will continue to have the lowest council tax for Kent District Councils.

Key Decision: YES

Significantly Affected Wards: All

Recommendations: **The Cabinet is recommended to:-**

Part 1

- a. Note the budget context

Part 2

- II. Recommend the Revenue Budget 2022/23 including the net budget requirement of **£16,093,900 (excluding parish precepts)**.
- III. Recommend the level of discretionary and statutory fees to be levied from 1st April 2022 as set out in **Appendix D**.
- IV. Delegate to the Chief Finance Officer the powers to establish local discounts in Business Rates in accordance with government policy.
- V. Note the summary of reserves **Table 6** and **Appendix C**
- VI. Note the Equality Impact Assessment in **Appendix E**
- VII. Recommend the Band D council tax at **£177.50**.

Part 3

- VIII. Resolve that the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2022/23 be approved.
- IX. Resolve the estimated average rent increase of CPI + 1% (4.1% rise), in accordance with government guidelines, and that rent setting for the future continues to follow government guidelines.

Part 4

- X. Capital Plan 2022/23 to 2024/25 in **Appendix G** is approved.

Part 5

- XI. Recommend to Council that the 2022/23 Capital Strategy be approved **Appendix H**
- XII. Recommend to Council that the MRP Policy as set out in **Appendix I**, the Treasury Management Strategy Statement at **Appendix J**, and the Investment Strategy at **Appendix K** are approved.

Part 6

- XIII. Approve the ABC Exceptional Circumstances Policy as outlined in **Appendix L**

Part 7

- XIV. Note the advice from the Chief Financial Officer concerning the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of reserves, **Appendix M**

Policy Overview:

The council's revenue budget is intended to support the priorities set out within the Corporate Plan and flows through from the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

The Corporate Plan is geared to ensuring that priorities are delivered and that the council's service activities are managed within the constraints of resources available.

Financial Implications:

The key implications of this budget are:

- Council Tax rise of £5.00 to £177.50 for a Band D property.
- Staff cost of living increase has been budgeted at 3% but is still to be formalised.
- Housing rents to increase by CPI+1% (4.1% Rise) as per Government policy.
- Revised service fees and charges be agreed
- £827,800 of budget savings have been included in the budget of which £639,260 are still to be fully identified.

Legal Implications: *Text agreed by the Monitoring Officer 03/02/2022*

The Council is legally required to set a balanced budget at the start of every year to meet our financial responsibilities.

Equalities Impact Assessment:	See Attached in Appendix E
Data Protection Impact Assessment:	NA
Risk Assessment (Risk Appetite Statement):	See body of report
Sustainability Implications:	NA
Other Material Implications:	This budget has been developed on the basis that the Country continues the recovery from the Covid19 Pandemic and that no further local or national lockdowns restrictions are imposed. If this position changes then there could be risks introduced to the budget.
Exempt from Publication:	No
Background Papers:	None
Contact:	Lee.Foreman@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330509

Report Title: Budget 2022/23

Introduction and Background

1. This report presents the final 2022/23 budget for approval and recommendation to full Council. The draft budget was approved by Cabinet in November 2021.
2. This budget has been built with regard to Sections 3 and 4 of CIPFA's Financial Management Code which has been introduced to demonstrate good financial management within the public sector. The full code which contains seven crosscutting sections will be fully embedded throughout 2022/23 in accordance with the code.
3. This budget supports the 2022/24 corporate plan and covers; the general fund revenue budget; discretionary fees; the housing revenue account; the capital programme; the capital strategy; minimum revenue provision statement, the treasury management and annual investment strategies; and the investment strategy.
4. The draft budget has been scrutinised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Budget Task Group. Public consultation has been sought through the council's website and other communication channels which commenced in December.
5. Full details of the revenue budget, HRA budget and capital programme will be contained in the 'Budget Book 2022/23' which will be published once the budget has been approved by Full Council.
6. This report is presented in seven parts:

Part One	-	Context and Government Grant
Part Two	-	General Fund Revenue Budget
Part Three	-	Housing Revenue Account
Part Four	-	Capital Programme
Part Five		Capital Strategy, MRP Policy, Treasury Management Strategy statement and the Investment Strategy
Part Six		Exceptional Circumstances Policies
Part Seven	-	Robustness of the Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves

PART ONE – CONTEXT AND GOVERNMENT GRANT

The Corporate Plan

2. The new Corporate Plan 2022/24 was adopted in 2021/22 and includes three priority themes:
 - a. **Green Pioneer** – Where businesses, communities and the public and third sector have come together to become carbon neutral, respect the local environment and ecology, and embrace a more sustainable way of living.
 - b. **Caring Ashford** – A caring and supportive place to live, with rich heritage; thriving towns, villages and rural communities; great schools; high-quality housing; a plethora of cultural activities and events; and a strong sense of civic pride.
 - c. **Targeted Growth** – A place where productive, innovative, responsible town and rural business communities offer good quality work to an agile and skilled local workforce who have embraced a culture of lifelong learning.
3. The new corporate plan also framed ‘The Ashford Ambition’ *“To be a thriving, productive and inclusive borough in 2030 and beyond; a vital part of Kent and the South East where local businesses, social enterprises, communities and the public sector provide collective leadership to promote shared prosperity, happiness and wellbeing”*.
4. The Corporate Plan includes a number of key strategic projects including project green, South Ashford Garden Community, Ashford College Phase 2, Newtown Works, Jasmin Vardimon Creative Laboratory, Vicarage Lane and Project Green.
5. The council has a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) which was presented to Cabinet in October 2021 and is a rolling five yearly budget. The MTFP is reviewed regularly and updated to reflect changes in corporate priorities and incorporate new projects/information into the plan.
6. The MTFP demonstrated a balanced position over the 5 year period however, it also highlighted key risks to the plan. The MTFP relies on some reserve funding in the early years moving to a balanced income and expenditure position in later years. There is an Economic Growth and Risk reserve of £9m to manage the risks to the MTFP, but also short to medium term risks that may arise are a result of uncertain economic conditions, this position will be reviewed regularly.
7. Beyond 2022/23 the further budget pressures resulting from growth will be targeted through cost awareness, income generation through commercialisation, smarter working through digital transformation, and investment strategies which continue to support these themes.
8. This includes supporting the Council’s wholly owned subsidiary A Better Choice for Property Ltd. which was established in November 2014 and is continuing to expand its portfolio (including development through its wholly

owned subsidiary A Better Choice for Development Ltd.) and generate income to the Council.

9. The budget included in this report has been built in accordance with the strategy adopted.

Local Government Finance Settlement

10. The local government finance settlement is the annual determination of funding to local government from central government and was published on 16 December 2021, and was approved by the House of Commons on the 7 February 2022. The only adjustment between provisional and final settlement was to increase the “Compensation for under-indexing the business rates multiplier” grant by Circa £58,000 to reflect the forgone RPI rather than CPI increase, however this was subsequently funded by cutting the Lower Tiers Service Grant therefore meaning Ashford Borough Council funded it. This followed a four week consultation period in which the Council responded expressing its disappointment over the provisional settlement. The Executive Leader of the Council has also written directly to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, The Rt Hon. Rishi Sunak MP.
11. The provisional settlement is largely based on the 2011/12 funding requirements which is outdated and does not account for significant issues such as the direct impact on the Borough of the EU Exit. The settlement is also forecasted on the assumption that every local authority will raise their council tax by the maximum permitted without a referendum.
12. **Furthermore, and despite headlines such as ‘Billions for councils to build back better’ the council was 1 of 34 Councils that did not receive any increase in Core Spending Power, which is effectively a loss in real terms once inflation is taken into consideration, and new burdens funded such as employer contributions for the new NHS and Social Care Levy and freezing of the business rates multiplier.**
13. The settlement announcement was not in line with the assumptions made within the draft budget, leaving a pressure of almost £500,000 in the final budget, which will need to be funded from reserves. A full list of movements between the draft and final budget report are covered in part two of this report. Due to the timing of the final settlement announcement the £58,000 change between grants will be applied in year and has a nil impact on the bottom line of the budget.

Levelling Up White Paper

14. One of the reasons for a single year settlement has been the imminent publication of the Levelling Up white Paper which sets to outline the Governments ambitions to level up the UK. The white paper has no investment plan and has been published outside of the Government’s spending review. This means that there are no new funding streams to support this policy and its objectives need to be met from existing funding allocations.
15. The levelling-up White Paper is positive for local government. It focusses on “local leaders” and giving them the levers to deliver, with options for

expanding and deepening devolution and this should be welcomed and the Council will need to assess the role it has to play in this agenda over the coming months.

16. The White Paper adds to the expectation that a review of the distribution of funding between local authorities will happen in 2022: “commitment to ensuring that funding allocations for councils are based on an up-to-date assessment of their needs and resources.” The Government undertakes that it “will work with the sector ... over the coming months ... to look at the challenges and opportunities facing the local government sector.” There is a further commitment to “look at options to support local authorities through transitional protection.” It is suspected that this relates to the lower tier services grant.
17. No clear signals are given in the White Paper about the political choices that ministers will make about redistribution, other than the indication that the south-east will get less.
18. This potentially presents a threat to the Council’s funding streams and we have seen that our spending power has been frozen in real terms for 2022/23 and there is a real prospect that reviews of funding distribution will lead to further freezes or reductions in this Council’s Funding.

Formula Grant

19. The Council no longer receives a Revenue Support Grant (RSG) from Government. However, for the last few years the concept of a Negative RSG has been discussed which would see the Council paying Government £240,000 redistributing Local Council Tax funds. In the face of strong opposition, the Government has confirmed that negative RSG will be eliminated again for 2022/23. There are some concerns for future budgets though if this is eventually applied as no impact for Negative RSG has been built into this, or future budgets.

Business Rates

20. The calculation for business rates takes into account a number of factors (tariff, yield and Small Business Rate Relief) that affect the budget. The valuation methodology of business premises rateable value and the multiplier is set by the Valuation Office and Central Government. The multiplier has been frozen by Central Government for 2022/23 and although the Government suggests they will compensate Councils. This has been included as a grant line in the government settlement, although other grants have been reduced to fund it, therefore the Council has received no new monies to fund this new burden resulting in cuts to existing funding in real terms.
21. The budget requires the sum of Business Rate income and Section 31 grant to achieve £4.6853m. The statutory business rates forecast return (called the NNDR1) has been submitted and exceeds the target, any surplus generated at the end of year will be retained to mitigate emerging risk to bad debts and appeals (beyond provisional levels) in 2022/23 as the impact of Covid on Businesses is better assessed.
22. The elements of these estimates are discussed below.

Yield

23. The NNDR1 calculates a yield for Ashford Borough Council (40%) of £19.731m (£20.983m 2021/22). This includes changes made to transitional relief, an allowance for costs of collection and amounts retain for renewable energy schemes within the Borough.

Tariff

24. For 2022/23 Government have set the tariff level for Ashford at £16.118m and is broadly in line with expectations.

Levy

25. This is a charge against income received over the government's baseline and charged at a rate of 50%. The Council has reduced this by being a member of the Kent Business rates pool and in reality will pay a lower levy rate, expected to be 0% in 2022/23 (Forecast to be 0% in 2021/22).

Section 31 Grant

26. To compensate Local Government for changes that have been imposed on the Business Rates Retention scheme by central government a grant is paid.
27. Government has for some time doubled the level of Small Business Rate relief offered. This is outside the business rate retention scheme and a compensatory grant is paid to the council in the form of a S31 Grant, alongside additional grant for other categories of relief specified by Government. The 2022/23 NNDR1 shows this figure as £5.841m (£2.743m in 2021/22). This increase in grant income compensates for the reduction in net rates payable, which is a direct result of reliefs given by Government to businesses.
28. Sometimes these amounts need to be held in reserves to off-set deficits in the collection fund that are recovered over subsequent years.

Deficit

29. Due to Covid-19, additional discounts were given to ratepayers in 2021/22 to reduce their rates bills (circa £9.2m more than on the original NNDR1 for 2021/22). This is the biggest single cause of the deficit that is expected to arise on the Collection Fund in 2021/22, which major preceptors will need to contribute towards in 2022/23. This is because precepts will have been paid of £53m in 2021/22 but only £39m is estimated to be charged to ratepayers.
30. The total in year deficit is expected to be approximately £15.2m, Ashford's share for contribution in 2021/22 is expected to be £6.1m (40%) which includes a previous year deficit of £1m.
31. Government has given additional S31 Grant in 2021/22 to cover the additional reliefs awarded which have reduced income and contributed to the deficit, Ashford's share of S31 grant is circa £5.69m which will be transferred to reserves in 2021/22 and used to cover the majority of its deficit contribution in 2022/23.

32. Additionally, there will be further income from business rates in 2021/22 that will be transferred to reserves to cover the remainder of the deficit contribution required in 2022/23, e.g. levy savings from pooling and 'income compensation grant' to cover other shortfalls of NNDR income due to Covid (such as extra empty property reliefs, reduced NNDR growth, and potential bad debts).
33. The deficit is mainly a timing issue for Ashford, as Government has compensated Ashford with extra S31 Grant in 2021/22 to cover most of its deficit share in 2022/23. Contributions to reserves in 2021/22, followed by use of reserves in 2022/23, are the appropriate means of dealing with this.

New Homes Bonus

34. New Homes Bonus makes its final legacy payment in 2022/23 although a further year's funding for property growth between October 2020 and October 2021 has been awarded, no legacy payment will apply to this payment.
35. The Government still plans to reform the New Homes Bonus (NHB) scheme having consulted in February to April 2021, they are still analysing feedback according to the Government website. This continues to leave the future of NHB uncertain with no clear indication on what a replacement scheme will look like, and what it will try to incentivise.
36. In preparation for a change in scheme, the Government has continue not to apply legacy payments to new awards with the 2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23 only being payable for one year, leaving no legacy payment after 2022/23. Reform of the NHB scheme could have a significant impact on Council funding and the Accountancy Team will keep abreast of developments and support further consultations where appropriate.
37. The final budget for New Homes Bonus for 2022/23 is £1.89m, this was higher than originally forecast by £1.15m. There has been a decision to remove the New Homes Bonus funding from the operational budget and no NHB funding is included accordingly. The additional amount received from the settlement has therefore been transferred equally between the Improvement Delivery Fund and Climate Change Delivery Fund within reserves.

Council Tax

38. The draft budget assumed a £5.00 (2.9%) increase in Council Tax bringing in the band D payment to £177.50 (£172.50 in 2021/22), the Council can opt to raise the Council Tax by up to the higher of 2% or £5.
39. The table below shows the anticipated (not approved) Council Tax increases across Kent Districts. **Table 1** shows that Ashford will still be the lowest Council Tax in Kent by over £11 against our county neighbours.

Table 1 – Anticipated Council Tax increases 2022/23

District	Anticipated Increase from 2021/22		Anticipated Band D 2022/23
	£	%	£
Ashford	5.00	2.90%	177.50
Canterbury	5.00	2.26%	226.27
Dartford	5.00	2.68%	191.35
Dover	5.00	2.53%	202.24
Folkestone & Hythe	5.18	2.00%	264.42
Gravesham	5.00	2.35%	218.08
Maidstone	5.42	2.00%	276.32
Sevenoaks	5.00	2.22%	229.96
Swale	5.00	2.71%	189.37
Thanet	5.00	2.06%	248.14
Tonbridge & Malling	5.00	2.47%	207.68
Tunbridge Wells	5.00	2.00%	254.86

40. To add further context of the Council increase at a local level, **Table 2** shows the increase from the main preceptors since 2011/12, for comparison.

Table 2 - Annual increase by Preceptors and proposed 2022/23 increase

Financial Year	Ashford Borough Council			Kent County Council			Kent Police			Kent Fire		
	Annual Charge	Increase from previous year £	%	Annual Charge	Increase from previous year £	%	Annual Charge	Increase from previous year £	%	Annual Charge	Increase from previous year £	%
2022/23	177.50	5.00	2.90	1,461.24	42.48	2.99	228.15	10.00	4.58	82.35	1.53	1.89
2021/22	172.50	5.00	2.99	1,418.76	67.50	5.00	218.15	15.00	7.38	80.82	1.53	1.93
2020/21	167.50	5.00	3.08	1,351.26	51.84	3.99	203.15	10.00	5.18	79.29	1.53	1.97
2019/20	162.50	5.00	3.17	1,299.42	61.74	4.99	193.15	24.00	14.19	77.76	2.25	2.98
2018/19	157.50	3.50	2.27	1,237.68	58.86	4.99	169.15	12.00	7.64	75.51	2.16	2.94
2017/18	154.00	4.00	2.67	1,178.82	45.27	3.99	157.15	5.00	3.29	73.35	1.35	1.87
2016/17	150.00	4.55	3.13	1,133.55	43.56	4.00	152.15	5.00	3.40	72.00	1.35	1.91
2015/16	145.45	0.00	0.00	1,089.99	21.33	2.00	147.15	2.87	1.99	70.65	1.35	1.95
2014/15	145.45	0.00	0.00	1,068.66	20.88	1.99	144.28	2.81	1.99	69.30	1.35	1.99
2013/14	145.45	4.78	3.40	1,047.78	0.00	0.00	141.47	2.79	2.01	67.95	0.00	0.00
2012/13	140.67	0.00	0.00	1,047.78	0.00	0.00	138.68	0.00	0.00	67.95	0.00	0.00
2011/12	140.67			1,047.78			138.68			67.95		

Medium Term Financial Plan

41. A review of the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), which was presented to Cabinet in October 2021, has been undertaken following confirmation of the financial settlement, and additional contributions from reserves will be required to fund a reduction in forecasted lower tier services grant. Additional NHB funding received has been allocated evenly between the Climate Change Delivery fund and the Improvement Delivery fund reserves.
42. However, following the provisional finance settlement for 2021/22, there is continued uncertainty over reforms to NHB, the fair funding review and changes to business rates, this means that forecasting assumptions beyond 2023/24 remain uncertain. As information becomes available finance will update the MTFP accordingly for future presentation.
43. Another factor that will impact the MTFP going forward is rising interest rates which are forecast to get to 1% by May 2022. Early modelling to factor in this faster than anticipated interest rate rise could add £3.5m pressure over the life of the MTFP our 5 year forecast.
44. Officers and members will need to review this in more detail as we move into 2022/23 and make recommendations on how this new emerging gap can be addressed going forward. In relation to the immediate impact on the 2022/23 budget, the borrowing strategy can be adjusted to focus on shorter borrowing which is available at lower rates however, this will need to be considered alongside fixing into long term borrowing to reduce the risk (up and downside) of future movements.

Recommendations (Part One)

45. The Cabinet is asked to:
 - a. Note the budget context, Government Grant and MTFP positions

PART TWO – GENERAL FUND REVENUE BUDGET

46. A summary of the General Fund budget, including a forecast of outturn for 2021/22 as at 30 September 2021, is shown at **Table 3** below.
47. Necessary changes to the preliminary draft budget have been made which were reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Budget Task Group.
48. The Overview and Scrutiny Budget Task Group scrutinised the budget during December 2021 and January 2022 and made six recommendations to Cabinet, and one recommendation to the full Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
49. Overall the Overview and Scrutiny Budget Task group found the draft budget to be sound, although some concern was raised around the savings to be identified as part of the 2022/23 budget, notably from the Planning service. However, the budget task group was supportive of the Cabinet's approach to requesting progress against saving targets as part of the quarterly financial monitoring reports, and that the Council has an Economic Risk and Resilience reserves could be utilised if savings are not fully delivered in 2022/23.
50. The revised general fund summary is shown below with details of the movement explained further on in this section of the report.

Table 3 - General Fund Summary

Actuals 2020/21 £	Budget 2021/22 £	Projected Outturn 2021/22 £	Detail	Budget 2022/23 £
19,144,216	16,303,390	17,216,215	Service Expenditure	16,018,530
(4,246,502)	(2,187,810)	(2,703,060)	Capital Charges & Net Interest	(2,153,740)
949,854	0	0	Revenue Funding of Capital Expenditure	0
270,466	276,000	276,000	Levies	282,000
18,109,351	348,860	(153,060)	Contribution to/(from) Balances	1,947,110
(18,046,940)	(4,093,390)	(4,093,390)	Retained Business Rates	(4,685,000)
(3,053,420)	(1,908,220)	(1,908,220)	New Homes Bonus	(1,886,050)
0	0	0	Council Tax 2020/21 Surplus	(400,000)
(8,012,237)	(7,792,350)	(7,792,350)	Council Tax	(8,637,850)
(168,097)	0	(421,345)		0

51. A summary of service expenditure is provided at **Appendix A** at service level, and **Appendix B** at a budget page level. Detailed budget pages will be available in the budget book for 2022/23 which will be published online following approval of the Final Budget by Full Council.

52. **Table 4** below details the contributions to and (from) reserves which form part of the proposed 2022/23 Final Budget. These contributions support the Council's Corporate Plan, deficits in the MTFP and mitigate risk from commercial activities, and economic uncertainty as we build back from Covid19, Stodmarsh and the EU Exit.

Table 4 - Analysis of Contributions to/(from) Balances

General Fund Revenue Reserve	Budget 2022/23	Comments
	£'000	
General Fund Reserves	200	Service contingency for 2022/23
Improvement Delivery Fund	1,311	New homes bonus receipt
Climate Change Delivery Fund	575	50% of additional New homes bonus receipt
Provide for Maintenance of Assets	600	£100,000 for Playgrounds
Economic Growth and Risk Fund	(739)	Make up short fall in MTFP and reduction in Lower Tier Services Grant following settlement
Total to/(from) reserve movement	1,947	

Principal changes to draft budget

53. Following government announcements and consultation on the draft budget the following changes to the draft budget have been made:-
- Additional new homes bonus funding was announced within the settlement and will be transferred equally between the Climate Change Delivery Fund and Improvement Delivery Fund.
 - The Lower Tier Funding Grant settlement figure was less than anticipated so budget was reduced by £498,000
 - The Rural Services Delivery Grant was £4,000 better than anticipated at settlement and has been added to the budget.
 - A further contribution from reserves £494,000 has been made from the Economic Growth and Risk Fund to fund the net deficit from the movement in lower tier services and rural services delivery grants.

54. These movements are summarised in the table below:

Table 5 – movement from draft budget

Description	Budget 2022/23
	£
Increase New Homes Bonus (NHB) receipt	(1,149,050)
Transfer 50 of additional NHB receipt to the Improvement Delivery Fund	574,525
Transfer 50 of additional NHB receipt to the Climate Change Delivery Fund	574,525
Reduce Lower Tier Services Grant	498,000
Increase Rural Services Delivery Grant	(4,000)
Increase transfer from Economic Growth and Risk Fund	(494,000)
Total movement from draft budget	0

55. Although not directly affecting the draft budget it should be reported that there is still a pressure within Cultural Services to support the tender for a new operator. Due to extensions to existing contracts and the work required to secure a future operator £250,000 will be set aside from reserves to fund this work during 2022/23.

Council Tax

56. The Final Budget summarised in **Table 3** includes a Council Tax increase of circa 2.9% which would result in an annual Council Tax increase of £5.00 per household based on a band D property.
57. Ashford Borough Council would remain the lowest Council Tax in Kent.
58. This increase allows the council to have a balanced budget with a contingency for operational service risks in year, and is in accordance with the council's adopted inflation management strategy and in line with the council's Medium Term Financial Plan assumptions.

Council Tax Reduction (CTR)

59. In January 2020 Cabinet approved a new CTR scheme. The main feature of the new scheme was that it was to become a banded discount scheme from April 2020. The aim of the change was to simplify the scheme for residents as well as making the administration of the scheme simpler. The scheme has run smoothly for the past two years without any problems or challenges.
60. When the scheme was approved in January 2020, it was agreed that the income bands used in the scheme would uprate every year in line with the National Living Wage (NLW) rise. From April 2022 the NLW will increase from £8.91 per hour to £9.50 per hour, and the income bands used in the CTR scheme will rise accordingly.

Business Rate Relief

61. Due to the nature of the business rates system there are two ways that reliefs can be granted, either through the introduction of legislation or to allow authorities to do this locally under powers included in the localism act. Where government announce new schemes the Council is compensated.
62. In terms of the wider policy concerning discretionary rate reliefs, there was an intention during 2021/22 to review the discretionary rate relief policy introduced from April 2013. This was due to be undertaken in 2020/21 although it has been delayed due to Covid19 and pressures placed on the service. It is anticipated that the Covid related grants will ease in 2022/23 and this review will be able to commence with a view to implementing a revised policy from April 2023. This will involve a consultation exercise.
63. Therefore, in view of all the above points, it is recommended that powers to establish local reliefs/discounts within the localism act are delegated to the Chief Finance Officer (Deputy Chief Executive), as in previous years.

Discretionary Fees

64. The MTFP makes an assumption that discretionary fees should be increased by around 3.5%, however for the 2022/23 budget this resulted in anticipated increases of around 3% on average for discretionary fees and charges once rounding etc. were taken into consideration. It should also be noted that some of the Council's charges, i.e. parking are not increased annually but on a triennial basis and reported separately when increased. Fees and charges proposed from 1 April 2022 at a service level are shown at **Appendix D**.
65. It is recognised that some of the fees and charges appear to be considerably higher than the average 3% increase, these increases are generally a result of low fees where a small increase in monetary terms translates to a significant percentage increase. Additionally some of the services provided by the Council are reliant on external providers and their prices increases need to be passed on to ensure the sustainability of the service.
66. The Licence fees for house in multiple application occupation is proposed to increase by 38% from 1 April 2022 increasing from £581 to £802 for a five year licence.
67. This increase has been proposed to bring our fees in line with other local authorities in Kent, which has given us the opportunity to help fund a new Private Sector Housing Officer. The private rented sector has an important role in providing decent homes to those who rent and this additional resource will ensure housing standards are maintained and landlords comply with their responsibilities. Prior to this increase Ashford's HMO fees were one of the lowest in Kent.
68. Building Control, Local Land Charges and the Ashford Port Health charges are retained in ring fenced accounts that aim to break even in accordance with individual regulations.
69. In line with the agreed Garage Commercialisation Strategy, any profit for the sale of garage sites received by the general fund be allocated into the Garage budget to enable the investment for renovation and upgrade of existing let sites.
70. The budget has been built with this level of fees and charges.

Savings

71. The 2022/23 budget includes £827,800 of savings that were previously agreed and identified in 2021/22 budget round where £3m of savings were required over the following three years to bridge the growing gap in the MTFP.
72. During the building of the budget not all of the previously agreed saving where deliverable as originally intended for 2022/23, and £639,260 still needs to be further developed before the saving can be delivered. The Draft Budget included these savings as targets for Heads of Service where the original budget had not been saved to ensure that they are still delivered to balance the MTFP.
73. These saving proposals where highlighted as a 'risk' to the 2022/23 budget by the Overview and Scrutiny Budget Task Group although as previously reported they were satisfied with the reporting arrangement going forward,

and that sufficient reserves are in place for short delays in delivery. These savings targets are therefore still proposed within the Final Budget and progress on the delivery of these items will be reported to members as part of the financial monitoring process.

Reserves

74. The Council has a good level of reserves and currently these are being held for the following purposes:
- a. **General Fund balance**, at least 15% of the Net Budget Require to balance in year risks to the operational budget
 - b. **Recovery Project reserve** is to be allocated at the discretion of members and is used to support projects coming forward that do not fit the criteria of other reserves.
 - c. **Climate Change Delivery Fund** will be used to support projects the support the reduction of Carbon within the Borough.
 - d. **Improvement Delivery Fund** will be used to focus on delivering projects in the more deprived areas, and those further afield in the Borough.
 - e. **Economic Growth and Risk Fund**, this fund represents £6m of funding that will be used to bridge the current MTFP deficit where necessary, and £3m is held to support short and medium term risk that may arise as a result of the current economic conditions. As risks dissipate then these reserves can be redistributed.
 - f. **Fund Future Expenditure (Risks, Legislation and Transformation)**, this reserve is to manage unforeseen risk that may come from legislative changes that could impact on the activities of the Council or funding streams, such as the New Homes Bonus and Fair Funding review. £1m will be allocation to Transformational projects that look to make services more accessible and efficient to absorb future capacity and improve services.
 - g. **Provide for the Maintenance of Assets** – The Council has a significant number of general fund assets that need to be maintained to ensure they are fit for purpose and last into the future. This reserve in addition to the annual allocations will enable appropriate maintenance of these assets.
 - h. **Required by Statue Reserves and Other Ring Fenced Amounts** – this reserves protects surplus funds from ring fenced services such as Ashford Port Health, Land Charges and Building Control. These reserves cannot be used for other purposes.
 - i. **Section 31 grant** – this new ‘temporary’ reserve has been established to clearly identify the funds necessary to fund collection fund deficits.
 - j. **Developer contributions** are funds the Council hold primarily from S106 Contributions and have to be spent in accordance with the S106 agreements.
75. A schedule of reserves is attached at **Appendix C** and a summary is shown at **Table 6** below which estimates revenue reserves of £20.8m at 31 March 2022 excluding ring-fenced amounts.

76. The reserve movements only look to deal with known project expenditure and those already underway, or amounts that are committed within the 2021/22, 2022/23 budgets.

Table 6 - Summary of Reserves

Analysis of Estimates Revenue Reserves	Balance at 31 March 2021	Forecast Balance at 31 March 2022	Forecast Balance at 31 March 2023
	£'000	£'000	£'000
General Fund Balance	2,562	2,562	2,562
Earmarked Reserves			
Recovery Project Reserve (now including Victoria Park)	1,063	261	0
Climate Change Delivery Fund	2,000	2,000	2,575
Improvement Delivery Fund	3,000	2,015	3,327
Economic Growth and Risk Fund	9,000	7,985	7,446
Fund Future Expenditure (Risk, Legislation, Transformation)	4,553	4,550	4,550
Provide for Maintenance of Assets	3,500	4,051	4,651
Provision for Discretionary Spend	23,116	20,862	22,548
			0
Required by Statute Reserves and other ring-fenced amounts	5,955	1,911	1,911
Section 31 grants and relief reserves (ring-fenced)	13,000	5,800	0
Developer Contributions	5,971	5,971	5,971
Amount ring-fenced, held under statute	24,926	13,682	7,882
Total General Fund Reserve	50,604	37,106	32,992

77. CIPFA (the principal accounting body that provides statutory advice and guidance on accounting and financial management to local government chief finance officers) issues guidance (last updated in 2014) covering the relevant legal background and importantly emphasises that Authorities should make their own judgements on such matters taking into account all the relevant local circumstances. The advice goes on to say that a well-managed authority, for example, with a prudent approach to budgeting, should be able to operate with a level of general reserves appropriate for the risks (both internal and external) to which it is exposed. CIPFA does not consider it necessary or appropriate to quantify a minimum level of reserves; this is for Chief Finance Officers and councils to consider. The government retains a power to impose a minimum, but is only intended to be used in circumstances where it is apparent to government that a council is not acting prudently and not following advice.
78. The Council has a policy that the general fund balance should be no less than 15% of net budget requirement, for 2022/23 this will be £2,414,085 and is within the General Fund reserve balance.
79. The Council's agenda was for it to be self-sufficient over the life of the MTFP. This reserve strategy supports the Council's Corporate Plan and the risks highlighted in the recent financial reports, including this one which are detailed at **Appendix M**.

Budget Scrutiny and Risk

80. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee Budget Task Group has examined the detailed budget proposals and reported its findings back to the full Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 8 February 2022. The Task Group made a number of recommendations including that:-

“The Task Group agreed that at this current time the council’s draft budget is sound. It was advised that increases to borrowing interest rates were expected next year and some increases were factored into the budget. Members were confident that increases above forecast could be mitigated by flexing the borrowing strategy”

“Members were informed that the council were in a good position with its reserves going forward but there was a need to be mindful. Sufficient reserves were in place to mitigate different risks including economic risk. Additionally, reserves will look to be increased over the 2022/23 year”.

81. A commentary of the risks associated with the budget is included as part of the statutory advice needed on ‘budget robustness and the adequacy of reserves and is attached at **Appendix M**

Equalities Impact Assessment

82. The equality impact assessment (EIA) screening tool has been completed to identify whether the budget policy treats any group differently. The EIA assumes that individual policies and initiatives will have separate impact assessments completed by the services concerned. Therefore whilst the assessment does highlight that some areas will need further examination as these will be covered individually and overall the budget does not discriminate against any group in society.

83. Members are referred to the attached Assessment at **Appendix E**.

Recommendations (Part Two)

84. The Cabinet is asked to:
- II. Recommend the Revenue Budget 2022/23 including the net budget requirement of **£16,093,900 (excluding parish precepts)**
 - III. Recommend the level of Discretionary Fees to be levied from 1st April 2022 (as set out in **Appendix D**)
 - IV. Delegate to the Chief Finance Officer the powers to establish local discounts in Business Rates in accordance with government policy
 - V. Note the summary of reserves **Table 6** and **Appendix C**
 - VI. Note the Equality Impact Assessment in **Appendix E**
 - VII. Recommend the Band D council tax at **£177.50**.

PART THREE – HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

Housing Revenue Account Budget

85. The 2022/23 position is broadly in line with the position reported to Members in the 30 year HRA business plan (Cabinet December 2021: Housing – Revenue Account Business Plan 2021/2052 – Affordable Housing Delivery and Aspirations).
86. **Table 7** shows a surplus of £1,535,960 in the HRA for 2022/23. This amount will be used to fund capital projects, thereby reducing the need for borrowing. The capital projects include, not only building and buying properties, but also the de-carbonisation of existing stock.
87. The HRA business plan presented to Cabinet in December forecast that the current plan remains affordable over the life of the plan, however the de-carbonisation programme does put some pressure on the HRA finances and officers will need to monitor this spend and take mitigating action should expenditure exceed the forecast.
88. The HRA Business Plan is ambitious, with its focus to increase housing provision, this requires a significant amount of investment, not only in new builds but also acquiring existing properties and block developments, for example former council houses that were sold through Right to Buy scheme, and the New Quarter acquisition.
89. This increase in affordable housing supply is designed to not only reduce the waiting list but also to reduce the pressure on temporary accommodation by providing homeless families with a long-term, affordable housing solution as highlighted in the HRA Business Plan presented to Cabinet in December 2021.
90. The 2022/23 budget in **Table 7** is shown in more detail, analysed to subjective level, at **Appendix F**

Table 7 – Housing Revenue Account Budget 2022/23

Revenue Budget				
Housing Revenue Account				
Actuals 2020/21 £	Budget 2021/22 £	Projected Outturn 2021/22 £	Detail	Budget 2022/23 £
(25,594,576)	(27,186,640)	(27,186,640)	Income	(28,775,130)
5,980,803	4,468,830	4,593,870	Supervision and Management	6,731,860
3,408,012	4,024,420	4,064,420	Repairs and Maintenance	4,347,100
293,373	221,700	191,150	New Builds	200,610
15,305,656	21,121,320	21,121,320	Other	15,959,600
(606,732)	2,649,630	2,784,120	Service Expenditure	(1,535,960)
1,848,337	5,913,700	3,838,520	Capital Works - Decent Homes	6,142,000
			Financed By:	
(1,848,337)	(4,435,000)	(3,118,440)	Contribution from Major Repairs Reserve	(6,142,000)
0	1,478,700	720,080	Net Capital Expenditure	0
(606,732)	5,607,030	4,224,280	Total Net Expenditure	(1,535,960)

Housing Revenue Account - Rents

91. In line with rent setting formula, set by Government, the new rent standard will allow the Council to increase rents by CPI + 1%. CPI at September 2021 was 3.1% and therefore the weekly rent increase will be, on average 4.1%.
92. For 2022/23 this means that the average weekly rent, for social housing, will be £95.16 (£91.39 for 2021/22). For tenants receiving housing benefit the increase will not have any cash impact as new rent levels are reviewed to ensure that they remain with the Local Housing Allowance rates. This increase will add pressure to household budgets where people are not in receipt of full benefit however the Council will continue to apply for government grants to help support those where necessary, although some council tenants could be affected by other aspects of the government's welfare reforms.
93. The new rent standard provides additional income to support the ambitious plans of the service and is in accordance with the assumptions made in the HRA Business Plan which was presented to Cabinet in December 2021. These plans include retrofitting existing stock with more efficient and effective products to help reduce the carbon foot print of the stock. Although it is acknowledged that this is a long term replacement programme, and therefore not a benefit to all immediately, it is anticipated that these measures will help reduce the utility usage of our residents, to help reduce costs.
94. The rent increase also applies to those tenants in affordable housing, although it should be noted that affordable rents are re-based to 80% of market rent each time a new tenancy agreement is made (i.e. upon vacancy) and will be increased in line with the Government formula each year. The average rent for 2022/23 will be £145.35 (£139.66 in 2021/22).

Recommendations (Part Three)

95. **The Cabinet is asked to:**
 - VIII. Resolve that the Housing Revenue Account budget for 2022/23 be approved
 - IX. Resolve the estimated average rent increase of CPI + 1%, in accordance with government guidelines, and that rent setting for the future continues to follow guidance, set by government.

PART FOUR – CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Capital Resources and New Allocations to Projects

96. This section gives consideration to the level of capital resources that are potentially available to support priorities including the business plan and other requirements
97. Capital investment currently may be funded from:
- a) Internal resources such as capital receipts and revenue reserves.
 - b) New Homes Bonus
 - c) Prudential (external) borrowing.
 - The 2022/23 budget provides specific support to borrow £500,000 for general fund property works, with a further £2m for strategic acquisitions that must be supported by a business plan.
 - Decisions on additional borrowing will be subject to an affordability test.
 - d) Third party grants and contributions from government, other local authorities or private organisations.
 - e) Section 106 developer contributions – currently we hold contributions amounting to circa £6m (capital & revenue), £4.7m of section 106 has been identified to support projects in the current capital programme and is expected to be spent over the next few years on community assets such as community buildings, open space and play areas throughout the borough.

Housing Revenue Account

98. The HRA has continued to invest in both building and buying new stock, it is hoped that even with the loss of a number of properties through Right to Buy that stock numbers will continue to increase. The Capital Plan has been updated to reflect the projects presented to Cabinet as part of the HRA Business Plan Report (December 2021).
99. In addition to borrowing, HRA funding sources include:
- External contributions from Homes England
 - Capital receipts, including retained 'Right to Buy' capital receipts for 'one for one replacement'
 - Surpluses within the revenue budget

Capital Expenditure 2022/23

100. The information below is an update on the significant items detailed in the Capital Programme. Major projects which have not already been approved will be reported for approval in accordance with the Council Policies. A full list and financing of the Corporate Plan is shown at **Appendix G**.

Property Portfolio

101. Included in the capital programme is an amount set aside annually for the maintenance of property assets and the purchase of replacement IT equipment, this is to enable the required works to lengthen the lives of the assets saving future replacement costs.
102. There has been £2m set aside for strategic acquisitions which was approved in January 2014. All projects will be supported with a business plan ensuring all investments are viable.

Regeneration Projects

Vicarage Lane Car Park Redevelopment

103. Following the acquisition of the Mecca bingo hall in March 2018, the Council is still developing plans to regenerate the lower high street and the wider town centre. Phase 1 to redevelop the former Odeon building and surrounding areas has been approved to spend £8m over the next 2 years.

Newtown Works

104. This development will be one of the most important economic drivers for the borough in the next few years and demonstrates the ongoing confidence that investors continue to have in Ashford.
105. The TV and film studios will bring significant benefits to Ashford in terms of investment and job creation and will play a key role in our economy's future recovery as we come out from the pandemic.
106. These exciting proposals involve finding a new use for one of the longest listed buildings in the country, which is of significant historical value but has been left to decay. This development will sensitively ensure our proud railway heritage is recognised, while transforming a brownfield site which has laid dormant for many years into a Film and TV Studio hub together with a hotel, serviced apartments, and commercial units.
107. Not only will this development put Ashford on the map nationally and internationally, it will also create sought after film studio space, provide thousands of jobs and make the town a hub for the creative arts industry, which is set to grow significantly in the future.

Project Green

108. The Council is exploring the potential of working with a world leading manufacturer in supporting their relocation to Ashford.
109. The facility is seeking to be as sustainable as possible through utilising heat from the ground, natural light, wind and solar power and be innovative in embracing sustainable travel plans – matching the ambitions of this Council as set out in our carbon pledge and Corporate Plan.

110. This will see the development of a 60 acre wetland park as part of this development, providing a bio diversity net gain for the scheme, carbon sequestration, enhanced flood attenuation, and nutrient neutrality credits, which will help with the wider Stodmarsh mitigation challenges the Council faces.

Corporate Projects

Carbon Neutrality

111. As part of the Council's commitment to becoming carbon neutral by 2030, a provisional amount of £10.8m has been included for the installation of Solar photovoltaic systems (PV). This project underpins the Carbon Neutral Strategy in generating income from investing in carbon neutrality opportunities. Carlton Road has approval to spend £401,000 to design and build solar installation on site utilising roof space, and will be paid back through saving of electricity in approx. 7-8 years.
112. The Council already has 114 PV panels in operation on domestic properties within the Housing Service, and within the Corporate Property and Projects portfolio. There are currently various sites still under review and a business case will be produced to support any bids to release of these funds at a later date.

Property Company – A Better Choice for Property

113. The Council's wholly owned subsidiary, A Better Choice for Property Limited requires financing to purchase its assets. The company's business plan is looking to develop a portfolio of 300 - 400 properties over the next 5 years. The Budget of £150m represents the total facility available to the Company with each acquisition requiring approval through the Council's Trading and Enterprise Board.
114. Currently the company has 105 units within the portfolio, made up of a mix of flats and houses of varying sizes. The company has been successful in acquiring land acquisitions and a subsidiary company has been formed, A Better Choice for Property Development, to develop out these acquisitions. This progression to developing its own schemes is now the preferred method of the company to achieve its overall property target and to ensure a quality product in the rental market.

General Fund Housing

Henwood Temporary Accommodation

115. This project is to deliver 23 units manufactured by Zedpods and be used for temporary accommodation which will be owned and managed by the Council. This development will help reduce the cost of putting homeless residents in expensive short-term accommodation which is putting a pressure on the General Fund.

Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme

116. The Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme (RSAP) is a scheme supported by Government Grant that will enable the Council to purchase 20 units of accommodation for supporting rough sleepers with a variety of complex needs (including mental and physical health, those with addiction issues and others who could have offending histories).

117. The scheme has the opportunity to purchase properties in the right location with good proximity to support services for individuals – to ensure the best outcomes for highly complex cases. It provides the intermediate supported accommodation within an existing rough sleeper framework to tackle levels of single homelessness and will effect real changes in the lives of individuals.

Culture and the Environment

Victoria Park

118. The current budget includes funding of £3.049m National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), and £1.369m from Council reserves. Some minor capital works have begun, although the main contract bids are back (in February 2022) there is a 10 week evaluation period, with uplift bids due March 2022. The project will see Victoria Park and Watercress Fields benefitting from improved toilet facilities, café, play areas, car parking, river corridor enhancements and other wildlife habitat improvements, volunteering opportunities and park events and activities. The park forms an integral part of the Council's commitment to providing and supporting public open space within the borough.

Conningbrook Country Park

119. Included in the plan is £2.055m of Section 106 funding to deliver key infrastructure elements of the country park. In July 2019 Cabinet endorsed the country park master plan, the park is designated as a Strategic Park in the Council's Open Space Strategy (2017 – 2030). The funding for the proposed works in the Country Park are provided by the enabling housing development that is currently under construction on land immediately adjacent to the main lake. Based upon current occupation rates we are forecasting another 3 years to receive all the S106 funding from the Conningbrook Development.
120. The carpark specification is currently being finished off with the consultants to enable a planning application and an application for a felling licence from the Forestry Commission. Works are expected to commence outside the birds nesting season in September 2022.

Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme

121. There are a number of Housing Revenue Account projects currently underway as well as a number of projects due to commence during 2022/23, brief outlines are below with more information contained within the HRA Business Plan which was presented to Cabinet in December:-
- The Halstow Way development (to be known as Brickworks) will deliver 17 units of general needs accommodation by end of April 2022. This site has been awarded just over £1m in grant from Homes England (£60,000 per unit) enabling a social rent to be set and deliver genuinely affordable homes.
 - 55 Mabledon Avenue (the former Piper Joinery site) is a site the Council acquired in 2019/20. It is proposed that 20 units of general need accommodation will form the development for the site which, subject to planning permission, is expected to complete in 2023/24. This development is being supported by 1-4-1 monies which are generated from right to buy receipts.

- The redevelopment of Oakleigh, subject to planning permission, involves demolishing the existing structure and delivering 67 units of independent living accommodation for older people and adults with learning disabilities. Expected completion is in 2024/25.
 - Tile Kiln Road is the site of a derelict cottage and (now demolished) agricultural barn purchased by the Council in 2019/20. Pre-planning application is being sought for 14 units of general needs accommodation.
122. Street Purchases is a way the Council uses 1-4-1 receipts to buy additional HRA stock, the number of acquisitions has started to slow as receipts from RTB sales have reduced. It is anticipated that the Council will purchase 31 properties, 10 of which will be larger properties either for large families, or possibly homes that could provide the space for some of the more complex cases on the waiting list, such as households who require homes suitable for household members with complex medical needs that cannot be met with the existing stock.

Recommendations (Part Four)

123. The Cabinet is asked to:
- X. Recommend to Council that the Capital Plan for 2022/23 – 2024/25 in **Appendix G** is approved.

PART FIVE – CAPITAL STRATEGY, TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT INVESTMENT STRATEGY, AND MRP POLICY

Capital Strategy

124. The Capital Strategy demonstrates that the authority takes capital expenditure and investment decisions in line with service objectives. Providing a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.
125. The Capital Strategy also incorporates the prudential indicators which are updated on an annual basis. They are set to a level that will allow the council to meet its Medium Term Financial Plan, accommodate the debt for HRA reform and make provision for the Council's Capital Programme ensuring it is affordable, prudent and sustainable.
126. This informs the recommended "Affordable Borrowing Limit" as shown under the heading 'Authorised Limit for External Debt'. The council must have regard to the prudential code when setting the Affordable Borrowing Limit. This essentially ensures that our total capital investment remains within sustainable limits as defined by the Council, and in particular, that the impact upon its future council tax and council rent levels is 'acceptable'.
127. The Capital Strategy recommended for 2022/23 is attached at **Appendix H**.

Treasury Management Strategy

128. The Council adopted the CIPFA Code of Treasury Management 2017 which requires the Authority to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year.
129. The code provides a framework to ensure that the Council gives appropriate consideration to its Borrowing and investment activities and sets appropriate controls commensurate with the Council's risk appetite.
130. A Treasury Management In The Public Services: Code Of Practice and Cross-sectoral Guidance Notes (2021 Edition) was first launched in December 2021 and the Council will look to adopt any changes necessary throughout 2022/23 and look to formally adopt the guidance before full implementation in 2023/24.
131. As part of a proactive approach to treasury management officers consider both investment opportunities and also the opportunities for debt restructuring to benefit from discounts offered on existing debt and lower interest rates. As at 31 December 2021 the Council had £121.6m of borrowing relating to HRA and £105.5m relating to general fund capital investment. The Council had investments with a fair value of £65m at this time, of which £31.8m were strategic long term investments.

132. In 2022/23 the Council's General Fund Net Interest on Borrowing and Investments is forecast to generate a net surplus of circa £1.684m, an increase of £432,290 on 2021/22.
133. The increase in income is due to strategic fund interest remaining strong and estimates have increased by circa £375,000 accordingly, the budget is also forecasting additional interest from loans made to its Property Company of £690,000 as it starts to borrow for major developments. Debt payable has also risen by circa £600,000, this is as a result of the additional lending to the Property Company, but also to reflect £17m of long term general fund debt that was taken in 2021/22 to mitigate some interest rate risk. Further long term placements may also be taken in 2022/23 to mitigate against further interest rate risk.
134. The Council is continuing with the strategy of borrowing where authorised, which enables the Council to take advantage of the current low interest rate environment, where returns from long term strategic investments are higher than the rate for borrowing. Officers continually evaluate and take advice on all investment and borrowing decisions and will look to take opportunities as they arise.
135. The proposed Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2022/23 is attached at **Appendix J** (it is a requirement to review this annually).

Investment Strategy

136. The Investment Strategy focuses on the Council's support for local services by lending to or buying shares in other organisations and service investments (commercial investments) where the generation of income is the main purpose, although the Department of Levelling up, Housing and Communities (DLUCH) defines property to be an investment that is held primarily or partially to generate a profit.
137. The Investment Strategy for 2022/23 is attached at **Appendix K**

HRA Debt Pools

138. The regulations allow councils to determine the number of debt pools (one, two or three) it wishes to operate. A 'two-pool' approach has been adopted; loans are split between the HRA & GF and new loans are added to each pool as required. Interest expenditure on external borrowing attributed to the HRA is charged directly to the HRA. Interest expenditure on external borrowing attributed to the General Fund will be charged to the General Fund.
139. Where the HRA or GF has a surplus cash balance which allow either account to have external borrowing below its level of CFR (internal borrowing), the rate charged on this internal borrowing will be based on the average rate of interest earned on cash balances for the financial year.

Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement

140. Each year the council must agree a statement on its policy for making a minimum revenue provision (MRP) (set aside for debt repayment).
141. There are four options available to the council as set out below:

- Option 1: Regulatory Method (4% borrowing requirement)
- Option 2: Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) Method (4% of non-housing borrowing requirement)
- Option 3: Asset Life Method (based on an annuity with an annual interest rate equal to an appropriate PWLB rate for the year of expenditure)
- Option 4: Depreciation Method (dependent on depreciation policy)

Proposed MRP Policy

142. Only options 3 and 4 can be applied to new capital expenditure, with Option 3 the most practical to adopt and a better fit for the Council's borrowing requirements.
143. In relation to option 3 there are two methods under this option for estimating the MRP requirement are,
- a) based on equal instalments over the useful life of the asset, and
 - b) based on an annuity repayment based on an appropriate annual interest rate.
144. The Council has previously adopted option 'a', (pre 2017/18) but now uses option 'b' as this more appropriately matches the MRP expense with the cash flows of the assets going forward.
145. No MRP is payable on the Loans to wholly owned Council companies as these are made on an annuity basis where the principal element of the loan is used to repay the debt in lieu of MRP (if the Property Company sells assets a voluntary MRP contribution to the value outstanding will be made).
146. MRP in respect of PFI (Private Financing Initiative) and leases brought on to the balance sheet will match the annual principal repayment for the associated deferred liability. This is a mandatory requirement, although in this instance does not affect the council's net expenditure.
147. The Council had the ability to use bespoke MRP policies where they are deemed prudent, any bespoke MRP policies considered will be reported through Council as necessary.
148. The MRP Policy for 2022/23 is attached at **Appendix I**.

Recommendations (Part Five)

149. The Cabinet is asked to:

- XI. Recommend the Capital Strategy is approved as set out in **Appendix H**.
- XII. Recommend that the MRP Policy **Appendix I** and the Treasury Management Strategy Statement at **Appendix J** and the Investment Strategy at **Appendix K**

PART SIX –

Exceptional Circumstances Policy

150. An Exceptional circumstances Policy has been created by Ashford Borough Council to assist persons who have applied for Council Tax Reduction and who are facing 'exceptional circumstances'. This is to provide further assistance where an applicant has made a claim for Council Tax Reduction but do not qualify for support or even with support are unable to meet their Council Tax liability.
151. Exceptional circumstances falls within S13(A)(1a) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and forms part of the Council Tax Reduction scheme.
152. The full policy can be found in **Appendix L**

Recommendations (Part Six)

153. The Cabinet is asked to:
 - XIV. Approve the ABC Exceptional Circumstances Policy as outlined in **Appendix L**

PART SEVEN – ROBUSTNESS OF THE ESTIMATES AND ADEQUACY OF RESERVES

Background

154. The council has a legal duty to set a balanced budget and must take all reasonable factors into account when doing so. Under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 the Chief Financial Officer (the Deputy Chief Executive) has a duty to advise the council about the robustness of the budget and the adequacy of the council's reserves. This section contains that advice.
155. We are now entering the recovery phase of the Covid 19 pandemic which is still a factor in the formulation of the budget with possible sustained reductions in historically steady income streams, such as parking income. There is also the wider economic impact as government support starts to come to an end and business become reliant on consumer confidence and spend to finance their businesses. Until we fully understand the lasting impact of Covid19 on the community, economy and consumer habits, the pandemic will continue to add unknown risk and uncertainty to the 2022/23 budget.
156. The reduction in the Council's incomes has resulted in a need for spending reductions and the delivery of these are critical to restoring the longer term finances of the Council. A significant amount of savings were delivered in 2021/22 although there is still £827,800 of saving built into the 2022/23 budget of which £639,260 still need to be fully developed and delivered. The savings were previously identified but it is acknowledged that a year later they may need to be delivered in a different way. Failure to deliver savings will have a compounded impact on the Medium Term Financial Plan which would consume reserves and restrict the Councils freedom to deploy these resources on its priorities.
157. One area where pressures are still to be understood are in two major income streams, Council Tax and Business Rates. As Government support for the economy unwinds there is a risk that the economic consequences will see increase level of non-payment and hardship which will affect the level of funding that the Council Receives.
158. Business rates also has a significant risk (as well as those highlighted above) in that the Government review which has been ongoing since 2016 has now been scrapped. As part of a future review there will need to be a reset of the Business Rates baseline that will see Ashford lose growth made over recent years. It is anticipated that a baseline reset could see the council lose business rates income in the region of £2.8m, although we would expect some transitional support to be put in place.
159. Other risks to budget are around contracted services and capital works, the Council is already seeing increases in capital contracts as a result of increasing raw material costs, supply issues, increased energy costs, and shortages in the labour market which is resulting in cost pressures being passed on. This will also flow through into more operational contracts such as software licences and consultancy services. With inflation not expected to start easing until 2023, suppliers will seek to pass these costs through to the authority and price these rises into new contracts. The Council is currently

out to tender on its new waste contract and so this will form a key risk in this process.

160. Next year will be a further one year only financial settlement from Government. The information drawn from the 2022/23 provisional settlement and Levelling up white paper leaves considerable uncertainty around funding moving beyond 2022/23. There is a strong expectation that government will launch a consultation process on funding allocations within the sector and Ashford does not represent a priority area for funding, therefore we can expect a challenging outlook for funding in the medium term.
161. The levelling up agenda will impact upon the future fair funding review, and while government promote positive messages about Councils not seeing reductions in core spending power (CSP), this means inflation adjusted cuts in funding. A continued approach to freezing CSP in cash terms could be a real possibility as a result of levelling up with the Levelling up Executive Summary highlighting things such as *“economic growth and the higher productivity which drives it has been over-concentrated in specific areas, particularly the South East of England”* and *“Nor does it mean dampening down the success of more prosperous areas. Indeed, by extending opportunity across the UK we can relieve pressures on public services, housing and green fields in the South East. And levelling up can improve well-being in the South East by improving productivity in the North and Midlands”*. Until the fair funding review is completed, and future settlements made, the true impact of this policy will not be known, and currently should be flagged as a risk. The Council will consult where appropriate to seek a fair deal for Ashford and other Councils.
162. The planned reforms of New Homes Bonus funding continue to be delayed and with no further legacy payment to be received there is a possibility that this could be abolished after 2022/23, and this has been reflected in the MTFP accordingly. The Council will monitor future developments and will actively participate in any consultation. However; as NHB funds previously funded corporate projects, an alternative means to funding projects will need to be found.
163. Reforms to the Business Rates retention scheme intended for 2021/22 were delayed, and have subsequently been scrapped following the change of minister and rebranding of MHCLG (Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government) to DLUCH (Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities). Change is going to happen and a baseline reset will still need to happen, however this latest decision leaves the Council with further uncertainty over business rates funding, and while the delay is positive as we have a good level of growth, the reset when it happens could reduce income by circa £3m, some tapering of the reduction would be expected but this could be simply funded from our own growth as with the current settlement and new burdens, however, as a worst case this would require a sudden correction in our budgets. To help mitigate this risk the Council currently holds several reserves to support in year and MTFP pressure as set out in **Appendix C**.
164. For prudence the Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan continues to reflect government formula grants to be zero, although in future years the Council may need to incorporate a negative revenue support grant (a payment to Government) although this is likely to be scrapped as part of the comprehensive spending review. The MTFP also makes no further provision

for NHB or any perceived replacement. The plan relies on the council growing its income base from other sources including:

- a. growing retention of business rates under the government's local retention scheme
 - b. new revenue from targeted housing and property investments.
 - c. Inflationary increases in fees and charges
165. The Plan also assumes increases in Council Tax at the maximum of £5 or 2% per annum whichever is the maximum. The latter assumption to increase Council Tax by the maximum amount permitted is in keeping with Government's expectations when setting the Council's base line need for funding.
166. The financial planning has been comprehensive leading up to this point and reports have been presented at various Cabinet meetings on the HRA Business Plan, Medium Term Financial Plan and Draft Budget which has allowed members to comment and engage in the financial planning of the organisation. The latter of these reports was the basis for a comprehensive review by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee and its Task Group who found the budget to be as "*The Task Group agreed that at this current time the council's draft budget is sound. It was advised that increases to borrowing interest rates were expected next year and some increases were factored into the budget. Members were confident that increases above forecast could be mitigated by flexing the borrowing strategy*" The budget has also been put out to public consultation.
167. This evidence clearly demonstrates that the council and its management team give serious regard to financial planning, to the management of resources, and to assessments of financial and operational risk.

Robustness

168. Robustness involves three considerations:
- a. consideration of the **context** in which the budget is set and how that context is understood, may develop, and therefore influence budgetary issues,
 - b. consideration of the various **components** of the budget, and
 - c. **weighing-up** all factors and taking a balanced view.

Context

169. This is the first budget that has been set to deliver the Council's new corporate plan. This outlines an ambitious vision for the Borough and includes an action plan with a number of commitments that the Council will seek to deliver. It is important to note that not all of the projects within the plan are costed and resourced and overall resourcing this agenda will be a challenge to the Council to achieve this whilst staying within budgeted resources. At some stages choices will need to be made and areas prioritised for resource over another to either maintain service delivery or corporate plan

delivery. This is not a new challenge and something that all Councils do, but it needs to be recognised that the events of the last few years have reduced our organisational capacity.

170. As previously highlighted and reported, comprehensive advice was provided to members concerning our financial forecasts and their underlying assumptions. Final assumptions are the results of reviews with the cabinet over the summer, and a review by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's budget task group.
171. As with any budget, and particularly in the current climate there are uncertainties as no budget can capture all future risks, however there is a corporate contingency of £200,000 within the 2022/23 budget for general unforeseen pressures that may arise.
172. This budget is set in a continued period of uncertainty as the global pandemic is still prevalent in many parts of the world which is continuing to impact the global economy and supply chains. Although domestically we are firmly entering the recovery phase of the pandemic, new issues such as soaring inflation, significant increase in utility costs, and anticipated interest rate rises new issues are emerging. The full impact of the UK leaving the European Union is also still to be fully understood, and how that will impact on the local and national economy as we move away from adopted European laws.
173. Inflation is expected to peak at about 7.25% in April 2022 and then could remain elevated throughout 2022 due to oil and gas price which have risen significantly and increased labour costs. Inflation will then start falling back to target in about two years' time.
174. To support this move back to target it is anticipated that interest rates will need to rise and the February rise represented consecutive rises from 0.10% to 0.25% and now 0.5% with further increase expected in March and May pushing the rate to 1%. This rapid rise in interest rates will place pressure on the Council's debt portfolio and the strategy will remain flexible to mitigate the general fund from increased costs. This will flow into future MTFP assumptions and options to manage pressure will be considered. Equally, this rise in rates and economic recovery will conversely, but to a lesser extent increase returns on treasury investments.
175. The tightening of fiscal policy could well be sowing the seeds of a future recession and therefore the Bank of England's move on interest rates could be seen as an attempt to build capacity to fight the next economic downturn. All this suggests a fragile outlook.
176. Despite the Economic pressures of Covid19, the Council has seen good resilience in commercial property and has been able to let further units at Elwick place and has now nearly let all the units at Carlton Road industrial Estate. The Housing team is also working on temporary accommodation solutions to ease temporary accommodation pressures in addition to increasing its social housing stock.
177. Locally there continues to be some interruption in awarding Planning Permissions due to water quality issues at Stodmarsh Nature Reserve which feeds from the River Stour. Considerable work is being undertaken by the

Council and Developers to identify mitigation strategies to overcome this problem and a solution is anticipated within 2022/23.

178. With risks to manage within this budget (and the associated Medium Term Financial Plan) a considered view is taken of both. The Council has re-profiled reserves to create two distinct reserves which look to address the economic in year risks to budgets, the Fund future expenditure (Risk, Legislation, and Transformation) reserve, and the Economic Growth and Risk fund which is to support the MTFP over the medium term. These reserves are forecast to be £4.5 and £8m respectively as at 31 March 2022.
179. It also recognises the support reserves play in supporting the Council's commercialisation agenda as it matures and is susceptible to economic conditions. Given the pending reform of New Homes Bonus scheme, the policy of not budgeting to use new homes bonus income for new projects until income is confirmed is to be maintained.
180. The inclusion of the Port Health Authority in this budget needs to be considered, whilst this presents an opportunity for the borough in terms of its own budget and the local economy in the short term the uncertainty in terms of understanding levels of demand and therefore the resources necessary to service this demand. Government have funded the set-up costs and have provided additional grant to support losses in 2021/22 due to delays in opening the facility, but continue to resist calls to underwrite the business during the first years of operation as demand settles and the trading relationship with the EU settles. Officers have held discussions with Officials on this matter and receive assurances that the Government will support these risks, and our planning continues on that assumption.
181. During 2022/23 the Council will continue to see proposals and affects arising from the expanded use of the council's prudential borrowing to support asset purchases, including the expansion of the HRA and other investments, including further lending to the council's property company. Appropriate business planning and governance arrangements are in place to ensure that opportunities and associated risks are evaluated as part of the decision-making processes. It is important these processes be maintained.
182. With economic uncertainty and continued reductions in budgeted income against pre-Covid levels, the Councils had to identify significant savings which were largely delivered within the 2021/22 budget, a further element of savings is also required within the 2022/23 budget. This poses some risk to the budget as some of the original savings proposals will need re-visiting to ensure that they are deliverable. These savings and uncertain funding streams have reduced the Council's budgetary flexibility and ability to respond to sudden changes in spending power. This is a particular threat when we consider regulatory changes that could be imposed upon the Council with short notice, for example the Fair Funding review, Spending Review, further guidance on borrowing and investment regulations, and reform of New Homes Bonus etc. To manage these risks the Council will need to continue to be actively involved in consulting with government on policy changes.

Key components of the budget

183. Detailed advice is set out in **Appendix M**, which considers the budget across a number of key components. Additionally, members have received advice

and recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Budget Task Group which were presented to the Overview and Scrutiny committee on the 8 February 2022, after considerable work scrutinising the draft budget it was found to be sound.

184. The Overview and Scrutiny Budget Task Group focused on a number of key themes in forming their opinion which are identified below:-
- a. The Port Health Service
 - b. The council's reserves positions and forecast
 - c. Savings and recharges
 - d. Planning and Development Service and the achievability of their savings target.
 - e. Details on expected borrowing interest rate increases.
 - f. Housing Service and delivery of savings target.
 - g. The risks around the maintenance of assets.
 - h. Risks linked to the commercial property portfolio.
185. From the above areas of coverage listed above cabinet were asked to note, and be advised of a number of matters arising although none of the formal recommendations have direct financial implications. The general theme of the recommendation was around concern over the savings to be identified within the budget although the Task Group was satisfied that appropriate measures were in place to mitigate the risks.
186. The full report on the review of the Draft Budget was reported to, and can be found at Agenda item 7 of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee dated 8 February 2022.

Weighing-up

187. This budget is developed with substantial external influences in flux, including the tail end of a global pandemic, and uncertainty over how the economy will recover once all restrictions are fully lifted, and what will be the long term structural changes to the way we live. Continued supply chain difficulties and rising inflation, and uncertainty over the future of government funding which needs to start saving/raising money to repay the Covid debt. **Appendix M** and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's endorsement, highlight that risks should be manageable through processes in place supported by the totality of the council's contingencies and reserves, although noting that the future

economic impact of Covid19 and emerging economic pressures are yet to be fully determined.

188. The Council does have an ambitious agenda to deliver and a limited capacity which will mean that choices will need to be made and work areas prioritised or reserves used to buy in additional capacity.
189. Supported by our strong governance of financial management and the council's commitment to deliver sustainable longer-term positions, members can be confident this budget is robust.

Adequacy of Reserves

190. Section Two covers the reserves position with a detailed forecast included in **Appendix C**.
191. The proposed policy position is that reserves need to be maintained at adequate levels, with the **un-earmarked general fund reserve** maintained at 15% of net general fund revenue spending.
192. For 2022/23 this amounts to a minimum unallocated reserve requirement of circa £2.414m which is in the reserve. In addition to the General Fund Reserve, the Council also has reserves with two significant reserves focusing on economic pressures to in year budgets but also to address the risk in the MTFP. These reserves were covered in the context section of Part 7 of this report.
193. Earmarked reserves (excluding section 106 developer contributions and S31 funding for the collection fund deficit), after planned drawings are expected to be in the region of £20.8m as at 31 March 2022.
194. Overall the advice is the council has adequate levels of reserves to support its budget and other requirements for the coming year and future liabilities. As ever reserve levels need close management to ensure they remain adequate and that longer term MTFP plans for resilience are sustainable. At the moment the level of risk and uncertainty leads me to the conclusion that we need to adopt a prudent approach to allocating reserves for spending, keeping this position under review whilst we develop a clearer understanding of how the longer implication will impact corporate resources.
195. Our budget monitoring will continue to highlight to Cabinet and Management Team approved movements in the use of reserves including reporting any actions of the management team taken to address new pressures or priority needs.
196. On the capital side General Fund capital receipts (cash from asset disposals) remain fairly limited with reduced scope for new general fund commitments that are unsupported by income returns to offset the borrowing costs.
197. Officers will continue to focus on optimising the value of our assets, though some priority will be given to achieving greater revenue returns where achievable as an alternative to outright sales. The council is also intending to continue to make use of its prudential borrowing power to pursue opportunities that add economic and regenerative benefits to the Borough,

although the returns need to support financing costs. Projects were previously supported by New Homes Bonus Receipts, however, as this scheme has no further legacy payments due, and not alternative scheme is yet to be introduced, new ways to fund projects will need to be identified.

198. **Appendix M** and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's review highlight risks should be manageable through this proposed budget and the decision-making processes in place. The Council's reserves remain reasonably healthy and provide the means to cushion unexpected shocks.
199. Supported by our strong processes of financial management and the council's commitment to deliver sustainable longer-term positions, members can be confident this budget is robust.

Recommendations (Part Seven):

200. The Cabinet is asked to:
 - XV. Note the advice from the Chief Financial Officer concerning the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of reserves, as set out in **Appendix M**

Equalities Impact Assessment

201. Members are referred to the attached Assessment at **Appendix E**.

Consultation Undertaken

202. A summary of the budget proposals were available for consultation from the end of December through to 18 February 2022. The consultation was promoted through the Council's online media platforms and posted on the council's website for general access.

203. Consultation with the public and the business community has taken place and the results will be reported to this meeting.

Other Options Considered

204. The Council has a statutory responsibility to deliver a balanced budget and this report sets out how that can be delivered. The composition of the budget can be 'changed'; and that is why the draft budget is consulted upon through the Overview and Scrutiny Budget Task Group and wider stakeholders.

205. There are no other options than to deliver a balanced budget.

Reasons for Supporting Option Recommended

206. This budget has been built within the financial parameters as determined affordable and sustainable as per the MTFP presented to Cabinet in October which were carried through into the draft budget.

207. The draft budget has been approved by Cabinet and following comprehensive scrutiny by the Overview and Scrutiny Budget Task Group is to be considered sound.

Next Steps in Process

208. If supported the Budget for 2022/23 will be presented to Full Council for approval.

Portfolio Holder's Views

209. As we enter the recovery phase of the Covid19 pandemic the budget should have been easier to set however, with the current economic climate inflating prices, pressure on historical income streams, no increase in core spending power, and savings still to be fully delivered, 2022/23 will be a challenging year for the Council.

210. We do however have a proven track record of delivering, and through digitalisation, transformation and new projects that bring growth to the borough, and financial returns to the Council, I am comfortable that this budget is deliverable. I also acknowledge the work done by the Overview and

Scrutiny Budget Task Group in that while also recognising the challenges presented in 2022/23, concluded the budget proposal to be sound.

211. We will however need to ensure that robust monitoring arrangements remain in place to report progress towards saving targets, and the general pressures coming through as a result of the economic climate so that appropriate and timely action can be taken to address any concerns, including the use of reserves specifically held for these circumstances.

Contact and Email

212. Lee Foreman – lee.foreman@ashford.gov.uk

LIST OF APPENDICES

Part Two	A	Summary of Expenditure
	B	Service Expenditure
	C	Analysis of Reserves
	D	Discretionary Fees
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Part Three	F	HRA Budget, analysed to subjective level
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	J	Treasury Management Strategy Statement
	K	Investment Strategy
Part Six	L	Exceptional Circumstances Policy
Part Seven	M	Robustness of Estimates and Adequacy of Reserves

REVENUE BUDGET				
SERVICE SUMMARY				
Actuals 2020/21 £	Budget 2021/22 £	Projected Outturn 2021/22 £	Service	Budget 2022/23 £
1,292,207	1,173,200	1,191,700	Corporate Policy, Economic Development & Communications	1,163,420
(1,728,850)	(1,269,350)	(1,424,211)	Corporate Property & Projects	(2,034,450)
2,754,547	3,269,790	3,153,840	Finance & IT	3,239,630
1,376,827	914,200	1,009,280	Housing General Fund Services	1,289,150
(50,256)	0	0	Ashford Port Health	0
2,005,036	711,520	909,290	Community Safety and Wellbeing	761,170
74,602	155,350	147,810	HR & Customer Services	176,810
1,180,023	1,233,590	1,316,050	Legal & Democratic Services	1,349,600
4,562,713	3,208,300	3,604,050	Culture	2,534,250
5,176,317	4,738,700	4,839,306	Environmental & Land Management	5,182,840
2,501,050	2,168,090	2,469,100	Planning	2,356,110
19,144,216	16,303,390	17,216,215	Net Expenditure on Services	16,018,530
(4,246,502)	(2,187,810)	(2,703,060)	Capital Charges & Net Interest	(2,153,740)
949,854	0	0	Revenue Funding of Capital Expenditure	0
270,466	276,000	276,000	Levies	282,000
18,109,351	348,860	(153,060)	Contribution to/(from) Balances	1,947,110
34,227,385	14,740,440	14,636,095	ABC Budget Requirement	16,093,900
(5,282,885)	(946,480)	(1,263,480)	Income Government Grant	(485,000)
(18,046,940)	(4,093,390)	(4,093,390)	Retained Business Rates	(4,685,000)
(3,053,420)	(1,908,220)	(1,908,220)	New Homes Bonus	(1,886,050)
0	0	0	Council Tax 2020/21 Surplus	(400,000)
(8,012,237)	(7,792,350)	(7,792,350)	Council Tax	(8,637,850)
(168,097)	0	(421,345)		0

General Fund Budget 2022/23				
Actuals 2020/21 £	Budget 2021/22 £	Projected Outturn 2021/22 £	Department	Budget 2022/23 £
			Corporate Policy, Economic Development & Communications	
252,306	276,120	270,720	Policy and Performance	242,690
574,411	451,800	475,700	Economic Development	467,200
465,490	445,280	445,280	Communications & Marketing	453,530
1,292,207	1,173,200	1,191,700		1,163,420
			Corporate Property & Projects	
(145,535)	17,600	1,150	Project Delivery Team	(30,360)
(107,174)	(10)	(125,990)	Facilities Management	(58,910)
(1,476,141)	(1,286,940)	(1,299,371)	Corporate Property	(1,945,180)
(1,728,850)	(1,269,350)	(1,424,211)		(2,034,450)
			Finance & IT	
(34,004)	26,610	10,180	Accountancy	74,670
501	(20)	(20)	Audit Partnership	70
762,566	778,920	722,650	Benefits Administration	836,890
508,970	367,610	517,380	Council Tax Collection	327,130
(16,979)	30	6,220	Debtors/Debt Recovery	1,900
388,782	35,130	35,130	Miscellaneous Expenditure	29,380
78,798	57,540	37,920	Exchequer	80,790
(848,598)	(280,000)	(280,000)	Housing Benefits Payments	(275,000)
(239,736)	(52,920)	(103,970)	NNDR Collection	(78,620)
1,181,647	1,419,400	1,089,400	Non-Distributed Costs	1,221,100
(44,425)	11,080	92,750	ICT	26,630
30,472	30	30	Telephony	50
803,985	690,750	801,490	Strategic Corporate Costs	824,690
182,568	215,630	224,680	Corporate Management	169,950
2,754,547	3,269,790	3,153,840		3,239,630
			Housing General Fund Services	
186,341	207,030	208,550	Private Sector Housing	184,590
108,047	114,600	115,300	Housing Strategy and Enabling	121,790
948,672	605,150	665,250	Housing Options	963,460
157,062	0	0	Refugee Project	1,980
(23,295)	(12,580)	20,180	Gypsy Site - Chilmington	17,330
1,376,827	914,200	1,009,280		1,289,150
			Ashford Port Health	
(50,256)	0	0	Ashford Port Health	0
(50,256)	0	0		0

General Fund Budget 2022/23				
Actuals 2020/21 £	Budget 2021/22 £	Projected Outturn 2021/22 £	Department	Budget 2022/23 £
			Community Safety and Wellbeing	
746,017	675,220	682,540	Community Safety,AMC,Licencing	787,690
465,700	579,590	509,930	Environmental Health	547,930
793,318	(543,290)	(283,180)	Parking & Engineering	(574,450)
2,005,036	711,520	909,290		761,170
			HR & Customer Services	
108,655	143,730	140,470	Human Resources	158,100
(34,053)	11,620	7,340	Visitor & Call Centre	18,710
74,602	155,350	147,810		176,810
			Legal & Democratic Services	
831,736	791,980	755,580	Democratic Representation	787,170
432,357	378,070	392,230	Electoral Services	417,240
(134,001)	0	15,640	Legal	(6,730)
49,931	63,540	60,890	Mayor	64,630
0	0	91,710	Office of the Leader	87,290
1,180,023	1,233,590	1,316,050		1,349,600
			Culture	
348,015	317,820	318,920	Cultural Services Management	286,530
2,782,321	1,691,040	2,059,680	Leisure Centres	1,022,660
295,965	301,120	305,920	Open Spaces and Conservation	317,650
320,839	315,860	336,000	Single Grants Gateway	345,860
191,991	182,910	184,170	Tourism & Heritage	162,590
623,582	399,550	399,360	Cultural Projects	398,960
4,562,713	3,208,300	3,604,050		2,534,250
			Environmental & Land Management	
243,038	261,410	246,460	Street Scene	175,450
3,304,015	2,986,900	3,102,190	Refuse,Recycling,Street Clean	3,155,960
1,629,265	1,490,390	1,490,656	Grounds Maintenance	1,851,430
5,176,317	4,738,700	4,839,306		5,182,840
			Planning	
82,681	88,310	88,310	Building Control	114,890
1,457,599	1,030,830	1,310,750	Development Manager	1,025,180
(32,085)	(70)	6,000	Land Charges	3,060
64,126	(10)	22,570	Planning Administration	12,550
928,727	1,049,030	1,041,470	Strategic Planning	1,200,430
2,501,049	2,168,090	2,469,100		2,356,110
19,144,216	16,303,390	17,216,215	Net Expenditure on Services	16,018,530
			Other Items	
(4,246,502)	(2,187,810)	(2,703,060)	Capital Charges & Net Interest	(2,153,740)
949,854	0	0	Revenue Funding of Capital Expenditure	0
270,466	276,000	276,000	Levies & Precepts	282,000
18,109,351	348,860	(153,060)	Contributions to/(from) Reserves	1,947,110
34,227,385	14,740,440	14,636,995	ABC Budget Requirement	16,093,900

Analysis of Estimated Reserves

Analysis of Estimates Revenue Reserves	Balance at 31 March 2021	2021/22 Forecast Movement		Balance at 31 March 2022	2022/23 Forecast Movement		Balance at 31 March 2023
		From Reserve	To Reserve		From Reserve	To Reserve	
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
General Fund Balance	2,562	0	0	2,562	0	0	2,562
Earmarked Reserves							
Recovery Project Reserve (now including Victoria Park)	1,063	(802)	0	261	(261)	0	0
Climate Change Delivery Fund	2,000	0	0	2,000	0	575	2,575
Improvement Delivery Fund	3,000	(1,273)	288	2,015	0	1,312	3,327
Economic Growth and Risk Fund	9,000	(2,162)	1,146	7,985	(739)	200	7,446
Fund Future Expenditure (Risk, Legislation, Transformation)	4,553	(69)	66	4,550	0	0	4,550
Provide for Maintenance of Assets	3,500	(99)	650	4,051	0	600	4,651
Provision for Discretionary Spend	23,116	(4,405)	2,151	20,862	(1,000)	2,686	22,548
							0
Required by Statute Reserves and other ring-fenced amounts	5,955	(4,044)	0	1,911	0	0	1,911
Section 31 grants and relief reserves (ring-fenced)	13,000	(13,000)	5,800	5,800	(5,800)	0	0
Developer Contributions	5,971	0	0	5,971	0	0	5,971
Amount ring-fenced, held under statute	24,926	(17,044)	5,800	13,682	(5,800)	0	7,882
Total General Fund Reserve	50,604	(21,449)	7,951	37,106	(6,800)	2,686	32,992

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Charge for the Port Health Services Border Control Post Sevington

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on %	
Common Health Entry Document (CHED-P) - Products of Animal Origin	All Products						
	Up to 6 tonnes	NB		52.12	54.00	3.61%	
	7-45 tonnes (cost per tonnes)	NB		8.53	9.00	5.51%	
	46 tonnes and over	NB		397.87	410.00	3.05%	
	All Products from New Zealand						
	Up to 6 tonnes	NB		40.39	42.00	3.99%	
	7-45 tonnes (cost per tonnes)	NB		6.60	7.00	6.06%	
	46 tonnes and over	NB		308.84	318.00	2.97%	
	Bulk fishery products and feed of animal origin or by-products						
	Up to 500 tonnes	NB		568.40	585.00	2.92%	
	Up to 1,000 tonnes	NB		1,136.79	1171.00	3.01%	
	Up to 2,000 tonnes	NB		2,273.59	2342.00	3.01%	
	More than 2,000 tonnes	NB		3,410.36	3513.00	3.01%	
	Intensified Official Controls, Enhanced Checks (i.e Brazil meat) and Protective Measures						
	Risk category II products (30%)	NB		60.96	63.00	3.35%	
	Risk category III products (15%)	NB		74.02	76.00	2.67%	
	Risk category IV products (5%)	NB		82.72	85.00	2.76%	
	Risk category V products (1%)	NB		86.20	89.00	3.25%	
	If sampled						
	Admin Fee	NB			87.08	90.00	3.35%
	Lab Fee - Assigned by Lab	NB			AT COST	AT COST	

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Charge for the Port Health Services Border Control Post Sevington

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on %
Page 78 Common Health Entry Document (CHED-D) - High Risk Non Animal Origin	Transits through the community					
	Minimum Fee	NB		87.08	90.00	3.35%
	Per additional quarter hour	NB		21.76	22.00	1.10%
	Admin for CHED's not presented on IPAFF's					
	Per CHED entered	NB		10.30	11.00	6.80%
	Photocopy document	NB		1.03	1.00	-2.91%
	Late notification fee					
	Per CHED not submitted before the arrival of the cargo	NB		86.52	89.00	2.87%
	Non compliance charge					
	Per rejected consignment	NB		126.89	131.00	3.24%
	Documentary check	NB		55.72	57.00	2.30%
	Sampling less than 10 sub-samples	NB		85.45	88.00	2.98%
	Sampling 10-59 sub-samples	NB		107.21	110.00	2.60%
	Sampling 60 or more sub-samples	NB		150.76	155.00	2.81%
	Non - compliance charge	NB		126.89	131.00	3.24%
	supervisory fee for disposals	NB		174.15	179.00	2.78%
	Late notification fee	NB		86.52	89.00	2.87%
	Analysts fee - assigned by Lab	NB			AT COST	AT COST
Radiation - Japanese Control Measures	Products of Animal Origin	NB		208.06	214.00	2.85%
	Non animal origin	NB		55.72	57.00	2.30%
	Sampled non-animal origin					
	Identity and sampling	NB		85.45	88.00	2.98%
	Analysis - assigned by Lab	NB		AT COST	AT COST	
	Non compliance	NB		126.89	131.00	3.24%
	Supervisory Fee for Disposal	NB		174.15	179.00	2.78%
	Late notification fee	NB		86.52	89.00	2.87%

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Charge for the Port Health Services Border Control Post Sevington

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on %
Guar Gum from India	Documentary check (CHED)	NB		55.72	57.00	2.30%
	Sampling analysis	NB		85.45	88.00	2.98%
	Analytical cost - Assigned by lab	NB		AT COST	AT COST	
	Non-compliance	NB		126.89	131.00	3.24%
	Supervisory fee for disposal	NB		174.15	179.00	2.78%
	Late notification fee	NB		86.52	89.00	2.87%
Plastic Kitchenware - China and Hong Kong control measures	6-10 Certificates	NB		64.22	66.00	2.77%
	11-20 Certificates	NB		89.01	92.00	3.36%
	21+ Certificates	NB		113.79	117.00	2.82%
	Identy, Physical Check and Sampling	NB		68.72	71.00	3.32%
	Analytical cost - Assigned by Lab	NB		AT COST	AT COST	
	Confirmatory test for nylon - Assigned by Lab	NB		AT COST	AT COST	
	Non - compliance	NB		126.89	131.00	3.24%
	Late notification fee	NB		86.52	89.00	2.87%
Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing (IUU) Ashford Port Health uses a per consignment basis for its charges. Where multiple catch certificates are submitted for the same consignment which include high and low risk country certificates, the higher risk charge is applied	High Risk 1-5	NB		45.06	46.00	2.09%
	High Risk 6-10	NB		67.60	70.00	3.55%
	High Risk 11-20	NB		78.87	81.00	2.70%
	High Risk 21+	NB		90.14	93.00	3.17%
	Low Risk 1-5	NB		22.54	23.00	2.04%
	Low Risk 6-10	NB		39.43	41.00	3.98%
	Low Risk 11-20	NB		50.70	52.00	2.56%
	Low Risk 21+	NB		61.96	64.00	3.29%
	Formal Verification/Movement Control Notice	NB		87.08	90.00	3.35%
	Per quarter hour	NB		21.76	22.00	1.10%
	Non-compliance	NB		126.89	131.00	3.24%
	Late notification fee	NB		86.52	89.00	2.87%

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Charge for the Port Health Services Border Control Post Sevington

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on %
Organic Import Controls	Current national flat rate	NB		55.62	57.00	2.48%
	Late notification fee	NB		86.52	89.00	2.87%
	Movement control	NB		126.89	131.00	3.24%
	Non compliance charge	NB		126.89	131.00	3.24%
Genetically Modified (GN) Controls in rice and Rice	Identity checks, physical check and sampling	NB		55.72	57.00	2.30%
	Analyst Fee	NB		85.45	88.00	2.98%
Products from China Documentary Check	Reduced sample (processed product) - Assigned by lab Non-	NB		126.89	131.00	3.24%
	Supervisory fee for disposal	NB		174.15	179.00	2.78%
Export Health Certificates	Export Health Certificate £100 for preparation and first hour. Subsequent hours charged at Officer Rate	NB		100.00	100.00	0.00%
	Animal Feed Import, £54 document checking, £100 officer time sampling and Lab sampling recharged at cost	NB		154.00	154.00	0.00%
	APHA Certificate recharged at cost	NB		AT COST	AT COST	
Other Charges	Disposal collection fee:					
	Up to 0.9 tonnes in 3.5T Lorry	NB		236.32	243.00	2.83%
	Lorry Up to 1.5 tonnes in 7.5T Lorry	NB		236.32	243.00	2.83%
	Lorry Up to 10 tonnes in 18T	NB		287.83	296.00	2.84%
	Lorry Up to 20 tonnes in artic	NB		386.25	398.00	3.04%
	Refund of PHILIS deposit	NB		28.00	29.00	3.57%
	Disposal by incineration NOA per kg	NB		0.26	0.26	0.00%
	Disposal by incineration POAO per kg	NB		0.35	0.35	0.00%
	Staff hourly rate	NB		87.08	90.00	3.35%
	Certificate of destruction	NB		25.75	27.00	4.85%
	Non compliance charge for all products without an official import	NB		126.89	131.00	3.24%

VAT Indicator:

NB = Non Business no VAT

VT = Exclusive of VAT

EX = Exempt from VAT

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Cemetery Charges

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Interments						
Interments in a new unpurchased grave						
(1) Interment of standard sized coffin in new grave - includes digging, purchase of right of burial for 30 years and temporary wooden marker with plaque	ADULT (Resident):					
	Single grave depth	NB	1,190.00	1,240.00	1,275.00	2.82%
	Single grave depth with boarding (excludes Tenterden cemetery and woodland graves)	NB	1,417.00	1,467.00	1,510.00	2.93%
	Double grave depth (excludes Tenterden)	NB	1,310.00	1,360.00	1,400.00	2.94%
	Triple grave depth (excludes Tenterden)	NB	1,530.00	1,580.00	1,625.00	2.85%
	ADULT (Non-resident):					
	Single grave depth	NB	3,570.00	4,960.00	5,100.00	2.82%
	Single grave depth with boarding (excludes Tenterden cemetery and woodland graves)	NB	4,251.00	5,868.00	6,040.00	2.93%
	Double grave depth (excludes Tenterden)	NB	3,930.00	5,440.00	5,600.00	2.94%
	Triple grave depth (excludes Tenterden)	NB	4,590.00	6,320.00	6,500.00	2.85%
	CHILD (Non-resident):					
	Single grave depth: under 3 months	NB	85.00	85.00	87.00	2.35%
	Single grave depth: 3 - 5 years	NB	85.00	85.00	87.00	2.35%
	Single grave depth: 6 - 18 years	NB	275.00	275.00	283.00	2.91%
(2) Interment of casket style or oversized coffin (<30") in new grave - includes digging, purchase of right of burial for 30 years and temporary wooden marker with plaque. NOTE: Oversized coffins or caskets require two grave spaces	ADULT (Resident):					
	Single grave depth	NB	2,389.00	2,420.00	2,485.00	2.69%
	Single grave depth with boarding (excludes Tenterden)	NB	2,834.00	2,874.00	2,955.00	2.82%
	Double grave depth (excludes Tenterden)	NB	2,620.00	2,660.00	2,735.00	2.82%
	Triple grave depth (excludes Tenterden)	NB	3,060.00	3,100.00	3,185.00	2.74%
	Single grave depth	NB	7,140.00	9,680.00	9,940.00	2.69%
	Single grave depth with boarding (excludes Tenterden)	NB	8,502.00	11,496.00	11,820.00	2.82%
	Double grave depth (excludes Tenterden)	NB	7,860.00	10,640.00	10,940.00	2.82%
Triple grave depth (excludes Tenterden)	NB	9,180.00	12,400.00	12,740.00	2.74%	

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Cemetery Charges

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Interments						
Interments in a reopen grave or grave that has been pre-purchased						
(3) Reopen of existing grave or pre-purchased grave for interment of standard coffin - includes digging but excludes temporary wooden marker with plaque	ADULT: (Resident):					
	Single grave depth	NB	560.00	640.00	657.00	2.66%
	Single grave depth with boarding (excludes Tenterden) *	NB		867.00	892.00	2.88%
	Double grave depth (excludes Tenterden)	NB	690.00	760.00	782.00	2.89%
	Triple grave depth (excludes Tenterden)	NB	985.00	980.00	1,007.00	2.76%
	ADULT (Non Resident):					
	Single grave depth	NB	1,920.00	2,560.00	2,628.00	2.66%
	Single grave depth with boarding (excludes Tenterden) *	NB		3,468.00	3,568.00	2.88%
	Double grave depth (excludes Tenterden)	NB	2,070.00	3,400.00	3,128.00	-8.00%
	Triple grave depth (excludes Tenterden)	NB	2,955.00	4,280.00	4,028.00	-5.89%
	Under 5 years *	NB	n/a	85.00	87.00	2.35%
6 - 18 years *	NB	n/a	275.00	283.00	2.91%	
(4) Reopen of existing grave or pre-purchased grave for interment of casket or oversized coffin (<30") where possible. Includes digging but excludes temporary wooden marked with plaque NOTE: Oversized coffins or caskets require two grave spaces, can only be dug if space is available and does not encroach on another purchased grave	ADULT (Resident):					
	Single grave depth *	NB	n/a	1,280.00	1,310.00	2.34%
	Single grave depth with boarding (excludes Tenterden) *	NB	n/a	1,734.00	1,780.00	2.65%
	Double grave depth (excludes Tenterden) *	NB	n/a	1,520.00	1,560.00	2.63%
	Triple grave depth (excludes Tenterden) *	NB	n/a	1,960.00	2,010.00	2.55%
	ADULT (Non-resident):					
	Single grave depth *	NB	n/a	5,120.00	5,240.00	2.34%
	Single grave depth with boarding (excludes Tenterden) *	NB	n/a	6,936.00	7,120.00	2.65%
	Double grave depth (excludes Tenterden) *	NB	n/a	6,080.00	6,240.00	2.63%
Triple grave depth (excludes Tenterden) *	NB	n/a	7,840.00	8,040.00	2.55%	

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Cemetery Charges

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Interments						
Interment of Ashes in new unpurchased cremation plot						
(5) Interment of ashes in new cremation plot - includes digging, purchase of right of burial for 30 years and temporary wooden marker with plaque	(Resident):					
	Large plot (capacity for upto 4 interment of ashes)	NB	427.00	500.00	515.00	3.00%
	Small plot (capacity for up to 2 interment of ashes)	NB	387.00	365.00	375.00	2.74%
	(Non Resident):					
	Large plot (capacity for upto 4 interment of ashes)	NB	1,281.00	2,000.00	2,060.00	3.00%
	Small plot (capacity for upto 2 interment of ashes)	NB	1,160.00	1,460.00	1,500.00	2.74%
Interment of Ashes in an existing grave or ashes plot or a grave or ashes plot that has been pre-purchased						
(6) Reopen of burial plot for interment of ashes	(Resident):					
	For one set of ashes. Further sets of ashes at same time will be charged as per item (7)	NB	118.00	139.00	143.00	2.88%
	(Non Resident):					
	For one set of ashes. Further sets of ashes at same time will be charge as per item (7)	NB	354.00	556.00	572.00	2.88%
Interment of ashes interred at same time of another burial in same grave or ashes plot						
(7) Interment of single set ashes buried same time as a coffin burial or another set of ashes in same grave or burial plot. Fee charged for each additional set	Per set of ashes *	NB	n/a	70.00	72.00	2.86%
	(Non Resident):					
	Per set of ashes *	NB	n/a	280.00	288.00	2.86%

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Cemetery Charges

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Memorials						
Memorial permit giving permission to erect a memorial						
(8) Application for a memorials for graves in all cemeteries excluding Woodland Sections where memorials are not permitted. One application required per placement of memorial required. NOTE: Not all sections of the cemtery are permitted kerbstones, these sections are detailed in the rules and regulations	Adult (Resident)					
	Headstone or tablet including inscriptions	NB	180.00	200.00	205.00	2.50%
	Kerbstone including cover slab and inscriptions	NB	255.00	200.00	205.00	2.50%
	Placement of a vase including inscriptions	NB	85.00	85.00	87.00	2.35%
	Adult (Non Resident):					
	Headstone or tablet including inscriptions	NB	540.00	800.00	820.00	2.50%
	Kerbstone including cover slab and inscriptions	NB	765.00	800.00	820.00	2.50%
	Placement of a vase including inscriptions	NB	255.00	340.00	348.00	2.35%
	Child - up to 18 years (Non Resident):					
	Headstone or tablet including inscriptions	NB	180.00	200.00	205.00	2.50%
	Kerbstone including cover slab and inscriptions	NB	255.00	200.00	205.00	2.50%
Placement of a vase including inscriptions *	NB		85.00	87.00	2.35%	
Inscription Application						
(9) Application for additional inscription on existing memorial.	(Resident):					
	New inscription on an existing memorial	VT	60.00	85.00	87.00	2.35%
	(Non Resident):					
New inscription on an existing memorial	VT	180.00	340.00	348.00	2.35%	
Exclusive Right of Burial						
Purchase of Exclusive Right of Burial						
(10) Purchase of right of burial for 30 years (applies to pre-purchase of graves and where burial rights that were not purchaed prior to introduction of the composite fee)	(Resident)					
	One grave space	NB	540.00	540.00	556.00	2.96%
	Large cremation plot	NB	301.00	301.00	310.00	2.99%
	Small cremation plot	NB	166.00	166.00	170.00	2.88%
	(Non Resident)					
	One grave space	NB	1,620.00	2,160.00	2,224.00	2.96%
	Large cremation plot	NB	903.00	1,204.00	1,240.00	2.99%
Small cremation plot	NB	498.00	664.00	680.00	2.41%	

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Cemetery Charges

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %	
Memorials							
Memorial permit giving permission to erect a memorial							
Page 85	(11) Extension of a right of burial for period of 5 years	(Resident)					
		One grave space	EX	75.00	90.00	92.50	2.78%
		Large cremation plot	EX	n/a	50.00	51.50	3.00%
		Small cremation plot	EX	n/a	28.00	28.50	1.79%
		(Non Resident)					
		One grave space	EX	225.00	360.00	370.00	2.78%
		Large cremation plot	EX	n/a	200.00	206.00	3.00%
	Small cremation plot	EX	n/a	112.00	114.00	1.79%	
(12) Transfer of a right of burial	(Resident)						
	Per transfer completed	EX	75.00	90.00	92.00	2.22%	
	Per transfer completed *	EX	n/a	360.00	368.00	2.22%	
Exhumations							
(13) Exhumation and reinterment in same grave		VT	AT COST	AT COST	AT COST		
(14) Exhumation and reinterment in another grave in ABC cemetery		EX	AT COST	AT COST	AT COST		
(15) Exhumation for transportation to non ABC cemetery		EX	AT COST	AT COST	AT COST		
Other Cemetery Charges							
(16) Selection of grave space by customer instead of using next available space		EX	100.00	105.00	108.00	2.86%	
(17) Incorrect arrival time in excess of 30 mins at cemetery		NB	105.00	105.00	108.00	2.86%	
(18) Family history search for genealogy purposes	Up to 3 names in single application	VT	30.00	30.00	30.00	0.00%	
	4 - 10 names in same application (per name) **	VT			5.00		
	11+ names in same application (per name) **	VT			2.50		

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Cemetery Charges

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21	Charge 2021/22	Charge 2022/23	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22
			£	£	£	%
(19) Temporary Marker with plaque for reopened graves or new graves that were prepurchased - Excludes woodland graves	Wooden cross	VT	60.00	60.00	62.00	3.33%
	Wooden plaque holder	VT	n/a	50.00	51.50	3.00%
(20) Additional memorial plaque for woodland grave or wooden marker	Additional plaque for reopen burial or interment in a pre-purchased grave, or replacement of existing plaque	VT	n/a	45.00	46.25	2.78%
(21) Tree Replacement in woodland section (Wybrook or Tenterden cemetery). Includes purchase and planting. Excludes a tree planting ceremony	Replacement of tree that has failed after being planted for more than 12 months.	VT	n/a	100.00	103.00	3.00%
(22) Cancellation of service	Fee chargeable if grave has been dug and date is rescheduled or interment has repeat rescheduling	NB	n/a	105.00	108.00	2.86%
(24) Reservation Fee to secure burial plot for a six month period. Amount payable is deducted from total cost when paid in full. No refund if burial plot is not fully purchased within six months.	(Resident)					
	One grave space	NB	n/a	108.00	111.00	2.78%
	Large cremation plot	NB	n/a	60.00	62.00	3.33%
	Small cremation plot	NB	n/a	33.00	34.00	3.03%
	(Non Resident)					
	One grave space	NB	n/a	432.00	444.00	2.78%
	Large cremation plot	NB	n/a	240.00	248.00	3.33%
Small cremation plot	NB	n/a	132.00	136.00	3.03%	

** new fee being charged

VAT Indicator:

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DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Property Services

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Licences - valuation	If external valuers are appointed, the charge will be the amount invoiced by the valuer.	EX	at cost recovery	at cost recovery	at cost recovery	n/a
Licences - inspection/administration	The fee may depend upon whether a new boundary fence needs to be erected.	VT	205.00	250.00	250.00	0.00%
Land sales - valuation	If external valuers are appointed, the charge will be the amount invoiced by the valuer. Initial payment of £500 is requested	EX	at cost recovery	at cost recovery	at cost recovery	n/a
Land sales - inspection/administration	Cost of the site inspection £324 up to sales value of £2500, where sales value exceeds £2500 cost will be £334 + 1% of sales value. Reflects more appropriate charge.	VT	315.00	324.00	334.00	3.09%
Easements - valuation	If external valuers are appointed, the charge will be the amount invoiced by the valuer.	EX	at cost recovery	at cost recovery	at cost recovery	n/a
Easements - administration		VT	138.00	200.00	200.00	0.00%
Release of covenant - valuation	If external valuers are appointed, the charge will be the amount invoiced by the valuer.	EX	at cost recovery	at cost recovery	at cost recovery	n/a
Release of covenant - administration		VT	138.00	300.00	300.00	0.00%
Boundary disputes	Charge only applies if unlawful encroachment on Council land is found to have occurred. Final cost will depend upon complexity of dispute.	EX	205.00	211.00	217.00	2.84%
Development Administration Fee	To cover overheads in relation to officer time for processing, site visits for monitoring purposes for duration of works, insurance checks, review of method statements and risk assessments.	VT	436.00	449.00	462.00	2.90%
AutoCAD plan production fee	Production of drawings for the purpose of ABC legal agreements	VT	109.00	112.00	115.00	2.68%
Wayleaves - inspection/administration		VT	138.00	250.00	250.00	0.00%

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Property Services

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Garage and Parking Space Fees and Charges						
Garage and Parking Space Fees and Charges	Council Tenant Low per week	EX	10.50	11.00	11.50	4.55%
	Council Tenant High per week	EX	10.50	11.00	11.50	4.55%
	Non Council Tenant Low (plus VAT) per week	VT	12.60	13.20	13.80	4.55%
	Non Council Tenant High (plus VAT) per week	VT	12.60	13.20	13.80	4.55%
	Deposit for all new Garage Tenancies (new charge)	EX		One months rent	One months rent	
	Parking Spaces (on garage sites only) per year in advance (new charge in 20/21 as we will be demolishing a number of garage sites and creating parking spaces, this will then be in place going forward)	VT	200.00	210.00	220.00	4.76%
<i>In line with the agreed Garage Commercialisation Strategy all profit of monies received for the sale of garage sites into the General</i>						

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DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

LEGAL & ELECTORAL SERVICES

Legal Fees

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
S9 Agreements	(including caution/note on Register)	NB	320.00	330.00	340.00	3.03%
S9 Transfers	Plus Land Registry Fees	NB	320.00	330.00	340.00	3.03%
S106 (and supplementary) deeds		NB	933.00	961.00	990.00	3.02%
Grazing Licences		NB	117.00	121.00	125.00	3.31%
Licences to Assign		NB	214.00	220.00	227.00	3.18%
Sales or Easements	Up to £2,500 in value	NB	306.00	315.00	324.00	2.86%
Sales or Easements	over £2,500 in value - Basic Fee Charge as listed plus 1% of actual sale price	NB	344.00	354.00	365.00	3.11%
Commercial Leases		NB	333.00	343.00	353.00	2.92%
Commercial lease renewals		NB	225.00	232.00	239.00	3.02%
Surrenders		NB	204.00	210.00	216.00	2.86%
Landlord consent etc		NB	108.00	111.00	114.00	2.70%
Transfer of Equity (mortgage)		NB	226.00	233.00	240.00	3.00%
Redemptions		NB	117.00	121.00	125.00	3.31%
Mortgagees Enquiries		NB	213.00	219.00	226.00	3.20%
Deed of Postponement		NB	97.00	100.00	103.00	3.00%
Release of expired Statutory Charge		NB	104.00	107.00	110.00	2.80%
Waiver (Improvement Grant)		NB	104.00	107.00	110.00	2.80%
Notice of Charge		NB	75.00	77.00	79.00	2.60%
Counterpart Lease		NB	75.00	77.00	79.00	2.60%
Engross Transfer/conveyance		NB	54.00	56.00	58.00	3.57%
Notice to Assign		NB	75.00	77.00	79.00	2.60%
Wayleaves		NB	187.00	193.00	199.00	3.11%

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

LEGAL & ELECTORAL SERVICES

Legal Fees

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
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IMPORTANT NOTE: The above represent a minimum level of charge, not a fixed level of charge.

Where the commercial value of the time worked on a matter exceeds the minimum charge stated above, the commercial value of the time (at a fair and reasonable hourly rate reflecting the skill and knowledge applied by the fee-earner; the urgency, importance, complexity and novelty of the work; the value involved; and all other relevant circumstances) will be charged unless it is deemed by the The Solicitor to the Council (or, in his absence, a Principal Solicitor) to be inappropriate or unreasonable to charge the full commercial value.

Electoral Services

Postal votes pack	Postal votes pack (Charge to Parish Councils for by-elections)	VT	Actual	Actual	Actual	
Poll Cards	Poll card (Charge to Parish Councils for by-elections)	VT	Actual	Actual	Actual	
	Statutory Charges (restricted availability for full register and overseas lists)					
Sales of full and edited register	Data £20 plus £1.50 per 1,000 entries or part of 1,000	NB	21.50	21.50	21.50	0.00%
Sales of full and edited register	Printed £10 plus £5 per 1,000 or part of 1,000	NB	15.00	15.00	15.00	0.00%
Overseas electors List	Data £20 plus £1.50 per 100 entries or part of 100	NB	21.50	21.50	21.50	0.00%
Overseas electors List	Printed £10 plus £1.50 per 100 or part of 100	NB	11.50	11.50	11.50	0.00%

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DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

LICENSING FEES

Item	Statutory or Discretionary	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Licensing Act							
Premises - new application	Statutory	Fee band - A	NB	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00%
		Fee band - B	NB	190.00	190.00	190.00	0.00%
		Fee band - C	NB	315.00	315.00	315.00	0.00%
		Fee band - D - if exclusively or primarily for supply, sale or consumption of alcohol <u>double</u> the fee	NB	450.00	450.00	450.00	0.00%
		Fee band - E - if exclusively or primarily for supply, sale or consumption of alcohol <u>triple</u> the fee	NB	635.00	635.00	635.00	0.00%
		Premises allowing 5000+ people attract additional fees	See regulation for detail				
Premises - annual fee	Statutory	Fee band - A	NB	70.00	70.00	70.00	0.00%
		Fee band - B	NB	180.00	180.00	180.00	0.00%
		Fee band - C	NB	295.00	295.00	295.00	0.00%
		Fee band - D - if exclusively or primarily for supply, sale or consumption of alcohol <u>double</u> the fee	NB	320.00	320.00	320.00	0.00%
		Fee band - E - if exclusively or primarily for supply, sale or consumption of alcohol <u>triple</u> the fee	NB	350.00	350.00	350.00	0.00%
		Premises allowing 5000+ people attract additional fees	See regulation for detail				
Personal	Statutory		NB	37.00	37.00	37.00	0.00%
Temporary Event Notice	Statutory		NB	21.00	21.00	21.00	0.00%
Change of address notification	Statutory		NB	10.50	10.50	10.50	0.00%
Replacement licence etc (due to loss/theft etc)	Statutory		NB	10.50	10.50	10.50	0.00%

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

LICENSING FEES

Item	Statutory or Discretionary	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21	Charge 2021/22	Charge 2022/23	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22
				£	£	£	%
Licensing Act							
Designated premises supervisor variation	Statutory		NB	23.00	23.00	23.00	0.00%
Premises licence transfer	Statutory		NB	23.00	23.00	23.00	0.00%
Club registration change	Statutory		NB	10.50	10.50	10.50	0.00%
Club name or rules notification	Statutory		NB	10.50	10.50	10.50	0.00%
Interim Authority Notice	Statutory		NB	23.00	23.00	23.00	0.00%
Provisional Statement	Statutory		NB	315.00	315.00	315.00	0.00%
Freeholder notification of licensing matters	Statutory		NB	21.00	21.00	21.00	0.00%
Minor Variation	Statutory		NB	89.00	89.00	89.00	0.00%
Check & send (pre-app) service	Discretionary		VT	N/A	120.00	120.00	0.00%
Animal Welfare and Public Health Licences							
Dangerous Wild Animals	Discretionary	New Licence (2 year licence)	NB	977.00	977.00	977.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	Renewal (2 year licence)	NB	669.00	669.00	669.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	Variation	NB	344.00	344.00	344.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	Concurrent 2nd application	NB	87.00	87.00	87.00	0.00%
Zoos	Discretionary	Consideration	NB	1,218.00	1,218.00	1,218.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	Licence (4 year licence)	NB	2,008.00	2,008.00	2,008.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	Renewal (6 year licence)	NB	3,013.00	3,013.00	3,013.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	Dispensation - 14(1)(a)	NB	491.00	491.00	491.00	0.00%
Boarding of animals	Discretionary	(New app) Application fee - up to 50 animals	NB	260.00	260.00	260.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(New app) Grant fee - up to 50 animals	NB	200.00	200.00	200.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(New app) Application fee - 51 or more animals	NB	295.00	295.00	295.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(New app) Grant fee - 51 or more animals	NB	230.00	230.00	230.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(Renewal) Application fee - up to 50 animals	NB	225.00	225.00	225.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(Renewal) Grant fee - up to 50 animals	NB	200.00	200.00	200.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(Renewal) Application fee - 51 or more animals	NB	255.00	255.00	255.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(Renewal) Grant fee - 51 or more animals	NB	230.00	230.00	230.00	0.00%

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

LICENSING FEES

Item	Statutory or Discretionary	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Animal Welfare and Public Health Licences							
Selling of Animals	Discretionary	(New app) Application fee	NB	280.00	280.00	280.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(New app) Grant fee	NB	215.00	215.00	215.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(Renewal) Application fee	NB	240.00	240.00	240.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(Renewal) Grant fee	NB	215.00	215.00	215.00	0.00%
Home boarding or day care	Discretionary	(New app) Application fee	NB	245.00	245.00	245.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(New app) Grant fee	NB	180.00	180.00	180.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(Renewal) Application fee	NB	210.00	210.00	210.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(Renewal) Grant fee	NB	180.00	180.00	180.00	0.00%
Riding Establishments	Discretionary	(New app) Application fee - up to 10 horses	NB	280.00	280.00	280.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(New app) Grant fee - up to 10 horses	NB	215.00	215.00	215.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(New app) Application fee - 11 or more horses	NB	310.00	310.00	310.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(New app) Grant fee - 11 or more horses	NB	245.00	245.00	245.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(Renewal) Application fee - up to 10 horses	NB	240.00	240.00	240.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(Renewal) Grant fee - up to 10 horses	NB	215.00	215.00	215.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(Renewal) Application fee - 11 or more horses	NB	270.00	270.00	270.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(Renewal) Grant fee - 11 or more horses	NB	245.00	245.00	245.00	0.00%
Keeping animals for exhibition	Discretionary	(New app) Application fee	NB	230.00	230.00	230.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(New app) Grant fee	NB	165.00	165.00	165.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(Renewal) Application fee	NB	190.00	190.00	190.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(Renewal) Grant fee	NB	165.00	165.00	165.00	0.00%

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

LICENSING FEES

Item	Statutory or Discretionary	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Animal Welfare and Public Health Licences							
Breeding Establishments	Discretionary	(New app) Application fee - up to 5 dogs	NB	230.00	230.00	230.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(New app) Grant fee - up to 5 dogs	NB	165.00	165.00	165.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(New app) Application fee - 6-10 dogs	NB	245.00	245.00	245.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(New app) Grant fee - 6-10 dogs	NB	180.00	180.00	180.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(New app) Application fee - 11+ dogs	NB	260.00	260.00	260.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(New app) Grant fee - 11+ dogs	NB	200.00	200.00	200.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(Renewal) Application fee - up to 5 dogs	NB	190.00	190.00	190.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(Renewal) Grant fee - up to 5 dogs	NB	165.00	165.00	165.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(Renewal) Application fee - 6-10 dogs	NB	210.00	210.00	210.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(Renewal) Grant fee - 6-10 dogs	NB	180.00	180.00	180.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(Renewal) Application fee - 11+ dogs	NB	225.00	225.00	225.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	(Renewal) Grant fee - 11+ dogs	NB	200.00	200.00	200.00	0.00%
Variation to increase animals or activities	Discretionary	Application fee	NB	90.00	90.00	90.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	Grant fee	NB	40.00	40.00	40.00	0.00%
Variation to reduce animals or activities	Discretionary	Grant fee	NB	40.00	40.00	40.00	0.00%
Request for re-rating inspection	Discretionary	Application fee	NB	90.00	90.00	90.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	Grant fee	NB	40.00	40.00	40.00	0.00%
Public Health Licences *							
Acupuncture	Discretionary	Initial registration practitioner/premises	NB	177.00	177.00	150.00	-15.25%
	Discretionary	Additional practitioner/premises	NB	109.00	109.00	70.00	-35.78%
	Discretionary	Minor variation	NB	30.00	30.50	30.50	0.00%
Tattooing (including semi-permanent skin-colouring)	Discretionary	Initial registration practitioner/premises	NB	342.00	200.00	150.00	-25.00%
	Discretionary	Additional practitioner/premises	NB	109.00	109.00	70.00	-35.78%
	Discretionary	Minor variation	NB	30.00	30.50	30.50	0.00%

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

LICENSING FEES

Item	Statutory or Discretionary	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Public Health Licences *							
Electrolysis	Discretionary	Initial registration practitioner/premises	NB	177.00	200.00	150.00	-25.00%
	Discretionary	Additional practitioner/premises	NB	109.00	109.00	70.00	-35.78%
	Discretionary	Minor variation	NB	30.00	30.50	30.50	0.00%
Cosmetic Piercing (excluding ear piercing)	Discretionary	Initial registration practitioner/premises	NB	342.00	200.00	150.00	-25.00%
	Discretionary	Additional practitioner/premises	NB	109.00	109.00	70.00	-35.78%
	Discretionary	Minor variation	NB	30.00	30.50	30.50	0.00%
Ear Piercing	Discretionary	Initial registration practitioner/premises	NB	177.00	200.00	150.00	-25.00%
	Discretionary	Additional practitioner/premises	NB	30.00	30.50	70.00	129.51%
	Discretionary	Minor variation	NB	30.00	30.50	30.50	0.00%
Sex Establishments Licence							
Sex Shops, Sex Cinemas and Sexual Entertainment Venue Licences	Discretionary	Grant	NB	3,397.00	3,499.00	3,499.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	Renewal	NB	324.00	334.00	334.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	Transfer	NB	324.00	334.00	334.00	0.00%
Street Trading and Consents							
Street Trading Licence	Discretionary	Yearly	NB	78.00	81.00	83.00	2.47%
Ashford Town Market pitch fee (per ft)	Discretionary	Collected by DD	NB	1.10	1.10	1.10	0.00%
Casual Street Trading Licence/Consent For One Off Event (per stall)	Discretionary	Grant	NB	20.00	21.00	21.50	2.38%
Casual Street Trading Licence for Market	Discretionary	Monthly	NB	30.00	31.00	32.00	3.23%
Street Trading Consent	Discretionary	Yearly	NB	79.00	81.00	83.00	2.47%
New Site Street Trading Consent - static	Discretionary	Grant	NB	110.00	113.00	116.00	2.65%

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

LICENSING FEES

Item	Statutory or Discretionary	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Street Trading and Consents							
New Site Street Trading Consent - short term static	Discretionary	Grant - 1 site £100 (£25 extra for each additional site, i.e. £125 for 2 sites, £150 for 3 sites)	NB	£105 per site plus £27 per additional site	£106 per site plus £28 per additional site	£106 per site plus £28 per additional site	
Hawker Street Trading Consent	Discretionary	Yearly	NB	79.00	81.00	83.00	2.47%
Town Centre Commercial Booking	Discretionary	Daily (Monday - Friday, Sunday).For 4 consecutive days deduct £100 from total cost 5 consecutive days deduct £150, and for 6 consecutive days deduct £200)	NB	156.00	156.00	156.00	0.00%
Town Centre Commercial Booking	Discretionary	Small, local businesses (and charity collections by professional canvassing companies) 1-7 day block (flat fee)	NB	N/A	40.00	40.00	0.00%
Town Centre Commercial Booking	Discretionary	1 day (Saturday)	NB	205.00	205.00	205.00	0.00%
Street Trading Consent Rents							
Furners Wood Lay-by - cherry stall	Discretionary	Monthly rents	NB	158.00	163.00	168.00	3.07%
Furners Wood Lay-by - hot food	Discretionary	Monthly rents	NB	237.00	244.00	251.00	2.87%
Great Chart - A28 Tenterden bound - Food	Discretionary	Monthly rents	NB	237.00	244.00	251.00	2.87%
Great Chart - A28 Tenterden bound - Non Food	Discretionary	Monthly rents	NB	158.00	163.00	168.00	3.07%
Great Chart - A28 Ashford bound - Food	Discretionary	Monthly rents	NB	237.00	244.00	251.00	2.87%
Great Chart - A28 Ashford bound Non Food	Discretionary	Monthly rents	NB	158.00	163.00	168.00	3.07%
Hothfield - A20 Maidstone bound - Non Food	Discretionary	Monthly rents	NB	158.00	163.00	168.00	3.07%
Hothfield - A20 Maidstone bound - Food	Discretionary	Monthly rents	NB	237.00	244.00	251.00	2.87%
Hothfield - A20 Ashford bound - Non Food	Discretionary	Monthly rents	NB	158.00	163.00	168.00	3.07%
Hothfield - A20 Ashford bound - Food	Discretionary	Monthly rents	NB	237.00	244.00	251.00	2.87%
Henwood	Discretionary	Monthly rents	NB	218.00	224.00	231.00	3.13%
Recreation Ground Road car park	Discretionary	Monthly rents	NB	401.00	413.00	420.00	1.69%
Potters Corner, Hothfield	Discretionary	Monthly rents	NB	237.00	244.00	251.00	2.87%
Hall Avenue, Sevington	Discretionary	Max 28 days use per year	NB	253.00	261.00	269.00	3.07%
Chilham Mill	Discretionary		NB	237.00	244.00	251.00	2.87%

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

LICENSING FEES

Item	Statutory or Discretionary	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Council Land							
Charity and Community Events	Discretionary		NB	40.00	40.00	40.00	0.00%
Commercial: Small	Discretionary	per operating day	NB	292.00	292.00	292.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	per non-operating day	NB	200.00	200.00	200.00	0.00%
Commercial: Medium	Discretionary	per operating day	NB	600.00	600.00	600.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	per non-operating day	NB	200.00	200.00	200.00	0.00%
Commercial: Large	Discretionary	per operating day	NB	1,200.00	1,200.00	1,200.00	0.00%
	Discretionary	per non-operating day	NB	200.00	200.00	200.00	0.00%
Safety Advisory Group							
SAAG application	Discretionary		NB	40.00	40.00	40.00	0.00%
Head closure application s21 TPCA 1847	Discretionary		NB	25.00	25.00	25.00	0.00%
Food Hygiene							
Level 1 course	Discretionary		EX	35.00	35.00	35.00	0.00%
Level 2 course	Discretionary		EX	48.00	48.00	48.00	0.00%
Re-sit (at time of next course)	Discretionary		EX	18.00	18.00	18.00	0.00%
Re-sit (oral)	Discretionary		EX	42.00	42.00	42.00	0.00%
Food Safety Charges							
Food surrender inspection and issuing of certificate	Discretionary	Set fee for first hour, then officers hourly rate thereafter.	NB	100.00	103.00	106.00	2.91%
Disposal/tipping costs charge at cost	Charged by tip		NB	Cost recovery	Cost recovery	Cost recovery	N/A
Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (FHRS) re-inspection to rescore following request from the food business operator	Discretionary		NB	N/A	90.00	90.00	N/A
Food safety advisory visits - to include a 2 hour consultation, follow up reports and supporting documentation.	Discretionary		NB	N/A	120.00	120.00	N/A
Food Export - confirmation enforcement / compliance. (Not EHC)	Discretionary	Original with seal	NB	60.00	75.00	75.00	0.00%

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

LICENSING FEES

Item	Statutory or Discretionary	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Private Water Supplies							
Private Water Supplies (England) Regulations 2016 Risk assessment	Statutory	Time taken to carry out the risk assessment (including travel and administration) at the officers hourly rate. This must be carried out at least every five years for each supply.	NB	N/A	Up to £500	Up to £500	N/A
Private Water Supplies (England) Regulations 2016 Sampling visit	Statutory	Time taken to carry out the sampling (including travel and administration) at the (sampling and administration) officers' hourly rate. Charge for a visit and to take a sample + administrative costs (including arranging with laboratory and invoicing).	NB	N/A	Up to £100	Up to £100	N/A
Private Water Supplies (England) Regulations 2016 Investigation e.g. of a complaint or a breach of a regulatory standard	Statutory	Time taken to carry out the investigation (including travel and administration) at the officers hourly rate.	NB	N/A	Up to £100	Up to £100	N/A
Private Water Supplies (England) Regulations 2016 Granting an authorisation	Statutory	Time taken to carry out the work involved in granting an authorisation at the officers and administrative officers hourly rates. This follows an application by the owner of a supply for permission to breach a standard temporarily whilst remedial work is carried out	NB	N/A	Up to £100	Up to £100	N/A
Private Water Supplies (England) Regulations 2016 Sample analysis at a laboratory	Statutory	Actual charge levied by the laboratory up to the maximum. Check monitoring is carried out to ensure that water complies with standards. Where possible it is carried out at the same time as any requirement for audit monitoring, to keep cost down. Single/small supply rates £25 and large/commercial supplies £100.	NB	N/A	Up to £100	Up to £100	N/A
Miscellaneous							
Scrap Metal Site Licence	Discretionary		NB	334.00	344.00	354.00	2.91%
Scrap Metal Collectors Licence	Discretionary		NB	224.00	231.00	237.00	2.60%
Scrap Metal Site Licence - Renewal	Discretionary		NB	224.00	231.00	237.00	2.60%
Scrap Metal Collectors Licence - Renewal	Discretionary		NB	112.00	115.00	118.00	2.61%

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

LICENSING FEES

Item	Statutory or Discretionary	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Miscellaneous							
Scrap Metal Variations	Discretionary		NB	84.00	87.00	89.00	2.30%
Scrap Metal Replacement Licence	Discretionary		NB	12.00	12.50	12.50	0.00%
Distribution of free printer material - week permit	Discretionary		NB	variable depending on time, duration, and no of	30.00	31.00	3.33%
Distribution of free printer material - month permit	Discretionary		NB	variable depending on time, duration, and no of	55.00	57.00	3.64%
Distribution of free printer material - year permit	Discretionary		NB	variable depending on time, duration, and no of	100.00	103.00	3.00%
Gambling Act							
New small casino	Statutory Maximum	New application	NB	7,103.00	7,316.00	7,535.00	2.99%
		Annual fee	NB	4,032.00	4,153.00	4,277.00	2.99%
		Variation	NB	2,908.00	2,995.00	3,084.00	2.97%
		Transfer	NB	1,690.00	1,741.00	1,794.00	3.04%
		Re-instatement	NB	1,420.00	1,463.00	1,507.00	3.01%
		Provisional statement	NB	7,103.00	7,316.00	7,536.00	3.01%
		Provisional statement holders	NB	2,523.00	2,599.00	2,677.00	3.00%
		Copy licence	NB	25.00	25.00	25.00	0.00%
		Notification of change	NB	50.00	50.00	50.00	0.00%

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

LICENSING FEES

Item	Statutory or Discretionary	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Gambling Act							
New large casino	Statutory Maximum	New application	NB	8,450.00	8,704.00	8,966.00	3.01%
		Annual fee	NB	8,130.00	8,374.00	8,626.00	3.01%
		Variation	NB	3,843.00	3,958.00	4,077.00	3.01%
		Transfer	NB	1,984.00	2,044.00	2,106.00	3.03%
		Re-instatement	NB	2,150.00	2,150.00	2,150.00	0.00%
		Provisional statement	NB	8,498.00	8,753.00	9,016.00	3.00%
		Provisional statement holders	NB	4,174.00	4,299.00	4,428.00	3.00%
		Copy licence	NB	25.00	25.00	25.00	0.00%
		Notification of change	NB	50.00	50.00	50.00	0.00%
Regional casino	Statutory Maximum	New application	NB	13,385.00	13,787.00	14,201.00	3.00%
		Annual fee	NB	12,552.00	12,929.00	13,317.00	3.00%
		Variation	NB	6,270.00	6,458.00	6,652.00	3.00%
		Transfer	NB	4,573.00	4,710.00	4,852.00	3.01%
		Re-instatement	NB	4,573.00	4,710.00	4,852.00	3.01%
		Provisional statement	NB	13,385.00	13,787.00	14,201.00	3.00%
		Provisional statement holders	NB	6,517.00	6,713.00	6,915.00	3.01%
		Copy licence	NB	25.00	25.00	25.00	0.00%
		Notification of change	NB	50.00	50.00	50.00	0.00%
Bingo club	Statutory Maximum	New application	NB	2,432.00	2,505.00	2,581.00	3.03%
		Annual fee	NB	757.00	780.00	804.00	3.08%
		Variation	NB	1,665.00	1,715.00	1,750.00	2.04%
		Transfer	NB	924.00	952.00	981.00	3.05%
		Re-instatement	NB	924.00	952.00	981.00	3.05%
		Provisional statement	NB	2,432.00	2,505.00	2,581.00	3.03%
		Provisional statement holders	NB	1,005.00	1,035.00	1,067.00	3.09%
		Copy licence	NB	25.00	25.00	25.00	0.00%
		Notification of change	NB	50.00	50.00	50.00	0.00%

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

LICENSING FEES

Item	Statutory or Discretionary	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Gambling Act							
Betting Premises (excluding tracks)	Statutory Maximum	New application	NB	2,475.00	2,549.00	2,626.00	3.02%
		Annual fee	NB	491.00	506.00	522.00	3.16%
		Variation	NB	1,406.00	1,448.00	1,492.00	3.04%
		Transfer	NB	924.00	952.00	981.00	3.05%
		Re-instatement	NB	924.00	952.00	981.00	3.05%
		Provisional statement	NB	2,432.00	2,505.00	2,581.00	3.03%
		Provisional statement holders	NB	1,005.00	1,035.00	1,067.00	3.09%
		Copy licence	NB	25.00	25.00	25.00	0.00%
		Notification of change	NB	50.00	50.00	50.00	0.00%
Tracks	Statutory Maximum	New application	NB	1,902.00	1,959.00	2,018.00	3.01%
		Annual fee	NB	757.00	780.00	804.00	3.08%
		Variation	NB	1,250.00	1,250.00	1,250.00	0.00%
		Transfer	NB	924.00	950.00	950.00	0.00%
		Re-instatement	NB	924.00	950.00	979.00	3.05%
		Provisional statement	NB	1,902.00	1,959.00	2,018.00	3.01%
		Provisional statement holders	NB	950.00	950.00	950.00	0.00%
		Copy licence	NB	25.00	25.00	25.00	0.00%
		Notification of change	NB	50.00	50.00	50.00	0.00%

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

LICENSING FEES

Item	Statutory or Discretionary	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Gambling Act							
Family Entertainment Centres	Statutory Maximum	New application	NB	1,902.00	1,959.00	2,000.00	2.09%
		Annual fee	NB	654.00	674.00	695.00	3.12%
		Variation	NB	860.00	886.00	913.00	3.05%
		Transfer	NB	924.00	950.00	950.00	0.00%
		Re-instatement	NB	924.00	950.00	950.00	0.00%
		Provisional statement	NB	1,902.00	1,959.00	2,000.00	2.09%
		Provisional statement holders	NB	832.00	857.00	883.00	3.03%
		Copy licence	NB	25.00	25.00	25.00	0.00%
		Notification of change	NB	50.00	50.00	50.00	0.00%
Adult Gaming Centre	Statutory Maximum	New application	NB	1,902.00	1,959.00	2,000.00	2.09%
		Annual fee	NB	762.00	785.00	809.00	3.06%
		Variation	NB	860.00	886.00	913.00	3.05%
		Transfer	NB	924.00	952.00	981.00	3.05%
		Re-instatement	NB	924.00	952.00	981.00	3.05%
		Provisional statement	NB	1,902.00	1,959.00	2,000.00	2.09%
		Provisional statement holders	NB	1,002.00	1,032.00	1,063.00	3.00%
		Copy licence	NB	25.00	25.00	25.00	0.00%
		Notification of change	NB	50.00	50.00	50.00	0.00%
Temporary Use Notices	Statutory Maximum	New application	NB	210.00	216.00	223.00	3.24%
		Copy licence	NB	25.00	25.00	25.00	0.00%

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

LICENSING FEES

Item	Statutory or Discretionary	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Gambling Act							
Licensed Premises Gaming Machine Permit	Statutory Maximum	Grant	NB	150.00	150.00	150.00	0.00%
		Existing operator grant	NB	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00%
		Variation	NB	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00%
		Transfer	NB	25.00	25.00	25.00	0.00%
		Annual Fee	NB	50.00	50.00	50.00	0.00%
		Change of name	NB	25.00	25.00	25.00	0.00%
		Copy of permit	NB	15.00	15.00	15.00	0.00%
Lottery Registration	Statutory Maximum	New Application	NB	40.00	40.00	40.00	0.00%
		Renewal	NB	20.00	20.00	20.00	0.00%
Licensed Premises Automatic Notification Process	Statutory Maximum	Notification	NB	50.00	50.00	50.00	0.00%
Club Gaming Permits	Statutory Maximum	Grant	NB	200.00	200.00	200.00	0.00%
		Grant (Club Premises Certificate holder)	NB	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00%
		Existing operator grant	NB	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00%
		Variation	NB	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00%
		Renewal	NB	200.00	200.00	200.00	0.00%
		Renewal (Club Premises Certificate holder)	NB	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00%
		Annual Fee	NB	50.00	50.00	50.00	0.00%
		Copy of permit	NB	15.00	15.00	15.00	0.00%

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

LICENSING FEES

Item	Statutory or Discretionary	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Gambling Act							
Club Machine Permits	Statutory Maximum	Grant	NB	200.00	200.00	200.00	0.00%
		Grant (Club Premises Certificate holder)	NB	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00%
		Existing operator grant	NB	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00%
		Variation	NB	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00%
		Renewal	NB	200.00	200.00	200.00	0.00%
		Renewal (Club Premises Certificate holder)	NB	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00%
		Annual Fee	NB	50.00	50.00	50.00	0.00%
		Copy of permit	NB	15.00	15.00	15.00	0.00%
Family Entertainment Centre Gaming Machine Permit	Statutory Maximum	Grant	NB	300.00	300.00	300.00	0.00%
		Renewal	NB	300.00	300.00	300.00	0.00%
		Existing operator grant	NB	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00%
		Change of name	NB	25.00	25.00	25.00	0.00%
		Copy of permit	NB	15.00	15.00	15.00	0.00%
Prize Gaming Permits	Statutory Maximum	Grant	NB	300.00	300.00	300.00	0.00%
		Renewal	NB	300.00	300.00	300.00	0.00%
		Existing operator grant	NB	100.00	100.00	100.00	0.00%
		Change of name	NB	25.00	25.00	25.00	0.00%
		Copy of permit	NB	15.00	15.00	15.00	0.00%
		Annual Fee	NB	20.00	20.00	20.00	0.00%

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

LICENSING FEES

Item	Statutory or Discretionary	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Hackney Carriage/Private Hire *							
Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Drivers Licence	Discretionary	For 1 year	NB	70.00	72.00	75.00	4.17%
		For 3 years	NB	145.00	149.00	154.00	3.36%
Vehicle Licence	Discretionary	New	NB	320.00	335.00	346.00	3.28%
		Renewal	NB	300.00	300.00	305.00	1.67%
Additional Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Drivers licence	Discretionary		NB	30.00	31.00	32.00	3.23%
Private Hire Operators	Discretionary	1-3 Vehicles	NB	139.00	143.00	148.00	3.50%
		4-10 Vehicles	NB	460.00	474.00	483.00	1.90%
		11-20 Vehicles	NB	919.00	947.00	960.00	1.37%
Drivers Badge (replacement)	Discretionary		NB	12.00	12.50	13.00	4.00%
Fee for Returned (Bounced) Cheques	Discretionary		NB	17.00	17.50	19.00	8.57%
Transfer of vehicle licence (including plate)	Discretionary		NB	32.00	35.00	38.00	8.57%
Replacement Plate (internal/external)	Discretionary		NB	20.50	21.00	22.00	4.76%
Additional Vehicle under an Operators Licence	Discretionary	Category 1-3	NB	137.00	141.00	146.00	3.55%
	Discretionary	Category 4-10	NB	318.00	328.00	334.00	1.83%
	Discretionary	Category 11-20	NB	461.00	475.00	483.00	1.68%
Replacement Licence	Discretionary		NB	12.00	12.50	13.00	4.00%
Hackney carriage knowledge test	Discretionary		NB	57.00	59.00	61.00	3.39%
DBS	Set by Home Office		NB	40.00	40.00	40.00	0.00%
Environmental Protection							
Contaminated land conveyance searches	Discretionary		NB	N/A	25.00	25.00	

VAT Indicator:

NB = Non Business no VAT

EX = Exempt from VAT

VT = Exclusive of VAT

* Last year saw a large overhaul of charges hence the variances on some fees.

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Monitoring Centre

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Telecare/Lifeline						
Telecare Lifeline/Addition Installation (Within Kent)	One Off Payment per client	VT	80.00	82.00	82.00	0.00%
Telecare Lifeline/addition Postage and self install - Nation Wide	One off payment per client	VT	15.00	15.00	15.00	0.00%
Telecare Lifeline Monitoring and Equipment Hire	Annual Fee per client	VT	160.00	165.00	165.00	0.00%
Supply of Second Pendant Sensor	One off payment per client	VT	55.00	57.00	57.00	0.00%
Supply of Key safe - new style	One Off Payment per client	VT	70.00	72.00	72.00	0.00%
Supply of Key release Door Chain - new style	One Off Payment per client	VT	63.00	65.00	65.00	0.00%
Telecare/Lifeline Equipment	Replacement of Equipment due to Damage/Non Return	VT	205.00	211.00	211.00	0.00%
Purchase of Safe Socket	One off payment per safe socket required	VT	25.00	26.00	26.00	0.00%
Purchase of BT Cable for Lifeline	One off payment per BT cable required	VT	15.00	15.00	15.00	0.00%
Purchase of Fall Detector	One off payment per fall detector	VT	110.00	113.00	113.00	0.00%
Purchase of Carbon Monoxide Detector	One off payment per Carbon Monoxide Detector	VT	121.00	125.00	125.00	0.00%
Purchase of Flood Detector	One off payment per Flood Detector	VT	110.00	113.00	113.00	0.00%
Purchase of Pendant Easy Press	One off payment per Pendant Easy Press	VT	10.00	10.00	10.00	0.00%

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Monitoring Centre

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Telecare/Lifeline						
Purchase of Smoke Alarm Detector	One off payment per Smoke Alarm Detector	VT	110.00	113.00	113.00	0.00%
Purchase of Power Cable	One off payment per Power Cable	VT	35.00	36.00	36.00	0.00%
Insurance CCTV review/download	One off payment for a data protection request from an insurance company	VT	125.00	125.00	125.00	0.00%

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EX = Exempt from VAT
9 = Exclusive of VAT

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Parking Charges

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on %
Season Tickets (Ashford)						
Page 108	Flour Mills car park 1 month	VT	68.00	74.00	74.00	0.00%
	Flour Mills car park 3 months	VT	191.00	210.00	210.00	0.00%
	Flour Mills car park 6 months	VT	360.00	396.00	396.00	0.00%
	Flour Mills car park 12 months	VT	675.00	742.00	742.00	0.00%
	Town Centre 1 month	VT	76.00	83.00	83.00	0.00%
	Town Centre 3 Months	VT	215.00	236.00	236.00	0.00%
	Town Centre 6 Months	VT	405.00	445.00	445.00	0.00%
	Town Centre 12 Months	VT	760.00	836.00	836.00	0.00%
	Henwood Parking Area 1 month	VT	54.00	59.00	59.00	0.00%
	Henwood Parking Area 3 months	VT	153.00	168.00	168.00	0.00%
	Henwood Parking Area 6 months	VT	288.00	316.00	316.00	0.00%
	Henwood Parking Area 12 months	VT	540.00	594.00	594.00	0.00%
	Henwood Business Permit 12 months	VT	360.00	360.00	360.00	0.00%
Season Tickets (Tenterden)						
	Bridewell Lane car park 1 month	VT	76.00	83.00	83.00	0.00%
	Bridewell Lane car park 3 months	VT	215.00	236.00	236.00	0.00%
	Bridewell Lane car park 6 months	VT	405.00	445.00	445.00	0.00%
	Bridewell Lane car park 12 months	VT	760.00	863.00	863.00	0.00%
	Bridewell Lane Reserved 12 months	VT	1,520.00	1,672.00	1,672.00	0.00%
	<i>*Season Tickets issued for Bridewell Lane car park are also valid in the rear car park at Tenterden Leisure Centre</i>					
	Admin Charge for loss of season ticket	VT	10.00	10.00	10.00	0.00%
	Admin Charge for refund of Season ticket	VT	10.00	10.00	10.00	0.00%

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Parking Charges

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on %
Residents Permits						
	Zone A Annual	NB	120.00	125.00	125.00	0.00%
	Zone B Annual	NB	50.00	55.00	55.00	0.00%
	Zone B Annual - Off Street Residents Parking Permit	VT	135.00	135.00	135.00	0.00%
	Zone D Annual	NB	30.00	35.00	35.00	0.00%
	Zone E Annual	NB	30.00	35.00	35.00	0.00%
	Zone F Annual	NB	30.00	35.00	35.00	0.00%
	Zone G Annual	NB	30.00	35.00	35.00	0.00%
Other Permits						
	Visitor's permits each	EX	1.00	1.00	1.00	0.00%
	HPA parking permit annual	VT	760.00	760.00	760.00	0.00%
	DSA parking permit annual	VT	760.00	760.00	760.00	0.00%
	International House permit discounted 12 months	VT	380.00	380.00	380.00	0.00%
	International House permit full price 12 months	VT	760.00	760.00	760.00	0.00%
Misc Charges						
	Waivers/Dispensations - per week or part week	VT	30.00	30.00	30.00	0.00%
	Waivers/Dispensations - Additional Charge for occupying on street pay and display bay, per bay per day (only applies for individual days if fully week £30 charge applies effectively 2 days free)	VT	10.00	10.00	10.00	0.00%
	Waivers/Dispensations - Additional Charge for occupying on street pay and display bay, per bay per week	VT	30.00	30.00	30.00	0.00%
	Bay Suspensions per week	VT	50.00	50.00	50.00	0.00%
	Replacement of lost cones per cone	VT	20.00	20.00	20.00	0.00%
	Locked car park-vehicle release fee	VT	55.00	55.00	55.00	0.00%
	Clamping release fee - Day	VT	40.00	40.00	40.00	0.00%
	Clamping release fee - Night	VT	150.00	150.00	150.00	0.00%
	Printing Charges Up to 5 pages per page	VT	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.00%
	Printing Charges more than 5 pages per page	VT	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.00%

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Parking Charges

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on %
Car Park Charges (Ashford)						
Page 110	Civic Centre and Stour Centre car park per hour over 2 hours. Linear Charge in 5p increments	VT	1.10	1.20	1.20	0.00%
	Civic Centre and Stour Centre car park charge over 4 hours Mon-Fri	VT	11.00	12.00	12.00	0.00%
	Civic Centre and Stour Centre car park charge over 4 hours Sat and Sun	VT	5.00	5.50	5.50	0.00%
	Civic Centre and Stour Centre car park per hour Coach Charge (Linear Charge in 5p	VT	1.70	1.85	1.85	0.00%
	Civic Centre and Stour Centre car park Coach charge over 4 hours	VT	11.00	12.00	12.00	0.00%
	Dover Place car park per hour	VT	1.10	1.20	1.20	0.00%
	Dover Place car park over 4 hours	VT	5.00	5.50	5.50	0.00%
	Elwick Road car park per hour	VT	1.10	1.20	1.20	0.00%
	Elwick Road car park over 4 hours	VT	5.00	5.50	5.50	0.00%
	Elwick Place car park up to 2 hours	VT	2.20	2.40	2.40	0.00%
	Elwick Place car park up to 3 hours	VT	3.30	3.60	3.60	0.00%
	Elwick Place car park up to 4 hours	VT	4.40	4.80	4.80	0.00%
	Elwick Place car park up to 5 hours	VT	5.50	6.00	6.00	0.00%
	Elwick Place car park over 5 hours	VT	11.00	12.00	12.00	0.00%
	Elwick Place car park Travelodge	VT	7.50	7.50	7.50	0.00%
	Edinburgh Road car park per hour	VT	1.10	1.20	1.20	0.00%
	Edinburgh Road car park charge over 4 hours	VT	5.00	5.50	5.50	0.00%
	Flour Mills car park per hour	VT	1.10	1.20	1.20	0.00%
	Flour Mills car park charge over 4 hours	VT	4.40	4.80	4.80	0.00%
	Henwood car park per hour	VT	0.90	1.00	1.00	0.00%
Henwood car park charge over 4 hours	VT	3.60	4.00	4.00	0.00%	

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Parking Charges

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on %
Car Park Charges (Ashford)						
	Station Road Ashford car park per hour	VT	1.10	1.20	1.20	0.00%
	Station Road Ashford car park charge over 4 hours	VT	5.00	5.50	5.50	0.00%
	Vicarage Lane car park per hour	VT	1.10	1.20	1.20	0.00%
	Vicarage Lane car park charge over 4 hours	VT	11.00	12.00	12.00	0.00%
	Victoria Road car park per hour ** (new car park)	VT	n/a	n/a	1.20	
	Victoria Road car park charge over 4 hours ** (new car park)	VT	n/a	n/a	5.50	
Car Park Charges (Tenterden)						
	Bridewell Lane car park per hour	VT	1.10	1.20	1.20	0.00%
	Bridewell Lane car park over 4 hours	VT	5.00	5.50	5.50	0.00%
	Recreation Ground Road car park per hour	VT	1.10	1.20	1.20	0.00%
	Recreation Ground Road car park over 4 hours	VT	11.00	12.00	12.00	0.00%
	Station Road car park Tenterden per hour	VT	1.10	1.20	1.20	0.00%
	Station Road car park Tenterden over 4 hours	VT	11.00	12.00	12.00	0.00%
	Station Road car park Tenterden per hour Coach charge	VT	1.70	1.85	1.85	0.00%
	Station Road car park Tenterden over 4 hours coach charge	VT	11.00	12.00	12.00	0.00%
	Tenterden Leisure Centre car park per hour	VT	1.10	1.20	1.20	0.00%
	Tenterden Leisure Centre car park over 4 hours	VT	11.00	12.00	12.00	0.00%
	Tenterden Leisure Centre car park Coach charge per hour	VT	1.70	1.85	1.85	0.00%
	Tenterden Leisure Centre car park Coach charge over 4 hours	VT	11.00	12.00	12.00	0.00%

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Parking Charges

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on %
On Street Parking Charges						
	Charge per hour before 6pm	NB	1.10	1.20	1.20	0.00%
	Charge after 6pm for parking up to 1 hour	NB	1.10	1.20	1.20	0.00%
	Charge after 6pm for parking over one hour	NB	3.00	3.30	3.30	0.00%
Penalty Charge Notices						
	Lower level	NB	50.00	50.00	50.00	0.00%
	Higher level	NB	70.00	70.00	70.00	0.00%

Where an actual recharge (based on hours worked) exceeds minimum figures above, the actual charge is to be levied unless commercial in which case an uplift of a minimum of 50% should be considered with Team Leader or Head of Service.

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DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Planning Services

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Pre-Application Planning & Policy Advice	Level 1 will be charged for written advice on all proposals that will require consent from the Local Planning Authority under the Planning Acts, other than those listed above and in levels 2 and 3	VT	95.00	98.00	Cost recovery	
	Level 2 will be charged for written advice on all minor developments	VT	182.00	187.00	Cost recovery	
	Level 3 will be charged for meetings with officers (If the meeting is on site then travelling time will be included in the assessment). The charge is per hour or part thereof	VT	488.00	503.00	Cost recovery	
Compliance Check (Confirmation that a development has been built in accordance with the approved plans)	For domestic Development	VT	90.00	93.00	96.00	3.23%
	For a Domestic proposal that requires a site visit	VT	175.00	180.00	185.00	2.78%
Research of Planning History	To confirm whether or not permitted development rights have been removed from a dwelling	VT	46.00	47.00	48.00	2.13%
Formal Complaint under High Hedges Legalisation		VT	497.00	512.00	527.00	2.93%

All other Statutory charges apply

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DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Other Charges

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Land Charges						
Standard Search Fee	Domestic Properties	NB		Cost Recovery		
	Non-Domestic Properties	NB		Cost Recovery		
Extra Questions		NB		Cost Recovery		
	<i>NB All Land Charges Fees are to be set at on full cost recovery Basis - these need to be reviewed periodically throughout the year to ensure that this is achieved.</i>					
Street Administration						
Street Naming and numbering	1 Unit	NB	55.00	57.00	59.00	3.51%
	2-10 units	NB	45.00	46.00	47.00	2.17%
	Over 10 units	NB	41.00	42.00	43.00	2.38%
New Street Name		NB	132.00	136.00	140.00	2.94%
Rename Existing Street		NB	281.00	289.00	298.00	3.11%
Address Change	per property	NB	55.00	57.00	59.00	3.51%
Building Control						
Discretionary Works	Including Party Wall surveying, Fire Risk assessments, Access audits, SBEM, SAP ratings and other surveying activities	VT		Cost Recovery		

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Other Charges

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Charge for the Supply of Information and Photocopies of Documents						
Notices and Extracts	Authenticated Building Control Regulation Approval or Completion Certificate (photocopy - copying charge only)	VT	10.99	11.32	11.66	3.00%
	Architects Plans (A3 & A4)	VT	0.40	0.41	0.42	2.44%
	Architects Plans (A2+)	VT	6.87	7.08	7.29	2.97%
Fact sheets	Major Development Proposals in Ashford (per page)	VT	1.87	1.93	1.99	3.11%
	All other fact sheets (per page)	VT	0.40	0.41	0.42	2.44%
Requests for Planning Information*		VT	59.26	61.04	62.87	3.00%
Requests for Building Control Information*		VT	59.26	61.04	62.87	3.00%
Inspection of approved Building Regulation Plans*		VT	59.26	61.04	62.87	3.00%
Gas and Pipeline Extracts*		VT	7.41	7.63	7.86	3.01%
Postage and Packing		VT	1.03	1.06	1.09	2.83%
*Fee for additional work on information that is freely available on website						

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DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 22/23

Other Charges

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Council Tax Collection						
Court costs	Summons costs	NB	60.00	60.00	60.00	0.00%
	Liability orders	NB	65.00	65.00	65.00	0.00%
Business Rates						
Court costs	Liability orders	NB	180.00	180.00	180.00	0.00%

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DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Other Charges

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Chilmington Road Travellers Site						
Rent	Charge per week	NB	48.96	50.43	51.94	3.00%
Service Charge	Charge per week	NB	38.11	39.25	40.43	3.00%
Mobile Homes						
Annual monitoring fee *	Charge per pitch	NB	7.40	7.40	7.21	-2.57%
Check & Depositing Site Rules		NB	67.00	69.00	71.00	2.90%
Site Licence Application Fees	Band 1 - 1-10 pitches	NB	380.50	392.00	404.00	3.06%
	Band 2 - 11-50 pitches	NB	425.50	438.00	451.00	2.97%
	Band 3 - 51-99 pitches	NB	562.00	579.00	596.00	2.94%
	Band 4 - 100-199 pitches	NB	697.00	718.00	740.00	3.06%
	Band 5 - 200+ pitches	NB	854.50	880.00	906.00	2.95%
Application to transfer a site licence	Band 1 - 1-10 pitches	NB	76.10	78.00	80.00	2.56%
	Band 2 - 11-50 pitches	NB	85.10	88.00	91.00	3.41%
	Band 3 - 51-99 pitches	NB	112.40	116.00	119.00	2.59%
	Band 4 - 100-199 pitches	NB	139.40	144.00	148.00	2.78%
	Band 5 - 200+ pitches	NB	170.92	176.00	181.00	2.84%
Application to amend a site ..	Band 1 - 1-10 pitches	NB	125.57	129.00	133.00	3.10%
	Band 2 - 11-50 pitches	NB	140.42	145.00	149.00	2.76%
	Band 3 - 51-99 pitches	NB	185.46	191.00	197.00	3.14%
	Band 4 - 100-199 pitches	NB	230.01	237.00	244.00	2.95%
	Band 5 - 200+ pitches	NB	281.99	290.00	299.00	3.10%

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Other Charges

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Homelessness						
Copy of File		VT	10.00	10.00	10.00	0.00%
Private Sector Housing						
Charge for service of enforcement notices Housing Act 2004 (per notice)	Incorporating improvement notices, prohibition orders, emergency remedial action, emergency prohibition orders, demolition orders	NB	300.00	309.00	318.00	2.91%
Charge to carry out inspections in respect of a UK entry application		NB	120.00	124.00	128.00	3.23%
Charge for making a prohibition notice (Housing Act 2004 sec 20 or 21)	Discretion regarding matters relating to overcrowding, but other issues which require a notice to be charged at £300	NB	340.00	350.00	361.00	3.14%
Charge for making an emergency prohibition order - Housing Act 2004		NB	226.00	233.00	240.00	3.00%
Charge for undertaking emergency remedial action (Housing Act 2004)	Charge between £100 - £500, depending on the extent of emergency works carried out	VT	100 - 500	100 - 500	100 - 500	N/A
Penalty Charge notices - the smoke and carbon monoxide alarm regulations 2015	First Offence £5,000, an early payment will attract a discount of 50% making it £2,500	NB	2,500.00	2,575.00	2,652.00	2.99%
	For subsequent offences the penalty will be £5,000 to deter continued non-compliance. No early payment discount would apply	NB	5,000.00	5,150.00	5,305.00	3.01%
House in Multiple Occupation Licence Fee	Five Year Licence - 1st property	NB	563.71	581.00	802.00	38.04%
	Five Year Licence - subsequent properties	NB	563.71	581.00	802.00	38.04%

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Other Charges

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
ABC Lettings						
Management charge	Agreed with landlord	VT	10% -12.5%	10% -12.5%	10% -12.5%	0.00%
Landlords one-off set up fee		VT	250.00	250.00	250.00	0.00%
Repairs Service		VT	Cost +10%	Cost +10%	Cost +10%	0.00%

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Notes

* The charge is worked out retrospectively on an annual basis and covers costs such as officer time, petrol, paper etc. Therefore the cost fluctuates yearly depending on how many visits there were and is set in July each year as per the Park Home Policy.

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Other Charges

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Waste Collection						
Bulky Collection	Base Charge	NB	25.00	26.00	27.00	3.85%
Garden Waste Bins	Wheellie Bin for Garden Waste - Previously agreed by Cabinet	NB	37.50	40.00	42.50	6.25%
Full household bin set (new developments)	Set of one recycle (240L) one refuse (180L) one food caddy (23L) and one silver kitchen caddy (5L)	NB	77.00	80.00	80.00	0.00%
Recycle bin (New development)	Green (240L)	NB	40.00	41.00	42.00	2.44%
Refuse bin (New development)	Black (180L)	NB	40.00	41.00	42.00	2.44%
Food caddy (New development)	Orange & black (23L)	NB	10.00	10.00	10.00	0.00%
Kitchen food caddy (New development)	Silver (5L)	NB	8.00	8.00	8.00	0.00%
Food bin	Orange & black (140L)	NB	35.00	36.00	37.00	2.78%
Replacement resident refuse bin	Black (180L)	NB	25.00	25.00	25.00	0.00%
Replacement resident recycle bin	Green (240L)	NB	25.00	25.00	25.00	0.00%
Bulk refuse bin (New or replacement) <i>(Includes signage)</i>	1100L steel/black lid	NB	345.00	355.00	366.00	3.10%
Bulk refuse bin (New or replacement) <i>(Includes signage on bins)</i>	1100L steel/black lid (each additional bulk refuse bin in same delivery)	NB	300.00	309.00	318.00	2.91%
Bulk recycle bin (New or replacement) <i>(Includes signage)</i>	1100L full green	NB	370.00	381.00	392.00	2.89%
Bulk recycle bin (New or replacement) <i>(Includes signage on bins)</i>	1100L full green (each additional bulk recycle bin in same delivery)	NB	330.00	340.00	350.00	2.94%
Bin store/compound recycle information sign (A2)	Colour signage on diabond board - Bin use	NB			40.00	
Dog Warden Fees						
Stray Dogs	Statutory fee for dog not being on lead	NB	25.00	25.00	25.00	0.00%
Dog Control Costs	Collection/delivery of dog	NB	45.00	45.00	50.00	11.11%
Kennelling costs	Per 24 hour period, day one due on admission	NB	10.00	11.00	12.00	9.09%
Administration charge	Office Hours	NB	15.00	16.00	18.00	12.50%
	Outside Office Hours	NB	33.00	35.00	36.00	2.86%
Veterinary Treatment	As required	NB			Cost Recovery	

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Other Charges

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Fixed Penalty Notices						
Non compliance of micro chip for a dog	*	NB	500.00	500.00	500.00	0.00%
Dog fouling	*	NB	n/a	50.00	50.00	0.00%
Littering	*	NB	n/a	75.00	75.00	0.00%
Flytipping	*	NB	n/a	400.00	400.00	0.00%
Failure to fulfil duty of care (Domestic Waste)	*	NB	n/a	400.00	400.00	0.00%
Failure to comply with a Community Protection Notice	*	NB	n/a	100.00	100.00	0.00%
Failure to comply with a Public Space Protection Order	*	NB	n/a	100.00	100.00	0.00%
Allotment Rents						
Plot rent		EX	7.00	7.20	7.50	4.17%
Concessionary rate rent	50% for 1st 5 perch,full price after	EX	3.50	3.60	3.75	4.17%
Memorial Benches						
Hereford Seat or similar style	15 year lease plus supply and Installation of bench	NB / VT**	758.00	780.74	804.16	3.00%
Georgian Seat or similar style	15 year lease plus supply and Installation of bench	NB / VT**	987.00	1016.61	1047.11	3.00%
Chavendish Seat or similar style	15 year lease plus supply and Installation of bench	NB / VT**	898.00	924.94	952.69	3.00%
Recasting of memorial plaque	Changing the inscription for example, adding an additional name	NB / VT**	250.00	257.50	265.23	3.00%
Extending the lease of a bench	Extending the lease of the bench at the end of the initial 15 year period for a period of 5 years (subject to condition)	NB / VT**	300.00	309.00	318.27	3.00%

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Other Charges

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Tree Planting						
Dedicate a tree	Lower end of price scale	NB / VT**	195.00	198.90	204.87	3.00%
	Higher end of price scale	NB / VT**	240.00	244.80	252.15	3.00%
Sponsor a tree		NB / VT**	98.00	99.96	102.96	3.00%
Plant a woodland tree		NB / VT**	25.00	25.50	26.26	2.98%

VAT Indicator:

NB = Non Business no VAT

EX = Exempt from VAT

VT = Exclusive of VAT

Other Notes

Fees where an * has been placed in the description/comments box were not detailed in the fees and charges prior to last year.

VAT rate depends whether relates to a cemetery or other open space. Cemeteries are NB rate and other are VT standard rate

** New fee introduced

2022/23

DISCRETIONARY & STATUTORY FEES 2022/23

Charges for Room Hire

Item	Description/Comments	VAT Indicator	Charge 2020/21 £	Charge 2021/22 £	Charge 2022/23 £	Increase / Decrease on 2021/22 %
Room Hire Page 123	Council Chamber - Up to 4 hours	VT	164.00	164.00	164.00	0.00%
		VT	288.00	288.00	288.00	0.00%
		VT	264.00	264.00	264.00	0.00%
	Committee Rooms - Up to 4 hours	VT	86.00	86.00	86.00	0.00%
		VT	155.00	155.00	155.00	0.00%
		VT	149.00	149.00	149.00	0.00%

VAT Indicator:

VT = Inclusive of VAT

Equality Impact Assessment

Lead officer:	Head of Finance and IT
Decision maker:	Full Council
Decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy, project, service, contract • Review, change, new, stop 	The report contains the annual budget for 2022/23 which supports the new Corporate Plan (including the medium term financial plan) and individual service plans
Date of decision: The date when the final decision is made. The EIA must be complete before this point and inform the final decision.	Approved annually (February each year)
Summary of the proposed decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims and objectives • Key actions • Expected outcomes • Who will be affected and how? • How many people will be affected? 	<p>The budgets role is to set council tax and rent levels, providing a framework to measure performance and to allocate resources to match the priorities established within the Corporate Plan.</p> <p>The Members are asked to approve the revenue and capital budgets for both the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account for 2022/23 and associated recommendations.</p> <p>Approve the capital strategy, investment strategy treasury strategy, investment policy and fees and charges for 2022/23.</p> <p>The budget affects the whole borough and its population.</p>
Information and research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the information and research that has informed the decision. • Include sources and key findings. 	<p>Budget Monitoring reports for the current year 2021/22 –September/November/February Cabinet reports.</p> <p>MTFP Cabinet report – October Cabinet</p> <p>Draft Budget report – November Cabinet</p> <p>HRA Business Plan – December Cabinet</p> <p>Budget Scrutiny (O&S) task group – throughout December and January, each service and budget area scrutinised with further focus on key areas of risk.</p> <p>Public consultation December to mid February</p> <p>JCC – staff consultation February</p>

<p>Consultation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What specific consultation has occurred on this decision? • What were the results of the consultation? • Did the consultation analysis reveal any difference in views across the protected characteristics? • What conclusions can be drawn from the analysis on how the decision will affect people with different protected characteristics? 	<p>Budget Scrutiny (O&S) task group – throughout December and January, each service budget area scrutinised, a report from the task group is referenced within this report. Full report to full meeting of O&S in February 2022.</p> <p>JCC – staff consultation February 2022.</p> <p>Public consultation late December to mid-February – Borough wide consultation, communicated via website and appropriate media channels.</p> <p>Responses to public consultation will be published at February 2022 Cabinet.</p>	
<p>Assess the relevance of the decision to people with different protected characteristics and assess the impact of the decision on people with different protected characteristics.</p> <p>When assessing relevance and impact, make it clear who the assessment applies to within the protected characteristic category. For example, a decision may have high relevance for young people but low relevance for older people; it may have a positive impact on women but a neutral impact on men.</p>		
<p>Protected characteristic</p>	<p>Relevance to Decision High/Medium/Low/None</p>	<p>Impact of Decision Positive (Major/Minor) Negative (Major/Minor) Neutral</p>
<p><u>AGE</u> Elderly</p>	<p>Low/Medium</p>	<p>Positive Minor– No contribution required through Council Tax support</p>
<p>Middle age</p>	<p>Low</p>	<p>Negative Minor – Increased level of contribution through Council Tax Support Scheme.</p>

Young adult	Low	Negative Minor - The provision of some services is not even across the borough (rural areas). Negative Minor – Increased level of contribution through Council Tax Support Scheme.
Children	None	
<u>DISABILITY</u> Physical	Low/Medium	Positive - The Council Tax Support Scheme will impact upon this group however additional protection has been built into the scheme for disabled people Negative – Disabled Facility grants budgets are usually lower than demand
Mental	Low	Positive - The Council Tax Support Scheme will impact upon this group however additional protection has been built into the scheme for disabled people
Sensory	Low	Positive - The Council Tax Support Scheme will impact upon this group however additional protection has been built into the scheme for disabled people
<u>GENDER RE-ASSIGNMENT</u>	None	
<u>MARRIAGE/CIVIL PARTNERSHIP</u>	None	

<u>PREGNANCY/MATERNITY</u>	None	
<u>RACE</u>	None	
<u>RELIGION OR BELIEF</u>	None	
<u>SEX</u> Men	None	
Women	None	
<u>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</u>	None	
<p>Mitigating negative impact: Where any negative impact has been identified, outline the measures taken to mitigate against it.</p>	<p>The negative impacts relate to the Council Tax Support scheme which was introduced in 2017/18 and requires middle aged and young adults to contribute to Council Tax when in receipt of benefit. This was an agreed policy following consultation and therefore no mitigation is recommended.</p>	

Is the decision relevant to the aims of the equality duty?

Guidance on the aims can be found in the EHRC's *Essential Guide*, alongside fuller *PSED Technical Guidance*.

Aim	Yes / No / N/A
1) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	n/a
2) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	n/a
3) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	n/a

<p>Conclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how due regard has been had to the equality duty, from start to finish. • There should be no unlawful discrimination arising from the decision (see guidance above). • Advise on whether the proposal meets the aims of the equality duty or whether adjustments have been made or need to be made or whether any residual impacts are justified. • How will monitoring of the policy, procedure or decision and its implementation be undertaken and reported? 	<p>There has been a full consultation process and Equalities Impact Assessment for the local council tax reduction scheme.</p> <p>Individual Services will look at discrimination for service provision, if a regular theme of those reviews suggests that financial resources are the key factor baring minorities from accessing our services then perhaps we need to elevate this higher.</p>
<p>EIA completion date:</p>	<p>7 February 2022</p>

Budget Housing Revenue Account 2022/23

SUBJECTIVE ANALYSIS - 2022/23 Budget Housing Revenue Account						
	Supervision & Management	Income	New Builds	Other	Repairs & Maintenance	Total
EXPENDITURE						
Employees	2,832,330	-	-	-	-	2,832,330
Premises	1,090,460	-	47,620	-	4,352,700	5,490,780
Supplies and Services	805,680	-	156,600	280,000	32,400	1,274,680
Transport	127,470	-	-	-	-	127,470
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	4,855,940	-	204,220	280,000	4,385,100	9,725,260
INCOME						
Grants	-	-	-	(2,999,850)	-	(2,999,850)
Fees & Charges	(67,950)	(28,775,130)	(8,000)	-	(38,000)	(28,889,080)
TOTAL INCOME	(67,950)	(28,775,130)	(8,000)	(2,999,850)	(38,000)	(31,888,930)
NET CONTROLLABLE EXPENDITURE	4,787,990	(28,775,130)	196,220	(2,719,850)	4,347,100	(22,163,670)
NON CONTROLLABLE ITEMS						
Support Services	2,066,990	-	4,390	870,850	-	2,942,230
Capital Charges	-	-	-	17,808,600	-	17,808,600
Recharges	(123,120)	-	-	-	-	(123,120)
Transfers to/from Reserves	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL NON-CONTROLLABLE ITEMS	1,943,870	-	4,390	18,679,450	-	20,627,710
NET EXPENDITURE	6,731,860	(28,775,130)	200,610	15,959,600	4,347,100	(1,535,960)

Capital Programme 2022/23 - 2024/25						
	Current budget	Previous Exp	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Planned Minor Capital Works for General Fund Assets	2,000	0	500	500	500	500
Ellingham Roof	500	0	0	500	0	0
Tenterden Leisure Centre Roof	1,178	7	863	308	0	0
Stour Centre Pool Tiles	750	0	0	375	375	0
Victoria Park Fountain & Carpark	570	0	0	420	150	0
Provisional for Economic Investment & Regeneration Board	8,000	0	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000
Property Company Acquisitions - based on current business plan	150,000	36,628	407	23,000	34,000	18,000
International House Works	2,700	327	50	300	1,700	323
Solar PV (various sites)	10,800	37	347	3,100	7,028	288
Stodmarsh	15,000	0	0	2,000	7,000	6,000
Public Sector Decarbonisation Works	2,000	0	0	1,000	1,000	0
Total - Corporate Property and Projects	338,435	39,663	4,667	87,852	118,677	49,611
Community & Housing						
Henwood Temporary Accommodation	4,700	16	50	4,634	0	0
Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme	3,376	0	1,776	1,600	0	0
External Funding	(1,228)	0	(764)	(464)	0	0
	2,148	0	1,012	1,136	0	0
Mandatory Disabled Facility Grants						
Expenditure	3,862	0	802	1,020	1,020	1,020
External Funding	(3,502)	0	(712)	(930)	(930)	(930)
	360	0	90	90	90	90
Total - Community & Housing	11,938	16	2,628	7,254	1,020	1,020
Information Technology						
Digital Transformation	664	119	313	121	111	0
Total - Information Technology	664	119	313	121	111	0
Culture & the Environment						
Single Grants Gateway Fund	300	0	75	75	75	75
Victoria Park Rejuvenation Project	4,418	103	71	1,002	3,173	69
Courtside Pitchside Replacement 3G & Lighting	300	36	0	264	0	0
Conningbrook Lakes Country Park development	2,055	26	50	950	500	529
JVC Facility	375	0	0	375	0	0
Stour Centre Decarbonisation works	1,454	1,154	300	0	0	0
Tenterden Decarbonisation Works	1,251	0	246	1,005	0	0
Civic Centre Decarbonisation Works	1,005	0	0	1,005	0	0
Play Parks	1,100	0	0	1,100	0	0
Leisure Procurement Capital Investment	7,660	3,425	4,235	0	0	0
External Funding	(9,539)	(1,283)	(667)	(4,226)	(2,834)	(529)
	10,379	(1,118)	(471)	(1,935)	914	144
Total Culture & the Environment	19,918	4,744	4,977	5,776	3,748	673
Community Safety and Wellbeing						
Automatic Number Plate Recognition	320	87	10	223	0	0
Total Community Safety and Wellbeing	320	87	10	223	0	0
General Fund Total	371,275	44,629	12,595	101,226	123,556	51,304

Capital Programme 2022/23 - 2024/25						
	Current budget	Previous Exp	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
HRA Capital Works - as current business plan						
Programmed Works	27,119	0	3,078	4,254	6,906	5,571
Adaptions to Disabled Properties	2,576	0	500	1,076	500	500
Play Areas	300	0	180	62	58	0
Street Purchases	39,074	0	6,300	7,893	8,090	8,292
Digitalisation	90	0	10	20	20	20
Decarbonisation	85,165	0	0	800	3,245	3,245
Lifeline	220	0	0	52	54	56
CRM	37	0	0	37	0	0
Court Wurtin	455	180	0	166	109	0
St Stephens Walk	3,165	0	550	1,285	1,330	0
Halstow Way	6,997	1,403	3,000	2,594	0	0
55 Mabledon (Piper Joinery)	7,246	1,671	2,500	3,075	0	0
Oakleigh House	15,946	199	200	5,125	5,253	5,169
Ford Way	9,042	0	0	0	4,465	4,577
Coneybeare	9,776	0	200	1,538	3,152	3,231
Tile Kiln	7,210	1,085	100	1,025	2,469	2,531
Infill Sites	6,274	0	0	2,460	2,522	1,292
Hamlet Chilmington	1,970	0	700	1,270	0	0
	222,662	4,538	17,318	32,732	38,173	34,484
Total HRA	222,662	4,538	17,318	32,732	38,173	34,484
Total Capital Spend	593,937	49,167	29,913	133,958	161,729	85,788

Capital Programme 2022/23 - 2024/25						
	Current budget	Previous Exp	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
CAPITAL SUMMARY						
Corporate Property and Projects	338,435	39,663	4,667	87,852	118,677	49,611
Community & Housing	11,938	16	2,628	7,254	1,020	1,020
Information Technology	664	119	313	121	111	0
Culture & the Environment	19,918	4,744	4,977	5,776	3,748	673
Community Safety and Wellbeing	320	87	10	223	0	0
GENERAL FUND	371,275	44,629	12,595	101,226	123,556	51,304
	0	0	0	0	0	0
HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT	222,662	4,538	17,318	32,732	38,173	34,484
	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME	593,937	49,167	29,913	133,958	161,729	85,788

Capital Programme 2022/23 - 2024/25						
	Current budget	Previous Exp	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Funding Source						
Capital Receipts - HRA	14,973	1,841	3,973	2,672	2,109	2,162
Capital Receipts - GF	660	0	165	165	165	165
Borrowing HRA	170,091	1,700	8,482	25,004	27,068	22,981
Borrowing GF	336,490	43,191	9,474	83,496	112,753	49,611
External grants & contributions HRA	8,350	868	1,285	302	1,590	3,270
External grants & contributions GF	31,078	1,319	2,643	15,969	9,688	1,459
Major Repairs Reserve HRA	29,119	0	3,578	4,754	7,406	6,071
Other Reserve HRA	129	129	0	0	0	0
Other Reserve GF	3,047	119	313	1,596	950	69
	593,937	49,167	29,913	133,958	161,729	85,788
External Grants						
Homes & Communities Agency (HCA)	9,373	868	1,906	704	1,590	3,270
Section 106	2,877	62	50	1,275	961	529
Heritage Lottery fund	3,049	103	71	1,002	1,873	0
Better Care Fund - Disabled Facility Grants	3,502	0	712	930	930	930
Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme Grant	5,711	1,154	546	3,011	1,000	0
KCC - Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF)	143	0	143	0	0	0
Department for Levelling Up	14,773	0	500	9,349	4,924	0
	39,428	2,187	3,928	16,271	11,278	4,729

Capital Strategy Report 2022/23

Introduction

The capital strategy was a new requirement introduced in 2019/20 under the revised CIPFA Prudential code 2018. CIPFA published their updated 2021 edition of the Prudential Code on 20 December 2021. Although the principles of the updated Code apply with immediate effect, however due to the late publication date Local Authorities are permitted to defer introducing the revised reporting requirements until the 2023/24 financial year. The main updates surround investments, risks, absorbing losses and using prudential indicators. Further inclusions were capital expenditure plans and investment plans to ensure that they are affordable and proportionate; and that all external borrowing and other long-term liabilities are within prudent and sustainable levels; that the risks associated with investments for commercial purposes are proportionate to their financial capacity and that treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice. Reporting on and clearly distinguishing investments for treasury management, service, and commercial purposes, providing a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.

Decisions made this year on capital and treasury management activity will have financial consequences for the Authority for many years into the future. They are therefore subject to both a national regulatory framework and to local policy framework, summarised in this report.

Capital Expenditure and Financing

Capital expenditure is where the Council spends money on assets, such as property or vehicles that will be used for more than one year. In local government, this includes spending on assets owned by other bodies, and loans and grants to other bodies enabling them to buy assets.

In 2022/23, the Council is planning capital expenditure of just under £134m as summarised below:

Table 1. Capital Expenditure

	2021/22 Revised £'000	2022/23 Estimate £'000	2023/24 Estimate £'000	2024/25 Estimate £'000
General Fund services	12,595	101,226	123,556	51,303
Council Housing (HRA)	17,318	32,730	38,173	34,484
Total Expenditure	29,914	133,956	161,729	85,787

The main General Fund capital projects included for 2022/23 are listed below:

- £23m of loans to the Council's subsidiary A Better Choice for Property Ltd.
- £49.3m for Newtown Works
- £3m for Vicarage Lane redevelopment.
- £4.6m for Henwood modular Temporary Accommodation.
- £3.1m Solar PV panels

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a ring-fenced account which ensures that council housing does not subsidise, or is itself subsidised, by other local services. HRA capital expenditure is therefore recorded separately.

The capital expenditure for the HRA is significant over the next few years and supports the ambition of the HRA in delivering its business plan which was presented to Cabinet in December 2021, and looks to significantly increase its housing stock numbers through new developments, and the purchase of old housing stock from the open market.

Governance

Service managers prepare Project Initial Documents (PID's) throughout the year. The PID's are supported by input from relevant professional colleagues such as Accountants, Planners and Legal specialists before presentation to Management Team. The Management Team will appraise all projects based on a comparison of service priorities, value for money, affordability and sustainability. Projects that meet an acceptable risk and return criteria will be included in the authorities capital programme. Some projects will be included as provisional figures awaiting further work to determine the final cost, but are included to give an idea of the overall level of resource commitment by the Council. The final capital programme is then presented to Cabinet in February each year in the final budget report.

- Full details of the Council's capital programme were reported to Cabinet on the 24 February 2022 as part of the 2022/23 budget report.

All capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (government grants and other contributions), the Council's own resources (revenue, reserves and capital receipts) or debt (borrowing, leasing). The planned financing of the above expenditure is as follows:

Table 2: Capital financing

	2021/22 Revised £'000	2022/23 Estimate £'000	2023/24 Estimate £'000	2024/25 Estimate £'000
Capital Receipts	4,138	2,837	2,274	2,327
Reserves	3,891	6,350	8,356	6,141
Borrowing	17,956	108,498	139,821	72,590
External Grants	3,929	16,270	11,278	4,729
Total Financing	29,914	133,956	161,729	85,787

Borrowing is only a temporary source of finance, since loans and leases must be repaid, and this is therefore replaced over time by other financing, usually from revenue which is known as minimum revenue provision (MRP). Alternatively, proceeds from selling capital assets (known as capital receipts) may be used to replace debt finance. Planned MRP contributions and housing contributions are as follows:

Table 3: Replacement of debt finance

	2021/22 Revised £'000	2022/23 Estimate £'000	2023/24 Estimate £'000	2024/25 Estimate £'000
MRP	1,835	1,664	1,839	2,020
GF Debt Repayment	375	750	750	750
HRA Debt Repayment	9,425	2,850	3,850	3,850
HRA PFI Repayment	1,108	1,089	1,039	1,026
Total Repayment	12,743	6,353	7,478	7,646

The Council's minimum revenue provision was reported to Cabinet on the 24 February 2022 as part of the 2022/23 budget report.

The Council's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP and capital receipts used to replace debt. The CFR is forecast to be circa £269m as at the 31 March 2022. Based on the above figures for expenditure and financing, the Council's estimated CFR is as follows:

Table 4: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Financing Requirement

	31.03.22 Revised £'000	31.03.23 Estimate £'000	31.03.24 Estimate £'000	31.03.25 Estimate £'000
General Fund	117,653	198,734	308,899	355,740
HRA	151,224	172,288	194,466	212,570
Total CFR	268,877	371,022	503,365	568,310

Asset management:

To ensure that capital assets continue to be of long-term use, the Council has an asset management strategy. The strategy recognises the critical role that real estate plays both in service delivery and in supporting the delivery of the Recovery Plan and future Corporate Plans and seeks to align property management in the wider sense to the corporate vision, plan and policies.

- The Council's Corporate Property Asset Management Strategy 2020-2024 was approved by Cabinet on the 25 June 2020.

Asset disposals:

When a capital asset is no longer needed, it may be sold so that the proceeds, known as capital receipts, can be spent on new assets or to repay debt. Repayments of capital grants, loans and investments also generate capital receipts.

Property is identified for disposal on the following criteria:

- It makes no contribution to the delivery of the Council's services or Corporate priorities nor generates any income and it has no potential for the future service delivery or strategic, regeneration, redevelopment purposes or
- Property or land site has been identified which would achieve a more cost effective service delivery and the existing site has no potential for future alternative service delivery or strategic, regeneration, redevelopment purposes.
- The Council's Property Acquisition and Disposal Strategy can be made available upon request.

Treasury Management

Treasury management is concerned with keeping sufficient but not excessive cash available to meet the Council's spending needs, while managing the risks involved. Surplus cash is invested until required, while a shortage of cash will be met by

borrowing, to avoid excessive credit balances or overdrafts in the bank current account.

Where the Council has cash injections through the year from income and grants, these surpluses are offset against capital cash shortfalls to reduce overall level of borrowing in year.

Due to decisions taken in the past, the Council currently (as at 31 December 2021) has £88.5m of short term borrowing at an average interest rate of circa 0.07% and long term borrowing of £138m. £106m relates to the HRA buy out, this debt is largely fixed with an average rate of around 3%. £15m relates to GF borrowing and a further £17m of HRA borrowing, with the interest rate for both loans being 1.56%. The Council as at the 31 December 2021 also had £65m of investments which had an average rate of circa 2.15%.

Borrowing strategy: The Council's current strategy is to take short term borrowing to take advantage of the low interest rate environment although this is expected to rise to 1% by May 2022. The Council's medium term financial plan does make provision for fixing a proportion of the debt in 2022/23, but to mitigate the impact of the forecast interest rate rise to 1% which is above MTFP forecasts, switching to longer term borrowing will likely to be deferred until 2023/24, although other forms of financing such as SWAPS may be considered. Current rates for short term borrowing are in the region of 0.50% whereas 25 year fixed rate maturity borrowing from the PWLB is circa 2.61% as at 10 February 2022.

Projected levels of the Council's total outstanding debt shown below, compared with the capital financing requirement as shown at **Table 4** above.

Table 5: Prudential Indicator: Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement

	31.03.22 Revised £'000	31.03.23 Estimate £'000	31.03.24 Estimate £'000	31.03.25 Estimate £'000
Total Debt	(253,525)	(352,622)	(490,478)	(554,001)
Total CFR	268,877	371,022	503,365	568,516

Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short-term. As can be seen from **Table 5**, the Council expects to comply with this in the medium term

Affordable borrowing limit: The Council is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the authorised limit for external debt) each. In line with statutory guidance, a lower "operational boundary" is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

Table 6: Prudential Indicators: Authorised limit and operational boundary for external debt.

Authorised Limit for Borrowing	2021/22 Limit £'000	2022/23 Limit £'000	2023/24 Limit £'000	2024/25 Limit £'000
Borrowing	532,000	732,000	1,010,000	1,142,000
Other long-term liabilities	23,000	23,000	23,000	23,000
Total Debt	555,000	755,000	1,033,000	1,165,000

Operational Boundary for Borrowing	2021/22 Limit £'000	2022/23 Limit £'000	2023/24 Limit £'000	2024/25 Limit £'000
Borrowing	241,000	341,000	480,000	546,000
Other long-term liabilities	18,000	17,000	16,000	15,000
Total Debt	259,000	358,000	496,000	561,000

Investment strategy: Treasury investments arise from receiving cash before it is paid out again. Investments made for service reasons or for pure financial gain are not generally considered to be part of treasury management.

The Council's policy on treasury investments is to strike the balance between security, liquidity and yield. Cash that is likely to be spent in the near term is invested securely through money market funds which diversify investments extensively through secondary investments. Money that will be held for longer terms is invested more widely, including in bonds, shares and property, to balance the risk of loss against the risk of receiving returns below inflation. Both near-term and longer-term investments may be held in pooled funds, where an external fund manager makes decisions on which particular investments to buy and the Council may request its money back at short notice.

- Further details on treasury investments are in treasury management strategy which was reported to Cabinet on the 24 February 2022 as part of the 2022/23 budget report.

Governance: Decisions on treasury management investment and borrowing are made daily and are therefore delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive and staff, who must act in line with the treasury management strategy approved by council. Quarterly updates on treasury management activity are presented to Cabinet as part of the quarterly budget monitoring report.

Investments for Service Purposes

The Council on occasion makes investments to assist local public services, including making loans to local organisations to promote economic growth. In light of the public service objective, the Council is willing to take more risk than with treasury investments.

Governance: Decisions on service investments are made by the relevant service manager in consultation with the Deputy Chief Executive and will be reported to full Council for approval where appropriate.

Commercial Activities

With central government financial support for local public services declining, the Council invests in commercial property primarily for Social, economic and regenerative purposes although financial gain can be a consequence of such investments. The Council lends to its wholly owned subsidiary A Better Choice for Property Ltd for the same reason.

With consideration to the factors above, the Council accepts higher risk on commercial investment than with treasury investments. The principal risk exposures include general decline in the economy or decline in sectors of the economy, possible long void periods, fall in property values. These risks are managed by diversification of the commercial portfolio, between retail, industrial and office accommodation. This portfolio mix ensures the Council is not over exposed in one sector of the economy if a down turn occurs. The Council also has leases with strong covenants in terms of length of lease, which ensures the council can budget with a measure of surety to manage debt repayments. The portfolio is monitored closely and lease renewal negotiations are started at an early stage to enable officers to engage in early marketing of units if they are to become void. The Council has a history of investing in and holding its commercial assets for a long period of time, therefore over coming any short term fluctuations in real estate values.

Governance:

Property and most other commercial investments are capital expenditure and purchases will therefore also be approved as part of the capital programme. As such they are subject to the same due diligence and Project Initiation Documentation as other projects.

- Details of the Council's Acquisition Strategy can be made available upon request.

Liabilities

In addition to debt of £270m detailed above, the Council is committed to making future payments to cover its pension fund deficit (valued at £1.4m) per annum although this will reduce over the long term.

Governance: Decisions on incurring new discretionary liabilities are taken by the Deputy Chief Executive and will be approved accordingly through the appropriate reporting channels including Cabinet/Council where necessary. The risk of liabilities crystallising and requiring payment is monitored by the Accountancy Team.

Revenue Budget Implications (general fund)

Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP are charged to revenue, offset by any investment income receivable. The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e. the amount funded from Council Tax, business rates and general government grants.

Table 7: Prudential Indicator: Proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream

	2021/22 Revised	2022/23 Budget	2023/24 Budget	2024/25 Budget
Financing costs (£,000)	850	1,775	2,918	3,831
Proportion of net revenue stream	5.64%	11.31%	21.5%	27.72%

The net financing costs as a percentage of revenue increases over the forecast period as investment balances slightly reduce as reserves are used to fund projects. Debt costs (including MRP) are also due to increase as interest rate forecasts assume that interest rates will rise over the period which will increase borrowing costs as the current strategy of short term borrowing is more susceptible to interest rate fluctuations. The revenues streams are also reducing with New Homes Bonus income totally removed from 2023/24 onwards. This strategy will be continually reviewed as per the treasury management strategy. It is worth highlighting that the increase proportion of net revenue stream does not take account of the increasing rental inflows of the assets which goes to revenue.

Sustainability: Due to the very long-term nature of capital expenditure and financing, the revenue budget implications of expenditure incurred in the next few years will extend for up to 50 years into the future. The Deputy Chief Executive is satisfied that the proposed capital programme is prudent, affordable and sustainable and the Council has adequate controls to review investment decisions should the funding outlook adversely change. The projects planned are supported by robust business cases that generate positive cash in-flows to the Council, the capital plan supports the growth and prosperity of the Borough which will underpin other income streams to the Council such as business rates and fees and charges income.

Knowledge and Skills

The Council employs professionally qualified and experienced staff in senior positions with responsibility for making capital expenditure, borrowing and investment decisions. For example, the Deputy Chief Executive is an experienced CIPFA qualified accountant.

The Council's also identifies and supports staff training needs through the staff appraisal process, and when the responsibilities of individual members of staff change.

Officers attend training courses, seminars and conferences provided by Arlingclose and CIPFA. Relevant Officers are also encouraged to study for relevant professional qualifications.

Where Council staff do not have the knowledge and skills required, use is made of external advisers and consultants that are specialists in their field. The Council currently employs Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers, and a variety of property consultants which are identified to ensure their strengths reflect the requirements of the council. This approach is more cost effective than employing such staff directly, and ensures that the Council has access to knowledge and skills commensurate with its risk appetite.

Minimum Revenue Provision Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2022/23

Where the Authority finances capital expenditure by debt, it must put aside resources to repay that debt in later years. The amount charged to the revenue budget for the repayment of debt is known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), although there has been no statutory minimum since 2008. The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Authority to have regard to the former Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's (MHCLG) Guidance on *Minimum Revenue Provision* most recently issued in 2018.

The broad aim of the MHCLG Guidance is to ensure that capital expenditure is financed over a period that is either reasonably commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure provides benefits, or, in the case of borrowing supported by the Government Revenue Support Grant, reasonably commensurate with the period implicit in the determination of that grant

The MHCLG Guidance requires the Authority to approve an Annual MRP Statement each year, and recommends a number of options for calculating a prudent amount of MRP. The following statement incorporates options recommended in the Guidance as well as locally determined prudent methods.

For unsupported capital expenditure incurred after 31st March 2008, MRP will be determined by charging the expenditure over the expected useful life of the relevant assets as the principal repayment on an annuity with an interest rate in line with PWLB rates for the year of expenditure, starting in the year after the asset becomes operational. MRP on purchases of freehold land will be charged over 50 years. MRP on expenditure not related to fixed assets but which has been capitalised by regulation or direction will be charged over 20 years, unless a bespoke MRP policy is more appropriate, bespoke MRP policies will be reported to Council accordingly.

For assets acquired by leases or the Private Finance Initiative, MRP will be determined as being equal to the element of the rent or charge that goes to write down the balance sheet liability.

Where former operating leases have been brought onto the balance sheet on 1st April 2022 due to the adoption of the IFRS 16 Leases accounting standard, and the asset values have been adjusted for accruals, prepayments, premiums and/or discounts, then the annual MRP charges will be adjusted so that the total charge to revenue remains unaffected by the new standard.

There is no MRP provision for Loans made to the Council's wholly owned companies, however the capital receipt that arises on the repayment of principal amount will be applied on an annual basis used to reduce the CFR instead.

No MRP will be charged in respect of assets held within the Housing Revenue Account.

MRP in respect of the £119m payment made in 2012 to exit the Housing Revenue Account subsidy system will be determined as being equal to the principal amount repaid on the loans borrowed to finance that payment. The outstanding balance in relation to the HRA subsidy will be £97.6m as at 1 April 2022.

Capital expenditure incurred during 2022/23 will not be subject to a MRP charge until 2023/24.

Based on the Authority's latest estimate of its Capital Financing Requirement on 31 March 2022, the budget for MRP has been set as follows:

	31.03.2022 Estimated CFR £'000	2022/23 Estimated MRP £'000
Unsupported capital expenditure after 31.03.2008	84,653	1,664
Loans to wholly owned companies *	33,000	308
Total General Fund	117,653	1,972
Assets in the Housing Revenue Account	35,784	0
Private Finance Initiative **	17,776	1,089
HRA subsidy reform payment ***	97,664	2,000
Total Housing Revenue Account	151,224	3,089
Total	268,877	5,061

* Forecast capital receipts from repayment of principal

** Annual payment to reduce CFR liability

*** Repayment of loans that reach maturity

Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2022/23

Introduction

Treasury management is the management of the Authority's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. The Authority has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the potential loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk are therefore central to the Authority's prudent financial management.

Treasury risk management is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2017 Edition* (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Authority to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Authority's legal obligation under the Local Government Act 2003 to have regard to the CIPFA Code.

Investments held for service purposes or for commercial profit are considered in the Investment Strategy which was presented to Cabinet on the 24 February 2022.

External Context

External context covers the following areas and is detailed at Appendix A with supporting tables.

- Economic Background
- Credit Outlook
- Interest Rate Forecast

Local Context

On 31 December 2021 the Authority held £227m borrowing, of which £88.5m related to short term borrowing, £15m long-term borrowing to the General Fund and £123.6m to the Housing Revenue Account. The Council also had investments of £64m. This is set out in further detail at **Appendix B**. Forecast changes in these sums are shown in the balance sheet analysis in **Table 1** below.

Table 1: Balance Sheet Summary and Forecast

	31.3.21	31.3.22	31.3.23	31.3.24	31.3.25
	Actual	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
General Fund CFR	110,389	117,653	198,734	308,899	355,740
HRA CFR	153,275	151,224	172,288	194,466	212,570
Total CFR	263,664	268,877	371,022	503,365	568,310
Less: Other debt liabilities *	(18,884)	(17,776)	(16,687)	(15,648)	(14,622)
Borrowing CFR	244,780	251,101	354,335	487,717	553,688
Less: External borrowing	(93,500)	(117,278)	(197,984)	(308,149)	(354,990)
Less: HRA External borrowing**	(106,664)	(118,471)	(137,951)	(166,681)	(185,183)
Internal borrowing	44,616	15,352	18,399	12,887	13,515
Less: Usable reserves	(63,850)	(63,850)	(63,850)	(63,850)	(63,850)
Less: Working capital	(44,716)	(44,716)	(44,716)	(44,716)	(44,716)
Investments	(63,950)	(93,214)	(90,167)	(95,679)	(95,051)

* finance leases, PFI liabilities and transferred debt that form part of the Council's total debt.

** A significant proportion of this debt relates to the HRA stock acquisition, for the 31 March 22 estimate it will be £97.6m.

The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment. The Council will consider the best financing options available at the time of investments/acquisitions; currently the Council is taking the opportunity to borrow short term money from the market to take advantage of low interest rates and enable long term investments to remain in place. The best approach will be considered 'as always' and placements made accordingly throughout if prudent to do so.

The Council has an increasing CFR due to the capital programme, which includes loans to A Better Choice for Property Ltd, Newtown Works and Vicarage Lane redevelopment as well as support for the HRA business plan and the growth of the Council's Housing Stock (the full capital plan can be seen at Appendix G of the Revenue Budget which was presented to Cabinet on 24 February 2022). To cover off this capital investment, external borrowing of circa £355m for the general fund and £168m for the HRA is assumed over the forecasted period and is reflected in the table above. However, this is only planned at present and decisions on individual investments will be reported and fully considered at the time of investment/acquisition to best benefit the Council.

CIPFA's *Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities* recommends that the Authority's total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years. Table 1 shows that the Authority expects to comply with this recommendation.

Borrowing Strategy

The Council currently holds £227m of loans, £123.6m represent loans to the HRA and £103.5m of general fund loans which are being used to fund previous capital expenditure. The balance sheet forecast in table 1 shows the Council expects to have borrowing of up to £235m by the end of 2021/22. The Council may also borrow additional sums to pre-fund future years' requirements, providing this does not exceed the authorised limit for borrowing of £732m.

Objectives: The Council's chief objective when borrowing money is to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving certainty of those costs over the period for which funds are required. The flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Authority's long-term plans change is a secondary objective. The Council monitors interest rate forecasts and takes advice where appropriate to determine when/if rates should be fixed.

Strategy: Given the significant cuts to public expenditure and in particular to local government funding, the Authority's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio. With short-term interest rates currently much lower than long-term rates, it is likely to be more cost effective in the short-term to either use internal resources, or to borrow short-term loans; again decisions will be made accordingly at the time of investment/acquisition.

The Council is currently favouring the use of short term borrowing which enables the Council to pay interest below that forecasted in business plans, and take advantage of the low interest rate environment, despite provision within the 2022/23 budget to make further long term borrowing, due to revised forecast for interest rates the policy for 2022/23 will likely be to remain with all short to funding. By using borrowing rather than internal resources this has enabled long term investments funded from reserves to remain in place which support the borrowing costs and provides a return to the Council. The benefits of changing strategy will be monitored regularly considering interest rate forecasts and try to capture the moment when fixing borrowing long term will be advantageous over short term funds. Arlingclose will assist the Authority with this 'cost of carry' and breakeven analysis. Its output may determine whether the Council borrows additional sums at long-term fixed rates in 2022/23 with a view to keeping future interest costs low, even if this causes additional cost in the short-term.

The Council has previously raised all of its long-term borrowing from the PWLB but will consider long-term loans from other sources including banks, pensions and local authorities, and will investigate the possibility of issuing bonds and similar instruments, in order to lower interest costs and reduce over-reliance on one source

of funding in line with the CIPFA Code. PWLB loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield; the Council intends to avoid this activity in order to retain its access to PWLB loans.

Alternatively, the Council may arrange forward starting loans, where the interest rate is fixed in advance, but the cash is received in later years. This would enable certainty of cost to be achieved without suffering a cost of carry in the intervening period.

In addition, the Council may borrow further short-term loans (normally for up to one month) to cover unplanned cash flow shortages.

Sources: The approved sources of long-term and short-term borrowing are:

- HM Treasury PWLB lending facility (formerly Public Works Loan Board)
- any institution approved for investments (see below)
- any other bank or building society authorised to operate in the UK
- any other UK public sector body
- UK public and private sector pension funds (except Kent County Council Pension Fund)
- capital market bond investors
- UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc and other special purpose companies created to enable local authority bond issues

In addition, capital finance may be raised by the following methods that are not borrowing, but may be classed as other debt liabilities:

- leases
- hire purchase
- Private Finance Initiative
- sale and leaseback

Municipal Bond Agency: UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc was established in 2014 by the Local Government Association as an alternative to the PWLB. It issues bonds on the capital markets and lends the proceeds to local authorities. This is a more complicated source of finance than the PWLB for two reasons: borrowing authorities may be required to provide bond investors with a guarantee to refund their investment in the event that the agency is unable to for any reason; and there will be a lead time of several months between committing to borrow and knowing the interest rate payable. Any decision to borrow from the Agency will therefore be the subject of a separate report to Cabinet.

Short-term and Variable Rate loans: These loans leave the Council exposed to the risk of short-term interest rate rises and are therefore subject to the interest rate exposure limits in the treasury management indicators below. Financial derivatives may be used to manage this interest rate risk (see section below).

Debt Rescheduling: The PWLB allows authorities to repay loans before maturity and either pay a premium or receive a discount according to a set formula based on current interest rates. Other lenders may also be prepared to negotiate premature redemption terms. The Council may take advantage of this and replace some loans with new loans, or repay loans without replacement, where this is expected to lead to an overall cost saving or a reduction in risk.

Treasury Investment Strategy

The Council holds significant invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. In the past 9 months, the Council's treasury investment balance of circa £65m although levels fluctuate with cash flows, these levels are expected to slowly reduce over the coming years as reserves are used to support the MTFP, General Fund and HRA capital programmes. Further reductions could be incurred if internal borrowing is used to support capital acquisitions rather the external borrowing.

Objectives: The CIPFA Code requires the Council to invest its treasury funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Council's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk receiving unsuitably low investment income. Where balances are expected to be invested for more than one year, the Authority will aim to achieve a total return that is equal or higher than the prevailing rate of inflation, in order to maintain the spending power of the sum invested.

Strategy: Given the increasing risk and very low returns from short-term unsecured bank investments, the Council will continue to use money market funds for liquidity which provide higher returns and stronger diversification, and will use pooled funds for strategic investments. The Council will work closely with its treasury management advisors 'Arlingclose' to explore new investment opportunities which will complement the portfolio including Tri-Repo's and Alternatives. This overall approach represents a continuation of the strategies which have been adopted over the last few years.

Approved Counterparties: The Council may invest its surplus funds with any of the counterparty types in table 2 below, subject to the cash limits (per counterparty) and the time limits shown.

Table 2: Approved Investment Counterparties and Limits

Sector	Time limit	Counterparty limit	Sector limit
The UK Government	50 years	Unlimited	n/a
Subsidiary Company	50 Years	£150m	£150m
Local authorities & other government entities	25 years	£15m	Unlimited
Secured investments *	25 years	£5m	Unlimited
Banks (unsecured) *	13 months	£5m	Unlimited
Building societies (unsecured) *	13 months	£5m	£5m
Registered providers (unsecured) *	5 years	£10m	£10m
Money market funds *	n/a	£10m	£60m
Strategic pooled funds	n/a	£15m	£60m
Real estate investment trusts	n/a	£15m	£15m
Other investments *	5 years	£1.5m	£5m

This table must be read in conjunction with the notes below

*** Minimum credit rating:** Treasury investments in the sectors marked with an asterisk will only be made with entities whose lowest published long-term credit rating is no lower than A-. Where available, the credit rating relevant to the specific investment or class of investment is used, otherwise the counterparty credit rating is used. However, investment decisions are never made solely based on credit ratings, and all other relevant factors including external advice will be taken into account.

For entities without published credit ratings, investments may be made either (a) where external advice indicates the entity to be of similar credit quality; or (b) to a maximum of £1.5m per counterparty where appropriate due diligence and checks are complete and an appropriate security is in place.

Government: Loans, bonds and bills issued or guaranteed by national governments, regional and local authorities and multilateral development banks. These investments are not subject to bail-in, and there is generally a lower risk of insolvency, although they are not zero risk. Investments with the UK Central Government are deemed to be zero credit risk due to its ability to create additional currency and therefore may be made in unlimited amounts for up to 50 years.

Banks and building society (unsecured): Accounts, deposits, certificates of deposit and senior unsecured bonds with banks and building societies, other than multilateral development banks. These investments are subject to the risk of credit loss via a bail-in should the regulator determine that the bank is failing or likely to fail. See below for arrangements relating to operational bank accounts.

Secured investments: Investments secured on the borrower's assets, which limits the potential losses in the event of insolvency. The amount and quality of the security

will be a key factor in the investment decision. Covered bonds and reverse repurchase agreements with banks and building societies are exempt from bail-in. Where there is no investment specific credit rating, but the collateral upon which the investment is secured has a credit rating, the higher of the collateral credit rating and the counterparty credit rating will be used. The combined secured and unsecured investments with any one counterparty will not exceed the cash limit for secured investments

Registered providers (unsecured): Loans and bonds issued by, guaranteed by registered providers of social housing or registered social landlords, formerly known as housing associations. These bodies are tightly regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (in England), the Scottish Housing Regulator, the Welsh Government and the Department for Communities (in Northern Ireland). As providers of public services, they retain the likelihood of receiving government support if needed.

Money market funds: Pooled funds that offer same-day or short notice liquidity and very low or no price volatility by investing in short-term money markets. They have the advantage over bank accounts of providing wide diversification of investment risks, coupled with the services of a professional fund manager in return for a small fee. Although no sector limit applies to money market funds, the Authority will take care to diversify its liquid investments over a variety of providers to ensure access to cash at all times.

Strategic Pooled Funds: Bond, equity and property funds offer enhanced returns over the longer term, but are more volatile in the short term. These allow the Council to diversify into asset classes other than cash without the need to own and manage the underlying investments. Because these funds have no defined maturity date, but are available for withdrawal after a notice period, their performance and continued suitability in meeting the Council's investment objectives will be monitored regularly.

Real estate investment trusts: Shares in companies that invest mainly in real estate and pay the majority of their rental income to investors in a similar manner to pooled property funds. As with property funds, REITs offer enhanced returns over the longer term, but are more volatile especially as the share price reflects changing demand for the shares as well as changes in the value of the underlying properties.

Other investments: This category covers treasury investments not listed above, for example unsecured corporate bonds and company loans. Non-bank companies cannot be bailed-in but can become insolvent placing the Council's investment at risk.

Operational bank accounts: The Council may incur operational exposures, for example through current accounts, collection accounts and merchant acquiring services, to any UK bank with credit ratings no lower than BBB- and with assets greater than £25 billion. These are not classed as investments, but are still subject to the risk of a bank bail-in, and balances will therefore be kept below £1m per bank. The Bank of England has stated that in the event of failure, banks with assets greater than £25 billion are more likely to be bailed-in than made insolvent, increasing the chance of the Authority maintaining operational continuity

Risk Assessment and Credit Ratings: Credit ratings are obtained and monitored by the Council's treasury advisers, who will notify changes in ratings as they occur. The credit rating agencies in current use are listed in the Treasury Management Practices document. Where an entity has its credit rating downgraded so that it fails to meet the approved investment criteria then:

- no new investments will be made,
- any existing investments that can be recalled or sold at no cost will be, and
- full consideration will be given to the recall or sale of all other existing investments with the affected counterparty.

Where a credit rating agency announces that a credit rating is on review for possible downgrade (also known as "negative watch") so that it may fall below the approved rating criteria, then only investments that can be withdrawn on the next working day will be made with that organisation until the outcome of the review is announced. This policy will not apply to negative outlooks, which indicate a long-term direction of travel rather than an imminent change of rating.

Other Information on the Security of Investments: The Council understands that credit ratings are good, but not perfect, predictors of investment default. Full regard will therefore be given to other available information on the credit quality of the organisations in which it invests, including credit default swap prices, financial statements, information on potential government support and reports in the quality financial press and analysis and advice from the Authority's treasury management adviser. No investments will be made with an organisation if there are substantive doubts about its credit quality, even though it may otherwise meet the above criteria.

When deteriorating financial market conditions affect the creditworthiness of all organisations, as happened in 2008 and 2020, this is not generally reflected in credit ratings, but can be seen in other market measures. In these circumstances, the Council will restrict its investments to those organisations of higher credit quality and reduce the maximum duration of its investments to maintain the required level of security. The extent of these restrictions will be in line with prevailing financial market conditions. If these restrictions mean that insufficient commercial organisations of high credit quality are available to invest the Council's cash balances, then the surplus will be deposited with the UK Government, or with other local authorities. This will cause investment returns to fall but will protect the principal sum invested.

Investment Limits: The Council's revenue reserves available to cover investment losses are forecast to be £25.6m on 31st March 2022. In order to limit the Council's risk no fund shall have more than the reserve balance available. However with the exception of the UK Government and the Council's subsidiary Company, a maximum of £15m will be deposited with a single organisation. A group of entities under the same ownership will be treated as a single organisation for limit purposes.

Credit risk exposures arising from non-treasury investments, financial derivatives and balances greater than £500,000 in operational bank accounts count against the relevant investment limits.

Limits will also be placed on fund managers, investments in brokers' nominee accounts, foreign countries and industry sectors as below. Investments in pooled funds and multilateral development banks do not count against the limit for any single foreign country, since the risk is diversified over many countries.

Table 3: Investment Limits

	Cash limit
Any single organisation, except the UK Central Government	£15m each
UK Central Government	unlimited
Any group of organisations under the same ownership**	£10m per group
Any group of pooled funds under the same management *	£15m per manager
Foreign countries	£5m per country
Registered providers and registered social landlords	£10m in total
Unsecured investments with Building Societies	£5m in total
Loans to unrated corporates	£5m in total
Loans to Council subsidiaries	£150m in total
Money Market Funds	£60m in total
Real estate investment trusts	£15m in total

* Where investments are subject to capital appreciation/depreciation, the initial value of the investment is considered in relation to the table above.

** Except where significant segregation of assets is confirmed which would stop any cross subsidising of investments in the event of default.

Liquidity Management: The Council uses cash flow forecasting to determine the maximum period for which funds may prudently be committed. The forecast is compiled on a pessimistic basis to minimise the risk of the Council being forced to borrow on unfavourable terms to meet its financial commitments. Limits on long-term investments are set by reference to the Council's medium term financial plan and cash flow forecast.

The Authority will spread its liquid cash over at least four providers (e.g. bank accounts and money market funds) to ensure that access to cash is maintained in the event of operational difficulties at any one provider.

Treasury Management Indicators

The Council measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using the following indicators.

Security: The Council has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average credit score of its investment portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2, etc.) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment. Unrated investments are assigned a score based on their perceived risk.

	Target
Portfolio average credit score	6

Maturity Structure of Borrowing: This indicator is set to control the Council's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of borrowing will be:

	Upper	Lower
Under 12 months	100%	0%
12 months and within 24 months	100%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	100%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	100%	0%
10 years and above	100%	0%

Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

Principal Sums Invested for Periods Longer than a year: The purpose of this indicator is to control the Council's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The limits on the total principal sum invested to final maturities beyond the period end will be:

	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£15m	£15m	£15m

Related Matters

The CIPFA Code requires the Authority to include the following in its treasury management strategy

Financial Derivatives: Local authorities have previously made use of financial derivatives embedded into loans and investments both to reduce interest rate risk (e.g. interest rate collars and forward deals) and to reduce costs or increase income at the expense of greater risk (e.g. LOBO loans and callable deposits). The general power of competence in Section 1 of the *Localism Act 2011* removes much of the uncertainty over local authorities' use of standalone financial derivatives (i.e. those that are not embedded into a loan or investment).

The Council will only use standalone financial derivatives (such as swaps, forwards, futures and options) where they can be clearly demonstrated to reduce the overall level of the financial risks that the Council is exposed to. Additional risks presented, such as credit exposure to derivative counterparties, will be taken into account when determining the overall level of risk. Embedded derivatives, including those present in pooled funds, will not be subject to this policy, although the risks they present will be managed in line with the overall treasury risk management strategy.

Financial derivative transactions may be arranged with any organisation that meets the approved investment criteria, assessed using the appropriate credit rating for derivative exposure. An allowance for credit risk calculated using the methodology in the Treasury Management Practices document will count against the counterparty credit limit and the relevant foreign country limit.

In line with the CIPFA Code, the Authority will seek external advice and will consider that advice before entering into financial derivatives to ensure that it fully understands the implications.

Housing Revenue Account: On 1st April 2012, the Council notionally split each of its existing long-term loans into General Fund and HRA pools.

In the future, new long-term loans borrowed will be assigned in their entirety to one pool or the other. Interest payable and other costs/income arising from long-term loans (e.g. premiums and discounts on early redemption) will be charged/ credited to the respective revenue account. Differences between the value of the HRA loans pool and the HRA's underlying need to borrow (adjusted for HRA balance sheet resources available for investment) will result in a notional cash balance which may be positive or negative. This balance will be measured annually and interest transferred between the General Fund and HRA at the Authority's average interest rate on investments, adjusted for credit risk.

Markets in Financial Instruments Directive: The Authority has opted up to professional client status with its providers of financial services, including advisers, banks, brokers and fund managers, allowing it access to a greater range of services but without the greater regulatory protections afforded to individuals and small companies. Given the size and range of the Authority's treasury management activities, the Chief Financial Officer believes this to be the most appropriate status

Investment Advisers: The Council has appointed Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers and receives specific advice on investment, debt and capital

finance issues. The quality of this service is controlled by the need to justify the ongoing appointment of Arlingclose through the completion of a 'Use of Consultant' pro-forma as stipulated in contract procedure rules. The Authority's Treasury Management Function is also periodically reviewed by Internal and External audit.

Financial Implications

The general fund budget for net investment interest for 2022/23 is £1.88m, this represents a debt expenses of £1m and interest of £2.9m which includes £1.7m from the council's Property Company. The remaining £1.2m is based on an investment portfolio of around £33m which is anticipated to provide an average return of 3.6%.

The budget for debt interest payable in 2022/23 of £1m is based on an average debt portfolio of £163m at an average interest rate of 0.60%.

In relation to the HRA, the interest on investment income for 2022/23 is forecast at £10,000 which represents interest payable on their reserves. The budget for debt interest paid in the HRA for 2021/22 is forecast at £4m, based on an average long debt portfolio of £114m and internal borrowing charges from the GF with an overall average interest rate of 3.5%. HRA balances are invested with general fund balances and an apportionment of interest is made at the end of the year through the item 8 calculation, this was covered previously in this report under 'Policy on Apportioning Interest to the HRA'.

If actual levels of investments and borrowing, and actual interest rates differ from those forecast, performance against budget will be correspondingly different. The actual position against budget is monitored through the Council's budget monitoring processes and reported to management on a quarterly basis accordingly.

Other Options Considered

The CIPFA Code do not prescribe any particular treasury management strategy for local authorities to adopt. The Chief Finance Officer has consulted the Portfolio Holder for Finance & IT, believes that the above strategy represents an appropriate balance between risk management and cost effectiveness. Some alternative strategies, with their financial and risk management implications, are listed below.

Alternative	Impact on income and expenditure	Impact on risk management
Invest in a narrower range of counterparties and/or for shorter times	Interest income will be lower	Lower chance of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be greater
Invest in a wider range of counterparties and/or for longer times	Interest income will be higher	Increased risk of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be smaller
Borrow additional sums at long-term fixed interest rates	Debt interest costs will rise; this is unlikely to be offset by higher investment income	Higher investment balance leading to a higher impact in the event of a default; however long-term interest costs may be more certain
Borrow short-term or variable loans instead of long-term fixed rates	Debt interest costs will initially be lower	Increases in debt interest costs will be broadly offset by rising investment income in the medium term, but long term costs may be less certain
Reduce level of borrowing	Saving on debt interest is likely to exceed lost investment income	Reduced investment balance leading to a lower impact in the event of a default; however long-term interest costs may be less certain

Appendix A – Arlingclose Economic & Interest Rate Forecast December 2021

External Context

Economic background: The ongoing impact on the UK from coronavirus, together with higher inflation, higher interest rates, and the country's trade position post-Brexit, will be major influences on the Authority's treasury management strategy for 2022/23.

The Bank of England (BoE) increased Bank Rate to 0.25% in December 2021 while maintaining its Quantitative Easing programme at £895 billion. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted 8-1 in favour of raising rates, and unanimously to maintain the asset purchase programme.

Within the announcement the MPC noted that the pace of the global recovery was broadly in line with its November Monetary Policy Report. Prior to the emergence of the Omicron coronavirus variant, the Bank also considered the UK economy to be evolving in line with expectations, however the increased uncertainty and risk to activity the new variant presents, the Bank revised down its estimates for Q4 GDP growth to 0.6% from 1.0%. Inflation was projected to be higher than previously forecast, with CPI likely to remain above 5% throughout the winter and peak at 6% in April 2022. The labour market was generally performing better than previously forecast and the BoE now expects the unemployment rate to fall to 4% compared to 4.5% forecast previously, but notes that Omicron could weaken the demand for labour.

UK CPI for November 2021 registered 5.1% year on year, up from 4.2% in the previous month. Core inflation, which excludes the more volatile components, rose to 4.0% y/y from 3.4%. The most recent labour market data for the three months to October 2021 showed the unemployment rate fell to 4.2% while the employment rate rose to 75.5%.

In October 2021, the headline 3-month average annual growth rate for wages were 4.9% for total pay and 4.3% for regular pay. In real terms, after adjusting for inflation, total pay growth was up 1.7% while regular pay was up 1.0%. The change in pay growth has been affected by a change in composition of employee jobs, where there has been a fall in the number and proportion of lower paid jobs.

Gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 1.3% in the third calendar quarter of 2021 according to the initial estimate, compared to a gain of 5.5% q/q in the previous quarter, with the annual rate slowing to 6.6% from 23.6%. The Q3 gain was modestly below the consensus forecast of a 1.5% q/q rise. During the quarter activity measures were boosted by sectors that reopened following pandemic restrictions, suggesting that wider spending was flat. Looking ahead, while monthly GDP readings suggest there had been some increase in momentum in the latter part of Q3, Q4 growth is expected to be soft.

GDP growth in the euro zone increased by 2.2% in calendar Q3 2021 following a gain of 2.1% in the second quarter and a decline of -0.3% in the first. Headline inflation has been strong, with CPI registering 4.9% year-on-year in November, the fifth successive month of inflation. Core CPI inflation was 2.6% y/y in November, the fourth month of successive increases from July's 0.7% y/y. At these levels, inflation is above the European Central Bank's target of 'below, but close to 2%', putting some pressure on its long-term stance of holding its main interest rate of 0%.

The US economy expanded at an annualised rate of 2.1% in Q3 2021, slowing sharply from gains of 6.7% and 6.3% in the previous two quarters. In its December 2021 interest rate announcement, the Federal Reserve continue to maintain the Fed Funds rate at between 0% and 0.25% but outlined its plan to reduce its asset purchase programme earlier than previously stated and signalled they are in favour of tightening interest rates at a faster pace in 2022, with three 0.25% movements now expected.

Credit outlook: Since the start of 2021, relatively benign credit conditions have led to credit default swap (CDS) prices for the larger UK banks to remain low and had steadily edged down throughout the year up until mid-November when the emergence of Omicron has caused them to rise modestly. However, the generally improved economic outlook during 2021 helped bank profitability and reduced the level of impairments many had made as provisions for bad loans. However, the relatively recent removal of coronavirus-related business support measures by the government means the full impact on bank balance sheets may not be known for some time.

The improved economic picture during 2021 led the credit rating agencies to reflect this in their assessment of the outlook for the UK sovereign as well as several financial institutions, revising them from negative to stable and even making a handful of rating upgrades.

Looking ahead, while there is still the chance of bank losses from bad loans as government and central bank support is removed, the institutions on the Authority's counterparty list are well-capitalised and general credit conditions across the sector are expected to remain benign. Duration limits for counterparties on the Authority's lending list are under regular review and will continue to reflect economic conditions and the credit outlook.

Interest rate forecast: The Authority's treasury management adviser Arlingclose is forecasting that Bank Rate will continue to rise in calendar Q1 2022 to subdue inflationary pressures and the perceived desire by the BoE to move away from emergency levels of interest rates.

Investors continue to price in multiple rises in Bank Rate over the next forecast horizon, and Arlingclose believes that although interest rates will rise again, the increases will not be to the extent predicted by financial markets. In the near-term, the risks around Arlingclose's central case are to the upside while over the medium-term the risks become more balanced.

Yields are expected to remain broadly at current levels over the medium-term, with the 5, 10 and 20 year gilt yields expected to average around 0.65%, 0.90%, and 1.15% respectively. The risks around for short and medium-term yields are initially to the upside but shifts lower later, while for long-term yields the risk is to the upside. However, as ever there will almost certainly be short-term volatility due to economic and political uncertainty and events.

A more detailed economic and interest rate forecast provided by Arlingclose is shown below:

Appendix K

	Dec-21	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24
Official Bank Rate													
Upside risk	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
Arlingclose Central Case	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
Downside risk	0.00	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25
3-month money market rate													
Upside risk	0.05	0.05	0.25	0.35	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
Arlingclose Central Case	0.25	0.55	0.55	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65
Downside risk	0.00	-0.25	-0.25	-0.30	-0.30	-0.30	-0.30	-0.35	-0.35	-0.35	-0.35	-0.35	-0.35
5yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.35	0.45	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.50	0.50	0.45	0.45
Arlingclose Central Case	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.60	0.65	0.70	0.75	0.75
Downside risk	-0.10	-0.20	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.30	-0.35	-0.40	-0.40
10yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.10	0.25	0.35	0.40	0.45	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.55	0.55	0.55
Arlingclose Central Case	0.80	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.90	0.90	0.95	0.95
Downside risk	-0.10	-0.25	-0.30	-0.35	-0.35	-0.35	-0.35	-0.35	-0.35	-0.40	-0.40	-0.40	-0.40
20yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.30	0.40	0.45	0.45	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
Arlingclose Central Case	1.00	1.05	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.15	1.15	1.15	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20
Downside risk	-0.15	-0.30	-0.35	-0.40	-0.40	-0.40	-0.40	-0.40	-0.40	-0.45	-0.45	-0.45	-0.45
50yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.25	0.30	0.40	0.45	0.45	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
Arlingclose Central Case	0.70	0.75	0.80	0.85	0.90	0.95	1.00	1.05	1.05	1.10	1.10	1.15	1.15
Downside risk	-0.15	-0.30	-0.35	-0.40	-0.40	-0.40	-0.40	-0.40	-0.40	-0.45	-0.45	-0.45	-0.45

PWLB Standard Rate (Maturity Loans) = Gilt yield + 1.00%

PWLB Certainty Rate (Maturity Loans) = Gilt yield + 0.80%

PWLB Infrastructure Rate (Maturity Loans) = Gilt yield + 0.60%

Appendix B – Existing Investment & Debt Portfolio Position as at 31/12/2021

Treasury Management Portfolio as at 31 December 2021

Counter Party	Deal Date	Rate %	Amount £	Fair Value £	Comment
Investment Accounts					
Goldman Sachs	Various	0.53%	50,000	52,391	**
ICD Portal - Blackrock	Various	0.00%	5,777,300	5,777,300	*
ICD Portal - BNP	Various	0.09%	6,984,200	6,984,200	*
ICD Portal - CCLA	Various	0.13%	6,989,200	6,989,200	*
ICD Portal - HSBC	Various	0.01%	3,896,200	3,896,200	*
ICD Portal - Invesco	Various	0.02%	5,087,700	5,087,700	*
Payden Global MMF	Various	0.91%	3,000,000	3,006,685	**
Total Investment Accounts			31,784,600	31,793,676	
Long Term Investments					
Property Investment					
A Better Choice of Property Ltd.***	Various		605,001	1,142,785	Value as at 31/03/2021
CCLA Local Authority Property Fund	Various	4.85%	11,000,000	13,236,979	
Equity Funds**					
CCLA Diversified Income Fund	Various	3.51%	3,000,000	3,194,193	
Investec Diversified Income Fund	28/03/2019	3.74%	2,500,000	2,433,504	
Kames Diversified Income Fund	13/05/2019	4.19%	5,500,000	5,631,119	
Schroder Income Maximiser	Various	3.06%	3,500,000	3,176,654	
UBS Multi Asset Income Fund	Various	4.81%	3,000,000	2,843,719	
UBS Global Income Equity Fund	29/07/2019	4.30%	1,500,000	1,426,883	
Total Long Term Investments			30,605,001	33,085,836	
Total Investment Portfolio			62,389,601	64,879,512	

* Money Market Fund (MMF) are AAA rated deposit facilities which have variable rates of interest but have constant net asset values. Interest rates are shown at the time of producing this report.

** Equity funds and the Property fund have variable rates of interest and also have fluctuating capital values, the amount stated is the current fair value.

*** A Better Choice Of Property Ltd. is a solely owned subsidiary of ABC

Debt Portfolio as at 31 December 2021

Counter Party	Deal Date	Rate %	Amount £	Maturity Date
Temporary Borrowing				
Wokingham Borough Council	21/06/2021	0.05%	10,000,000	21/01/2022
London Borough of Sutton	22/06/2021	0.05%	3,000,000	24/01/2022
Vale of Glamorgan Council	19/07/2021	0.08%	2,500,000	13/05/2022
Lichfield District Council	19/07/2021	0.07%	2,000,000	19/04/2022
Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council	20/07/2021	0.05%	5,000,000	20/01/2022
Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar	20/07/2021	0.04%	5,000,000	20/01/2022
Middlesbrough Council	21/07/2021	0.04%	5,000,000	21/01/2022
Tendering District Council	22/07/2021	0.04%	4,000,000	24/01/2022
Cambridge City Council	22/07/2021	0.04%	5,000,000	05/01/2022
Warwickshire County Council	05/08/2021	0.06%	10,000,000	05/04/2022
Middlesbrough Teeside PF	19/08/2021	0.07%	7,000,000	19/04/2022
Bridgend County Borough Council	24/08/2021	0.04%	5,000,000	24/02/2022
Mersyside Fire & Rescue	24/08/2021	0.06%	2,000,000	25/04/2022
North Somerset Council	25/08/2021	0.06%	2,000,000	25/04/2022
West Yorkshire Combined Authority	22/11/2021	0.07%	3,000,000	22/08/2022
New Forest District Council	24/11/2021	0.06%	1,500,000	24/05/2022
Winchester City Council	24/11/2021	0.06%	1,500,000	24/05/2022
Hampshire County Council	24/11/2021	0.09%	3,000,000	24/05/2022
Ryedale District Council	25/11/2021	0.08%	2,000,000	24/11/2022
Oxfordshire County Council	17/12/2021	0.15%	5,000,000	17/10/2022
North East Derbyshire District Council	17/12/2021	0.15%	5,000,000	16/12/2022
Total Temporary Borrowing			88,500,000	
Long Term Borrowing				
Public Works Loan Board - HRA	various	various	123,664,150	various
Public Works Loan Board - GF	13/07/2021	1.56%	15,000,000	13/07/2041
Total Long Term Borrowing			138,664,150	
Grand Total Borrowing			227,164,150	

Note: the loans made to ABCFP Ltd are not shown in the investment portfolio above, for completeness though the total draw down value of loans to the company as at 31st December 2021 was £32m

Detail of PWLB Loans Outstanding at 31 December 2021

Date of Advance	Loan Ref Number	Date of Repayment	Amount Outstanding £	Rate %
28/03/2012	*499500	28/03/2022	7,000,000	0.90%
28/03/2012	499516	28/03/2022	2,000,000	2.40%
28/03/2012	499514	28/03/2023	2,000,000	2.56%
28/03/2012	499507	28/03/2024	3,000,000	2.70%
28/03/2012	499503	28/03/2025	3,000,000	2.82%
28/03/2012	499505	28/03/2026	1,000,000	2.92%
28/03/2012	499496	28/03/2027	1,000,000	3.01%
28/03/2012	499509	28/03/2028	2,000,000	3.08%
28/03/2012	499497	28/03/2029	2,000,000	3.15%
28/03/2012	499510	28/03/2030	2,000,000	3.21%
28/03/2012	499498	28/03/2031	8,000,000	3.26%
28/03/2012	499511	28/03/2032	9,000,000	3.30%
28/03/2012	499499	28/03/2033	10,000,000	3.34%
28/03/2012	499512	28/03/2034	11,000,000	3.37%
28/03/2012	499506	28/03/2035	12,000,000	3.40%
28/03/2012	499513	28/03/2036	9,000,000	3.42%
28/03/2012	499515	28/02/2037	16,713,000	3.44%
29/03/2011	498502	29/03/2061	5,951,150	5.26%
13/07/2021	374161	13/07/2041	17,000,000	1.56%
Total HRA Borrowing			123,664,150	
13/07/2021	374159	13/07/2041	15,000,000	1.56%
Total GF Borrowing			15,000,000	

* Variable Rate Loan, the others are fixed rate

Investment Strategy Report 2022/23

Introduction

The Authority invests its money for three broad purposes:

- because it has surplus cash as a result of its day-to-day activities, for example when income is received in advance of expenditure (known as **treasury management investments**),
- to support local public services by lending to or buying shares in other organisations (**service investments**), and
- to earn investment income (known as **commercial investments** where this is the main purpose).

This investment strategy meet the requirements of statutory guidance issued by the government in January 2018, and focuses on the second and third of these categories.

Treasury Management Investments

The Authority typically receives its income in cash (e.g. from taxes and grants) before it pays for its expenditure in cash (e.g. through payroll and invoices). It also holds reserves for future expenditure and collects local taxes on behalf of other local authorities and central government. These activities, plus the timing of borrowing decisions, lead to a cash surplus which is invested in accordance with guidance from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). The balance of treasury management investments is expected to average around £40m during the 2022/23 financial year.

Contribution: The contribution that these investments make to the objectives of the Authority is to support effective treasury management activities.

Further details: Full details of the Authority's policies and its plan for 2022/23 for treasury management investments are covered in a separate document, the treasury management strategy which was reported to Cabinet on the 24 February 2022 as part of the Budget Setting Report.

Service Investments: Loans

Contribution: The Council lends money to local businesses, parish councils and its employees to support local public services and stimulate local economic growth. These service investments include loans to Councils subsidiary which is supporting the local economy as a high quality private landlord for privately rented residential units in addition supporting council services over a long term when dividends are payable. Other examples include temporary loans to businesses to enable/facilitate development and investment within the borough, and small loans to Parish councils to support urgent local issues in advance of raising precepts to fund the expenditure.

Security: The main risk when making service loans is that the borrower will be unable to repay the principal lent and/or the interest due. In order to limit this risk, and ensure that total exposure to service loans remains proportionate to the size of the Authority, upper limits on the outstanding loans to each category of borrower have been set as follows:

Table 1: Loans for service purposes

Category of borrower	31.3.2021 actual	2022/23
	Net figure in accounts	Approved Limit
	£'000	£'000
Subsidiaries	32,705	150,000
Parish Councils	20	200
Suppliers	0	10,000
Local businesses	0	1,500
Employees	0	100
TOTAL	32,705	161,800

Accounting standards require the Authority to set aside loss allowance for loans, reflecting the likelihood of non-payment. The figures for loans in the Authority's statement of accounts are shown net of this loss allowance. However, the Authority makes every reasonable effort to collect the full sum lent and has appropriate credit control arrangements in place to recover overdue repayments.

Risk assessment: The Authority assesses the risk of loss before entering into and whilst holding service loans by:-

Subsidiaries: The Council loans money to its subsidiary A Better Choice for Property Ltd. (the Property Company) to enable it to make acquisitions in support of its business plan. The development of the property company was in response to government funding cuts and the ambition of the Council to be self-sufficient of government grant through its entrepreneurial approach and commercial mind-set.

The original concept of the property company was subject to legal and professional advice and a full business model developed and approved by full council. The company became operational in November 2014 and made its first acquisitions.

With the Council being the sole shareholder of the property company it has good oversight and awareness of the ongoing obligations of the Company and receives reports to its Trading and Enterprise Board (TEB) which was established to oversee the Council's subsidiary companies.

TEB approved the Business Plans of the Property Company and recommends to Council any increases in the facilities agreement which provide the framework under which the property company can borrow money from the Council. The £150m approved limit recommended at Table 1 represents the current value approved by the Council. However, for the money to be drawn down, business models of proposed acquisition have to be presented to the TEB, and Full Council where appropriate for sign off before borrowing is approved.

In relation to monitoring risk of default, the loan facilities agreement has a number of financial covenants, one of which is the loan to current value (total borrowings outstanding to value of assets) which is monitored and reported to TEB on an annual basis.

The facilities agreement also ensures that the Council has appropriate security over sums borrowed with first charge, or an appropriate form of security over the assets of the Company. Should the property market move against the property Company then the Council will review and consider its options accordingly.

Parish Councils: The Council has made a number of loans in recent years to support parish councils with liquidity issues and to help fund costs associated with locally defending planning applications.

Where the council makes these loans appropriate loan agreements are in place to ensure that the money is recovered in a timely manner. In relation to risk the loans to Parish Councils are effectively underwritten by the ability of the Parish Council to raise precept accordingly to repay borrowed amounts.

Suppliers/Local Businesses/Employees: the Council as at 31/03/2021 did not have any loans made to these organisation, however it is felt prudent to make a provisional limit available under this strategy should any requirement arise in 2022/23.

As with the examples of lending as outlined above, any decision to lend within the limit stipulated within this report would require further approval at an appropriate level, with appropriate supporting material before funds were released.

Service Investments: Shares

Contribution: The Council invests in the shares for its subsidiary so that it can develop and high quality private landlord function as aforementioned under service investment loans.

Security: One of the risks of investing in shares is that they fall in value meaning that the initial outlay may not be recovered. In order to limit this risk, upper limits on the sum invested in each category of shares have been set as follows, the approval limit is comparable to the amount investment and not the current fair value:-

Table 2: Shares held for service purposes

Category of company	31.3.2021 actual			2022/23
	Amounts invested	Gains or losses	Value in accounts	Approved Limit
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Subsidiaries	605	537	1,142	1,000

Risk assessment: Shares in the Council's subsidiary property company have been made to enable the property company to have an element of working capital which enable it to explore investment opportunities.

The investment in Council subsidiary is not purely for financial return but to enable the development of a high quality landlord in the local area with a view to changing the offerings available through private renting, such as longer tenancy terms.

As the sole shareholder of the Property Company the council would have to consider the shares in this company in the wider context to encompass the loans as outlined earlier in this strategy.

As with all company related matters, any concerns the council or company have would be reported through the TEB accordingly.

Liquidity: In relation to the property company the Council views this as a long term investment and has therefore not defined a maximum period for which the funds are deposited.

If the Council made acquisitions of shares in other entities, it would consider the business model and set an initial investment period in conjunction with professional advisors. Where investment periods are for a long period they would still be regularly reviews and the investment time frame re-set accordingly based on the prevailing circumstances at the time. Longer term investments would generally be placed with a 5 year outlook subject to review.

Non-specified Investments: Shares are the only investment type that the Authority has identified that meets the definition of a non-specified investment in the

government guidance. The limits above on share investments are therefore also the Authority's upper limits on non-specified investments. The Authority has not adopted any procedures for determining further categories of non-specified investment since none are likely to meet the definition.

Commercial Investments: Property

Contribution: The Council invests in local, commercial property with the intention of making a contribution to the local economy through regeneration and a profit that will be spent on local public services.

The most recent example of this would be the completion of the Elwick development which transformed an empty space into a vibrant facility containing a Cinema, eateries and hotel. This site will also generate income through additional business rates to the council in addition to rental income streams.

Another recent example would also be the light industrial units which have been constructed at Carlton Road. These units have been developed to support small businesses expand in the local area and provide more units to support the Council existing offering at Ellingham industrial estate. Again, in addition to the economic benefits of Carlton Road it is expected to provide an income stream to the Council which can be used to maintain the current level of public services in Ashford as government support is cut.

The final example of Council intervention in supporting local prosperity was the acquisition of Park Mall, this shopping mall had high void rates and little prospects of improvement, however following the Council's acquisition and work in offering attractive tenancies and support to small businesses, this area has turned into a thriving mall once more with very few empty properties.

All commercial investments carry an element of risk and the individual schemes highlighted above have all been adversely impacted by the Covid19 Pandemic. However, the recovery from Covid19 has commenced with the majority of these investments recovering and delivering the regeneration and economic benefits as intended.

Table 3: Property held for investment purposes

Property	Actual	31.3.2021 actual		31.3.2022 forecast	
	Purchase cost	Gains or (losses)	Value in accounts	Gains or (losses)	Value in accounts
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Ellingham Industrial estate units	2,780*	3905	6,685	334	7,019
Park Mall (retail units) purchase	4,404	2975	7,379	(184)	7,195
International House (Offices)	7,731	7362	15,093	(377)	14,716
Carlton Road light industrial units	6,823	162	6,985	349	7,334
Elwick – Restaurants, Cinema, Hotel	35,915 (as at 31/03/2021)	(14,326)	21,589	(540)	21,049
Matalan	5,031	(145)	4,886	(122)	4,764
TOTAL	62,684	(67)	62,617	(540)	62,077

* Historical value as at 2007 – Acquisition of site was purchased between 1935 and 1980 as it was acquired in stages.

It is anticipated that the Ashford Market will continue to drop during 2022/23 and movements will be reflected in the Council's accounts accordingly.

Security: In accordance with government guidance, the Authority considers a property investment to be secure if its accounting valuation is at or higher than its purchase cost including taxes and transaction costs.

The Council's budget setting and budget reporting arrangements will highlight and manage any impacts arising from this reduction in security.

Risk assessment: The Authority assesses the risk of loss before entering into and whilst holding property investments by engaging professional consultants to ensure the existing valuation of the acquisition is fair, and also provide commentary on the market the asset will be competing with. As a council though it is accepted that

these assets are not purely acquired for financial gain and therefore the return on investment required will not be as high as for a private investor when considering an acquisition. That being said the Council will not pay above a fair valuation unless it had a significant strategic purpose to the Authority.

As part of the business plan the council will consider the ongoing requirements of the investment in terms of repairs and maintenance and future capital costs, it will also understand the requirement to tenant commercial property and consider who tenants will be attracted and lease renewals conducted where incumbent tenants are in place. As part of this process the Council will carry out due diligence on any new tenant to ensure that they are financially sound and able to meet the lease obligations.

The ongoing monitoring of tenants is performed by Council as part of its budget monitoring arrangements, the Council's Corporate Property Team deal with lease events and the repairs and maintenance of assets. During the Covid19 Pandemic additional support was offered to tenants to support them through this period.

This report currently reflects that the asset values are above acquisition costs although these are expected to drop as at 31 March 2022. It is accepted that capital values rise and fall and therefore significant consideration is also given to the income streams of the assets to ensure that the cash inflows are sufficient to meet related expenditure, i.e. borrowing, repairs and maintenance costs.

Liquidity: Compared with other investment types, property is relatively difficult to sell and convert to cash at short notice, and can take a considerable period to sell in certain market conditions. When making acquisitions the Council takes a long term view and anticipates the borrowing requirement accordingly. In terms of liquidity the Council has the ability to borrow from a number of sources and therefore it is unlikely that an event occurred where the Council would be required to sell assets to re-pay the linked debt. This long term view is more prevalent now than ever as property values decline and any asset disposals could lead to losses real losses.

Loan Commitments and Financial Guarantees

Although not strictly counted as investments, since no money has exchanged hands yet, loan commitments and financial guarantees carry similar risks to the Authority and are included here for completeness.

The Authority has contractually committed to make up to £150m of loans to its Subsidiary A Better Choice for Property Ltd. as part of the facilities agreement, should it request it and it is supported by an approved business plan. This is covered under service loans.

Capacity, Skills and Culture

Elected members and statutory officers:

The Council has treasury management advisors that are contracted to provide training and support to both officers and members. This includes regular strategy meetings which statutory officers and the responsible portfolio holder attend. The CFO has to be a member of professional accountancy body and participate in its Continual Professional Development scheme so that their skills are maintained and current.

Commercial deals: On the occasions that the Council undertakes to make a commercial deal the statutory officers are required to ensure that Members have appropriate information to make an informed decision. This requires the Council to seek appropriate professional advice to inform decisions from properly qualified advisors. This advice is then reported to members to support the decision making process. As mentioned previously the Council has contracts Treasury Management advisors, Valuers and other specialists to ensure that there is ready access to support.

Corporate governance: The Council's Constitution outlines the decision making process that has been put in place and the governance arrangements to ensure transparency and openness in decision making. Investment decisions are taken in the context of the Council's Corporate Plan and medium term financial plans.

Investment Indicators

The Authority has set the following quantitative indicators to allow elected members and the public to assess the Authority's total risk exposure as a result of its investment decisions.

Total risk exposure: The first indicator shows the Authority's total exposure to potential investment losses. This includes amounts the Authority is contractually committed to lend but have yet to be drawn down.

Table 5: Total investment exposure

Total investment exposure	31.03.2021 Actual	31.03.2022 Forecast	31.03.2023 Forecast
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Treasury management investments	30,000	30,000	30,000
Service investments: Loans	32,705	33,113	56,113
Service investments: Shares	475	605	810
Commercial investments: Property	62,684	62,614	62,077
TOTAL INVESTMENTS	125,864	126,332	149,000
Commitments to lend	117,295	116,887	93,887
TOTAL EXPOSURE	243,159	243,219	242,887

How investments are funded: Government guidance is that these indicators should include how investments are funded. Since the Authority does not normally associate particular assets with particular liabilities, this guidance is difficult to comply with. However, the following investments could be described as being funded by borrowing. The remainder of the Authority's investments are funded by usable reserves and income received in advance of expenditure.

Table 6: Investments funded by borrowing

Investments funded by borrowing	31.03.2021 Actual	31.03.2022 Forecast	31.03.2023 Forecast
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Service investments: Loans	32,705	33,113	56,113
Commercial investments: Property	62,684	62,614	62,077
TOTAL FUNDED BY BORROWING	95,389	95,727	118,190

Rate of return received: This indicator shows the investment income received less the associated costs, including the cost of borrowing where appropriate, as a proportion of the sum initially invested. Note that due to the complex local government accounting framework, not all recorded gains and losses affect the revenue account in the year they are incurred.

Table 7: Investment rate of return (net of all costs)

Investments net rate of return	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Forecast	2022/3 Forecast
Service investments: Loans	2.55%	2.51%	2.60%
Service investments: Shares	0%	0%	0%
Commercial investments: Property	0.2%	1.3%	1.5%
ALL INVESTMENTS	2.75%	3.81%	4.1%

Ashford Borough Council Council Tax Reduction

Exceptional Circumstances Policy 2022/23

1 Background

1.1 An Exceptional circumstances Policy has been created by Ashford Borough Council to assist persons who have applied for Council Tax Reduction and who are facing 'exceptional circumstances'. This is to provide further assistance where an applicant has made a claim for Council Tax Reduction but do not qualify for support or even with support are unable to meet their Council Tax liability.

1.2 The main features of the policy are as follows:

- * The operation of the policy will be at the total discretion of the Council;
- * The policy will be applied by the Revenues and Benefits section on behalf of the Council;
- * Exceptional circumstances falls within S13(A)(1a) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and forms part of the Council Tax Reduction scheme;
- * Exceptional circumstances awards will only be available for a Council Tax liability from 1 April 2022 onwards and will not be available for any other debt other than outstanding Council Tax;
- * To receive an award, an application for a Council Tax Reduction will need to be made, unless there are exceptional circumstances which would preclude any entitlement to a Council Tax Reduction.
- * Where an Exceptional circumstances award is requested for a previous period, Exceptional circumstances must have been proven to have existed throughout the whole of the period requested and will only be backdated to the start of the financial year in which the claim is made;
- * Exceptional circumstances awards are designed as short-term help to the applicant only; and
- * All applicants will be expected to engage with the Council and undertake the full application process. Failure to do so may mean that no payment will be made.

2 Exceptional circumstances and Equalities

2.1 The creation of an Exceptional Circumstances Policy facility meets the Council's obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

2.2 The Council recognises the impact the changes to our Council Tax Reduction Scheme will have on our most vulnerable residents and therefore the importance this policy has in protecting those applicants most in need. It should be noted that an Exceptional Circumstances Policy is intended to help in cases of extreme financial difficulty and not support a lifestyle or lifestyle choice.

3 Purpose of this policy

3.1 The purpose of this policy document is to specify how Ashford Borough Council will operate the scheme, to detail the application process and indicate a number of factors, which will be considered when deciding if an Exceptional circumstances payment can be made.

3.2 Each case will be treated on its own merits and all applicants will be treated fairly and equally in both accessibility and also decisions made.

4 The Exceptional circumstances process

4.1 As part of the process of applying for additional support, all applicants must be willing to undertake all of the following:

- * Make a separate application in writing for assistance;
- * Provide full details of their income and expenditure;
- * Where a person is self-employed or a director of a private limited company, provide details of their business including supplying business accounts;
- * Accept assistance from either the Council or third parties where applicable (such as Citizens Advice Bureau and Money Advice Service) to enable them to manage their finances more effectively - including the termination of non-essential expenditure and assessment of the potential for additional paid employment where applicable;
- * Identify potential changes in payment methods and arrangements to assist them;
- * Assist the Council to minimise liability by ensuring that all discounts, exemptions and reductions are properly granted; and
- * Maximise their income through the application for other welfare benefits, cancellation of non-essential contracts and outgoings and by identifying the most economical tariffs for the supply of utilities and services generally.

4.2 Through the operation of this policy the Council will look to:

- * Allow a short period of time for someone to adjust to unforeseen short-term circumstances and to enable them to “bridge the gap” during this time, whilst the applicant seeks alternative solutions;
- * Help applicants through personal crises and difficult events that affect their finances;
- * Help those applicants who are trying to help themselves financially; and
- * Encourage applicants to contact the Job Centre Plus or the Job Club to obtain and sustain employment, where applicable.

4.3 An Exceptional circumstances award will not be considered in the following circumstances:

- * Where the full Council Tax liability is being met by Council Tax Reduction;
- * For any other reason, other than to reduce Council Tax liability;

- * Where the Council considers that there are unnecessary expenses/debts etc and that the applicant has not taken reasonable steps to reduce them; or
- * To cover previous years Council Tax arrears.

5 Exceptional circumstances award

5.1 The Council will decide whether or not to make an Exceptional circumstances award, and how much any award might be.

5.2 When making this decision the Council will consider:

- * The shortfall between Council Tax Reduction and Council Tax liability;
- * Whether the applicant has engaged with the Exceptional circumstances process;
- * The personal circumstances, age and medical circumstances (including ill health and disabilities) of the applicant, their partner any dependants and any other occupants of the applicant's home;
- * The difficulty experienced by the applicant, which prohibits them from being able to meet their Council Tax liability, and the length of time this difficulty will exist;
- * The income and expenditure of the applicant, their partner and any dependants or other occupants of the applicant's home;
- * All income received by the applicant, their partner and any member of their household irrespective of whether the income may fall to be disregarded under the Council Tax Reduction scheme;
- * Any savings or capital that might be held by the applicant, their partner and any member of their household irrespective of whether the capital may fall to be disregarded under the Council Tax Reduction scheme;
- * Other debts outstanding for the applicant and their partner;
- * The exceptional nature of the applicant and/or their family's circumstances that impact on finances, and
- * The length of time they have lived in the property;

5.3 The above list is not exhaustive and other relevant factors and special circumstances will be considered.

5.4 An Exceptional circumstances award does not guarantee that a further award will be made at a later date, even if the applicant's circumstances have not changed.

5.5 An Exceptional circumstances award may be less than the difference between the Council Tax liability and the amount of Council Tax Reduction paid. The application may be refused if the authority feels that, in its opinion, the applicant is not suffering 'exceptional circumstances or where the applicant has failed to comply with the Exceptional circumstances process.

6 Publicity

6.1 The Council will make a copy of this policy available for inspection and will be published on the Council's website.

7 Claiming an Exceptional circumstances award

7.1 An applicant must make a claim for an Exceptional circumstances award by submitting an online application to the Council via the Council's website.

7.2 Applicants can get assistance with the completion of the form from the Revenues and Benefits Service or Customer Services at the Council.

7.3 The application form must be fully completed and supporting information or evidence provided, as reasonably requested by the Council.

7.4 In most cases the person who claims the Exceptional circumstances award will be the person entitled to Council Tax Reduction. However, a claim can be accepted from someone acting on another's behalf, such as an appointee, if it is considered reasonable.

8 Changes in circumstances

8.1 The Council may revise an Exceptional circumstances award where the applicant's circumstances have changed which either increases or reduces their Council Tax Reduction entitlement. The Exceptional circumstances award may be increased or decreased.

9 Duties of the applicant and the applicant's household

9.1 A person claiming an Exceptional circumstances payment is required to:

- * Provide the Council with such information as it may require to make a decision; and
- * Tell the Council of any changes in circumstances that may be relevant to their ongoing claim within 21 days of the change

10 The award and duration of an Exceptional circumstances award

10.1 Both the amount and the duration of the award are determined at the discretion of the Council, and will be done so on the basis of the evidence supplied and the circumstances of the claim.

10.2 The start date and duration of any award will be determined by the Council. The maximum length of the award will be limited to the financial year in which the claim is received.

11 Payment

11.1 Any Exceptional circumstances award will be made direct onto the taxpayer's Council Tax account, thereby reducing the amount of Council Tax payable.

12 Overpaid Exceptional circumstances payments

12.1 Overpaid Exceptional circumstances payments will generally be recovered directly from the applicant's council tax account, thus increasing the amount of council tax due and payable.

13 Notification of an award

13.1 The Council will notify the resident of the outcome of their application for an Exceptional circumstances award.

14 Appeals

14.1 Exceptional circumstances awards are granted under S13A(1a) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as part of the Council Tax Reduction scheme, as such the normal Council Tax appeal process applies and an appeal can be made at any time. The initial appeal should be made to the Council who will review any decision. Ultimately any decision can be considered by an independent Valuation Tribunal.

15 Fraud

15.1 The Council is committed to protect public funds and ensure funds are awarded to the people who are rightfully eligible to them.

15.2 An applicant who tries to fraudulently claim an Exceptional circumstances payment by falsely declaring their circumstances, providing a false statement or evidence in support of their application, may have committed an offence under The Fraud Act 2006.

15.3 Where the Council suspects that such a fraud may have been committed, this matter will be investigated as appropriate and may lead to criminal proceedings being instigated.

16 Complaints

16.1 The Council's 'Complaints Procedure' (available on the Councils website) will be applied in the event of any complaint received about the application of this policy.

17 Policy Review

17.1 This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis and updated as appropriate to ensure it remains fit for purpose. However, a review may take place sooner should there be any significant changes in legislation.

18 Benchmarking

18.1 Ashford Borough Council will monitor overall Exceptional circumstances expenditure annually and will benchmark against the other Kent Local Authorities.

2022/23 Budget Report

The following table represents risks to the 2022/23 budget at both a service and economic level. These risks were presented with the draft budget and have been updated where appropriate to support the final budget.

Budget Component	Financial standing and management
1. Covid19 Pandemic	<p>The Covid19 pandemic has delivered an unprecedented economic shock across the Globe that will be felt for many years to come.</p> <p>We are now entering the recovery phase of the pandemic and starting to understand what long term changes in habits might mean for Ashford both from an economic, societal and employer perspective.</p> <p>From an economic perspective the Council made significant budget revisions in 2021/22 for areas impacted by the pandemic, notably Parking and Corporate property income streams. The reductions in these income budgets were necessary and the Council is now starting to see stability and slow increases in parking income, and strong interest in commercial properties which have supported the 2022/23 draft budget.</p> <p>There is still a risk of further Covid measure being implemented by government which could slow the recovery.</p> <p>To deal with pressures arising from Covid19, and cuts in government funding, the Council identified savings of £3m in 2021/22 to be delivered over a 3 year period.</p> <p>Having delivered year 1, year 2 savings of £762,800 were identified to be incorporated into the 2022/23 budget. A significant proportion of these savings are still to be delivered and in some instances new proposals and strategies will be necessary.</p> <p>Having identified the savings and factored them into the draft 2022/23 budget and MTFP, it is now imperative that we closely monitor the delivery of these savings.</p> <p>Failure not to deliver the required savings will result in further draws on reserves and undermine the MTFP and financial sustainability of the Council.</p>

Budget Component	Financial standing and management
2. Ashford Port Health Authority	<p>The Council has recruited a substantial number of Officers to deliver the Ashford Port Health Facility at Sevington.</p> <p>Despite Ashford being ready to deliver this statutory service, Government has delayed the opening of the facility and therefore no fees or charges are being collected to offset costs. The Council is working closely with DEFRA with the expectation that all lost income from the delays in opening will be met to cover expenditure. The Council will also push for a longer agreement to underwrite any losses in the first years of operation to mitigate any risk to the Ashford Tax Payer.</p> <p>Perhaps a greater risk is the need to build a specific contingency reserve to manage fluctuations in income streams in this business area. This contingency may not be funded by government and it need to be accrue over the first years of operation as a safety net. If DEFRA do not support this then any costs could fall upon the Councils other earmarked reserves to manage.</p>
3. Exit from the European Union	<p>The UK exited the European Union (EU) just before the Covid19 Pandemic started to have wider implication for the world.</p> <p>The Council was well prepared for exiting the EU and had significant contingency plans in place and was supported by government funding.</p> <p>Originally it was envisaged that disruption would be to controls at the ports etc. that would bring transportation issues to Ashford, this was indeed the case but more as a result of Covid that exiting the EU.</p> <p>Things have moved on since at it is now becoming apparent that changes to legislation have created employment issues most notably a shortage of HGV drivers that is creating supply chain issues.</p> <p>These issues have driven up costs of services and materials that could have an impact on the revenue budgets but more notably the Capital Plans for the Council.</p> <p>These prices will need to be monitored and decisions taken as to how the Council can balance resources, and perceived market fluctuations against the need to deliver the works/projects.</p>

Budget Component	Financial standing and management
4. Government Spending Review	<p>Although the Government Department received a three year settlement, this only transpired into a further single year deal for Local Authorities with significant reviews such as fair funding and business rates continuing to be unresolved. This approach continues to provide significant uncertainty over long term funding especially with changes direction to meet new Government policies, such as levelling up.</p> <p>The spending review announced further funding for local authorities, circa £3.5bn although Ashford was 1 of 34 authorities who received no increase in core spending power, representing a real terms loss to the Council once inflation adjusted. Additionally this meant that new burdens such as the NHS and Social care levy and business rates freeze were funded from cuts in funding, rather than new monies as promised.</p> <p>The one year settlement, and continued freeze to business rates does have some benefit though as we retain our growth since the last baseline reset. However this continues to be a significant risk and is cover separately within this section.</p> <p>The Council will contribute to consultations where appropriate to encourage Government to deliver policies that are fair to Ashford, but also other public sector bodies.</p>

<p>5. Pressure on the 2021/22 Budget and impact going forward.</p>	<p>2021/22 is still experiencing additional costs arising from Covid19 directly, but also through supporting other parties. The risks below will try to look through the one off pressures arising from Covid19 and focus on risks going forward.</p> <p>Homelessness – This area has been under pressure for a number of years which worsened due to the pandemic and is still continuing to experience pressure on its budget.</p> <p>To address the long term issues in this area a specialist consultant was engaged during 2021/22 to fully review and makes recommendation on how the service could be strengthened and what resources were necessary.</p> <p>The 2022/23 budget has been developed using the findings of this report and it is felt that this budget is more robust to support the challenges posed from homelessness. This change did result in a net increase in the budget which has allowed more money to be earmarked for prevention of homelessness and more accurately reflect the cost differential between benefits claimable and temporary accommodation costs.</p> <p>Going forward it is anticipated that some of the increased costs will be recovered as the Council is developing bespoke homeless accommodation such as Christchurch Lodge which is already operational, and Henwood Modular units which will be applying for planning permission in the near future. This development will save money by taking people out of expensive nightly and B&B accommodation.</p> <p>There is still some risk to the budget due to covid and the end of the furlough scheme, removal of the universal credit top up, and rising prices due to the current economic climate that could put pressure on tenants ability to pay accommodation costs, and therefore could be evicted and present as homeless.</p> <p>Parking Income</p> <p>The 2021/22 budget was impacted by further nation lockdown measures that placed significant pressure on the parking income budget for the first quarter of 2021/22. Parking income has since started to pick up although the increase in usage is slower than early trends predicted.</p> <p>To recognise the slowdown in usage the parking budget has been kept broadly in line with the 2021/22 budget which was reduced by 15% to recognise the impact of covid on usage.</p> <p>This budget will continue to be a risk in 2022/23 though if any new covid restrictions are put in place. Equally, if usage and returns to pre pandemic levels quicker than expected then additional revenues may be recognised.</p>
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Budget Component	Financial standing and management
	<p>Planning</p> <p>Planning continues to have some pressure around staffing levels and the need for consultants to support the service, although this position is improving and new incentives have been developed to attract and retain staff.</p> <p>The other pressures arising in planning is the cost of planning appeals, despite some allowance being available for counsel fees within the budget, any increase in Planning Enforcement activity or the need to defend against major planning appeals will need to be funded from general reserves.</p> <p>The Stodmarsh issues and current economic climate will continue to pose a risk to the planning budget in 2022/23.</p> <p>Cultural service</p> <p>This budget area is reporting a pressure within 2021/22 as the Council has supported an extension to the Leisure facilities contract in Tenterden for 2021/22. We are still awaiting confirmation of the plans for 2022/23 however, it is expected that the current operator will extend their management whilst the operation is tendered. This will require a degree of underwrite from the Council of approximately £250,000.</p> <p>The risk to the budget is if the Council needs to further intervene to ensure the facility retains a service operator.</p> <p>Environmental Services</p> <p>The environmental services budget has provision for the Waste refuse and recycling contract which is budgeted to be nearly £4m in 2022/23, this is an increase 4.5% since previous years and represents contractual inflation and an element of new property growth. Although the contractual increase is compiled from a number of weighted indices there is a high risk that the contractual inflation costs could be higher as a result of the increase CPI figure than forecast resulting in a potential budgetary pressure.</p> <p>The service has had really strong growth in the garden collection waste service in recent years, however if the economic conditions start to impact household income then renewals maybe be under pressure and new customers may delay taking up the service.</p>

Budget Component	Financial standing and management
6. Commercialisation	<p>The Council's commercialisation agenda is progressing and has a number of successes with Garden waste and the Electrical Services Division, it is now reviewing its inaugural year to see what lessons can be learnt and how the process can be strengthened.</p> <p>This is seen as an area to promote continued improvement in what we do going into 2022/23 and a budget of £60,000, funded from the additional income achieved is available to support existing and new ideas.</p> <p>In terms of the wider context, the Council continues to have good reserves which have recently been re-purposed as part of the MTFP report to provide greater flexibility to protect budgets from economic shocks and uncertainty.</p>
7. Transformation and digitalisation	<p>Digitalisation continues to be a key priority for the organisation to ensure systems work effectively and efficiently to deliver excellent services for our external stakeholders. The digitalisation programme is targeting systems to ensure efficiencies through digitalisation can be maximised to create staffing capacity to manage business growth within existing resources.</p> <p>One of the most significant areas under review will be the implementation of a new planning system which is in progress.</p>
8. Assumptions about increases in service income.	<p>For budget setting purposes income has been increased by an average of 3.0%, for legislative reasons or demand some charges will be lower or higher than this.</p> <p>The proposed fees and charges are presented in detail as part of the budget report. Any amendments to the proposals may involve a slight risk to the budget.</p>
9. Housing Revenue Account	<p>The HRA has an ambition development plan and this plan is built into the HRA's 30 year business plan and will also include a retrofit programme to reduce the carbon footprint of the stock, the 30 year business was presented at December Cabinet.</p> <p>The business plan is currently affordable although the inclusion of the retrofit programme limits its debt repayments over the long term, the model will be kept under review to ensure that new opportunities are properly assessed for viability as to not place pressure on the HRA model.</p> <p>Regular updating of the HRA business plan to include new projects and financial monitoring will occur during 2022/23.</p>

Budget Component	Financial standing and management
10. Estimates of the level and timing of capital receipts.	<p>Capital receipts are now low in the General Fund, the budgets and financing of the capital plan reflects this.</p> <p>The Housing Revenue Account capital receipts have reduced over the last couple of years as right to buy sales have reduced due to Covid and the current economic conditions, although 2021/22 is on track to increase on 2020/21.</p> <p>The majority of RTB receipts need to be held to fund affordable housing (funds 30% of the total cost) within the Borough, and this Council took the opportunity to retain these receipts for this purpose, these receipts are called 1-4-1 capital receipts.</p> <p>The receipts and capital plans are being closely monitored and ensure these receipts are used to avoid repayment which would attract interest of 4% above base. These funds are currently being spent well in advance of need as the on street purchasing programme was really strong, this scheme is now being reviewed to determine best used of resources moving forward.</p>
11. Major Capital Projects	<p>The Council has just published a new corporate plan that will be used to guide capital investment within the borough.</p> <p>However, there is a risk to projects of a capital nature at present as supply chain and economic conditions are significantly increasing tender prices that can challenge the affordability of self-funding schemes, or reduce that amount of work that can be undertaken for asset repairs and maintenance as we only have limited amount of capital resource.</p> <p>The report has highlighted that the Council has a limited capacity to deliver these projects and so it may be necessary to focus these resources on the delivery of priority projects.</p> <p>To maintain financial stability Members and Officers need to thoroughly assess new projects to ensure that they will not increase annual revenue costs to the Council, by way of additional unfunded borrowing costs or maintenance liabilities.</p> <p>It is acknowledged that some capital projects are delivered for more wider social and economic reasons, and that these schemes will need to be judged on their individual merits and the cost implications to the Council fully understood.</p>

Budget Component	Financial standing and management
12. Business Rates	<p>Risks to the council's business rates yield is a major risk to the budget as the revaluation of rates and the level of appeals against new valuations are likely to affect the overall level of rateable value within the borough.</p> <p>However, commentators are suggesting that a business rates baseline reset is now not likely until 2025/26. The delay to the baseline reset is actually favourable to Ashford as we have good growth since the previous baseline was determined. However, there is a risk that government may look to design a mechanism to target Councils with strong growth to redistribute.</p> <p>The future of business rate retention is now also uncertain as the review which commenced in 2016 has all but been ceased as the proposal for 100% retention, then 75% retention are inconsistent with Governments levelling up agenda. The current level of retention is 50%.</p> <p>As the economy recover from the impact of Covid19 Business rates will be monitored regularly and any movement against budget will be flagged as part of the budget monitoring process.</p>

Budget Component	Financial standing and management
13. Inflation, Interest Rate and Pay Award	<p>Inflation is a factor that needs to be managed carefully within any financial planning regime. Inflation has been gradually climbing over the last few years and is now well above the Bank of England's (BOE) 2% target as spikes in energy prices and supply chain issues have driven up costs. Inflation is expected to continue to rise and will peak in April 2022 at circa 7.25% before dropping back to target over the medium term, although it is anticipated to remain high throughout 2022.</p> <p>Interest rates were forecast in line with the Arlingclose (Treasury Management Advisors) forecasts although in response to growing inflationary pressures the BOE increased rates to 0.50% in its February 2022 meeting and further increase in March and May 2022 taking the bank rate to 1%. This has exposed to the Council debt portfolio to higher borrowing costs than anticipated and the Treasury Management Strategy will be adapted accordingly to mitigate risks to the Revenue budget, while accepting a proportionate amount of Interest Rate risk moving forward.</p> <p>To mitigate some of this pressure the Council took some fixed rate 20 year borrowing from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) in 2021/22.</p> <p>Inflation is also a major driver in capital works and many of the council contracts are inflation linked, or inflationary rises will be applied. Some allowance has been built into the MTFP and bespoke increases have been applied to the largest contracts and utility costs.</p> <p>Pay – the draft budget has made an overall allowance of 4.4% for pay, this is 3% cost of living, 0.7% for increments and 0.7% for increased costs relating to the new Health and Social Care Levy. At the time of writing this report, a pay award has not been agreed and therefore any movement away from this expectation will have a positive or negative influence on the budget.</p>
14. Regulatory risk, revisions to the prudential code.	<p>As covered previously business rates reform looks like it will be reviewed which will likely lead to a revised consultation. The Council will monitor appropriate channels to determine what future proposals look like and how they will possibly impact on the Council. This is not necessarily and immediate risk but certainly will be a factor for significant consideration over the medium term.</p>

Agenda Item No: 8
Report To: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: 24 February 2022
Report Title: Quarter 3 - Financial Monitoring
Report Author & Job Title: Lee Foreman
Accountancy Manager
Portfolio Holder Cllr. Neil Shorter
Portfolio Holder for: Finance & IT



Summary:

This report presents the quarter three budget monitoring position for 2021/22, based on data available up to 31 December 2021.

The overall quarter three year end forecast is reported as a surplus of £224,000.

The largest change is the reserve funding for Tenterden Leisure Centre, where it is now possible to fund this pressure from in year savings rather than reserves.

Other movements between quarters include:

- Corporate Property and Projects of circa £126,000, with increases in service charge billing and reductions in business rate liabilities.
- Planning are forecasting an additional pressure of £137,000 for consultants to support current vacancies
- There is a net pressure of £118,000 within environmental services for additional waste containers due to growth in the garden waste service.
- Finance and IT are forecasting £145,000 surplus from grants and salary savings
- Further reductions in borrowing costs and increased investment income adding an additional £114,000 to the quarterly movement.

The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is forecasting an increase in operational spend since quarter two monitoring of £474,000. Capital expenditure plans have reduced by £975,000 and a corresponding reduction in HRA reserve funding has been made.

This report also provides an update on the Collection Fund, Capital expenditure, Treasury Management and Reserve movements.

There are also a number of items that have been included under the 'Other Items' section of this report for Cabinet to note.

Key Decision:	No
Significantly Affected Wards:	None
Recommendations:	<p>The Cabinet is asked to:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> I. Note the forecast outturn position for the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account. II. Note the Collection Fund position III. Note the contribution from reserves in Table 5. IV. Note the Treasury Management position V. Note the use of delegations under the ‘Other Items’ section of the report VI. Recommend to Council that forward funding of £335,000 plus the relevant index is made available to the Chilmington Management Organisation (subject to quarterly reviews) VII. Recommend to Council Approval of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme project and approve the funding detailed in Appendix B
Policy Overview:	The Budget is a key element supporting the delivery of the Council’s wider policy objectives.
Financial Implications:	<p>The General Fund is reporting an overall surplus of £224,000 which is a decrease of £197,000 from the previous quarter.</p> <p>The HRA is forecasting an overall overspend of £608,000 in operational budgets, and is forecasting a reduction in capital spend of £3.050m.</p>
Legal Implications	N/A
Equalities Impact Assessment	As part of 2021/22 Final Budget Report a full assessment was undertaken.
Exempt from Publication:	N/a.
Contact:	Lee.Foreman@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330509

Report Title: Quarter three Financial Monitoring

Introduction and Background

1. This report presents the forecast outturn position for 2021/22 based on information available as at 31 December 2021.
2. The 2021/22 budget was set during the Covid19 pandemic and a number of budgets were revised to allow for changes in consumer habits. Although these revised budgets were subject to scrutiny, it is only now that we are starting the recovery phase of the pandemic that the accuracy of those assumptions will be measurable and future trends/habits will start to be understood and fed into future budgets.
3. This report considers each of the following areas of the Council in more detail including the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Collection Fund (Council Tax and Business Rates), Capital Expenditure, Treasury Management and reserves movements.
4. Other items are also included where decisions have been made that required subsequent reporting to Cabinet.

Summary of General Fund Position

5. The current General Fund position is forecasting a surplus of £224,000 for the year which comprises of a deficit in service expenditure of £924,000, which is supported by government grants, savings on borrowing costs, and reserve movements totalling £1.149m. The service deficit needs to be considered alongside the income reductions experienced from the pandemic. This current forecast represents a positive position overall and has even enabled us to absorb the support for Tenterden Leisure Centre which is now to be funded from in year surpluses, reversing and protecting reserves.
6. The deficit in service expenditure was covered in the last financial monitoring report and identified £850,000 of the pressure being Covid related. Although there have been movements in services through the quarter, the overall pressure had remained relatively static with a small movement of £11,000. It is worth reminding ourselves though that while much of the Covid pressure should drop out in 2022/23, it will be imperative that strong, challenging financial management is exercised to keep service expenditure within budget, and to fully understand any emerging pressures.
7. **Table 1** shows the movement between budget and projected outturn at a Head of Service Level, narrative providing supporting information on material movements between quarters then follows.

Table 1 - General Fund Quarter 3 Outturn Forecast as at 31 December 2021

Service and General Fund Summary	2021/22 Current Budget £'000	2021/22 Forecast Outturn at Q3 £'000	2021/22 Forecast Outturn at Q2 £'000	2021/22 Forecast Variance £'000	Q2 - Q3 Movement £'000
Ashford Port Health	0	0	0	0	0
Corporate Core	729	792	801	63	(9)
Corporate Policy, Economic Development, Communications and CMO	1,168	1,194	1,192	26	2
Community Safety and Wellbeing	709	890	909	182	(19)
Hr & Customer Services	144	144	148	0	(4)
Legal & Democratic Services	1,271	1,318	1,316	46	2
Corporate Property & Projects	(1,292)	(1,550)	(1,424)	(258)	(126)
Finance & Ict	2,579	2,207	2,352	(372)	(145)
Housing Services	914	972	1,009	57	(38)
Culture	3,208	3,697	3,604	489	93
Environmental & Land Management	4,727	4,957	4,839	230	118
Planning	2,146	2,606	2,469	460	137
Net Service Expenditure	16,303	17,227	17,216	924	11
Capital Charges and net interest	(2,188)	(2,817)	(2,703)	(630)	(114)
Government Grant	(859)	(1,176)	(1,176)	(317)	0
Levies, Grants and Precepts	276	276	276	0	0
Contribution (from)/to reserves	349	147	(153)	(202)	300
Budget Requirement	13,881	13,657	13,460	(224)	197
Financing:					
Retained Business Rates	(4,093)	(4,093)	(4,093)	0	0
Council Tax	(7,792)	(7,792)	(7,792)	0	0
New Homes Bonus	(1,908)	(1,908)	(1,908)	0	0
Rural Service Delivery Grant	(87)	(87)	(87)	0	0
Total movement	0	(224)	(421)	(224)	197

Summary of General Fund Movements

Corporate Property and Projects

- Corporate Property and Projects is reporting a net saving of £126,000 since the last reporting period. This movement relates to increased service charge billing of circa £110,000, reductions in business rates liabilities across the portfolio due to government retail discounts and increased occupancy levels totalling £106,000, and increased rental income of £103,000 from Elwick and Carlton Road.
- There has been a reduction in anticipated income at Park Mall of around £140,000 as it is expected that current, and arrears accrued throughout the covid period may need to be written off. There is also an ongoing business rates liability attached to the Mecca building of £26,000, and £40,000 increase in consultancy fees for new projects.

Finance and IT

- Finance and IT is reporting an additional surplus of £145,000 since the last reporting period. This surplus is made up of £63,000 of salary savings, a £100,000 increase in government grant to support the Revenues and Benefit team with additional burdens this year, and an overall pressure of £25,000 due to increased card payment transaction charges.

Culture

11. Cultural services is reporting an additional pressure of £93,000 since quarter two with £100,000 of additional support being forecast for Tenterden Leisure Centre, this is due to increased losses as a result of closures due to issues with the roof. It is now anticipated that the overall support package for 2021/22 will be in the region of £400,000.

Environment and Land Management

12. Environment and Land Management is reporting a net pressure of £118,000 since the previous quarter. The service has revised income upwards for cemetery and bulky refuse collection by £40,000.
13. There is pressure on containerisation costs of £100,000 as a result of growth in the garden waste service and delivery of new bins. Although there has been significant growth in the service, the levels on new sign ups have not been as strong as envisaged and therefore income forecasts have been reduced by £50,000.

Planning

14. Planning is forecasting a pressure of £137,000 since the last quarter, consultancy costs have risen by £100,000 to support the service cover vacancies, and there is a reduction in income of £50,000.

Financing and Other General Fund Movements

15. This area includes the £300,000 reversal in reserve contributions relating to Tenterden Leisure centre, and additional savings in borrowing costs and interest receivable of £114,000.

Chilmington Management Organisation Agreement

16. The Chilmington Management Organisation (CMO) approached the Council some time ago regarding funding due from the developers not yet released. This funding, the Deficit Grant Contribution, is payable to the Council, which should be passed on to the CMO to deliver on its objectives.
17. To enable the CMO to operate effectively they have asked the Council to forward fund the contribution, of up to £335,000 plus indexation. This has come forward now as the CMO needs this in place before the end of the financial year to demonstrate they have a solvent Business Plan moving forward.
18. Although the acting Section 151 Officer has delegated authority to arrange the terms of the agreement (The Head of Finance & IT is acting as S151 Officer in this case, due to the Council's Section 151 Officer being a trustee on the CMO board), the funding needs to be approved under urgency powers to process at speed.
19. The amount required is £335,000 plus indexation, which will be paid in stages (quarterly), and only paid if required to ensure the CMO can continue to operate. The trigger of 125 homes has been met, so the money is due to the Council and this would normally be passed onto the CMO in full.
20. The Council is not under obligation to pass this on until it has been received. However, for the CMO to operate effectively, they do need to prove they are not running at a deficit (insolvent) and that they have a balanced budget so a contract does need to be in place if the CMO is to continue operating.
21. **The Cabinet are being asked to recommend to Council that this forward funding is approved.**
22. There will be quarterly meeting held with the CMO to agree the payment that is required for the following quarter, we will not be releasing the full £335,000 plus indexation, only the amount that is required on a quarterly basis. The CMO are managing their expenditure ensuring only essential spend is made.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

23. The Housing Revenue Account is showing an increase in operational spending since the second reporting period of £474,000. This largely relates to Homeloss payments at Pym House of £110,000, £95,000 increase in independent living costs and £204,000 increase in general HRA repairs.
24. Planned capital works has reduced by £975,000 between quarters with reduction across most categories of works. The reserve contribution to fund capital works has been updated accordingly.
25. Overall there is additional revenue spend of £608,000 for the year and this is reflected in the table below. It should also be noted that there is an overall reduction of £3.050m in capital spend and this is offset in the table by reserves.
26. A breakdown of this variance is shown in **Table 2** below:

Table 2 – 2021/22 Housing Revenue Account Forecast Outturn Position

Housing Revenue Account	2021/22 Current Budget £'000	2021/22 Forecast Outturn at Q3 £'000	2021/22 Forecast Variance £'000	Q2 - Q3 Movement £'000
Income	(27,187)	(27,187)	0	0
Supervision and Management	4,469	4,735	267	142
Repairs and Maintenance	4,024	4,268	244	204
Other	21,343	21,440	97	128
Net Revenue Expenditure	2,650	3,257	608	474
Capital Works - Decent Homes	5,914	2,864	(3,050)	(975)
Financed By:				
Contribution To/(From) Major Repairs Reserve	(5,914)	(2,864)	3,050	975
Net Capital Expenditure	0	0	0	0
Total Net Expenditure	2,650	3,257	608	474

Collection fund Monitoring

Business Rates

1. Collection rates for NNDR are continuing to be regularly monitored to gauge the potential impact of the Covid19 Pandemic within the Borough. At the end of January 88.44% (£38.462m) of rates billed for the year had been collected, this compares to 85.01% in 2020/21 and 90.58% in 2019/20. Despite collection rates improving on last year, these figures clearly show the continuing pressure on businesses, impacting their ability to pay, this pressure is likely to worsen with increasing inflation and rising energy prices.
2. The amount of Business Rates billed has reduced further since the quarter two report, this is largely as a result of the reliefs which are fully funded by Government. This will create a significant deficit at year end in the collection fund, with Government compensation grants held in reserves as the accounts are closed to offset this in future years.
3. Including a prior year deficit of £2.601m, the overall deficit on the collection fund for business rates is forecast at £16.64m with Ashford's share being circa £6.6m, although as mentioned this will be funded from S31 Grant.

Table 3 – Business Rate Summary

	Original Budget	Outturn (net)	Variance - Adverse/ (Favourable)
	2021/22	2021/22	2021/22
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Opening (Surplus)/Deficit	31,313	31,911	598
(Deficit) contributed by/Surplus distributed to Major Preceptors	(29,310)	(29,310)	0
Remaining Deficit/(Surplus) to be Contributed/(Distributed)	2,003	2,601	598
2021/22			
Amount of Business Rates to be paid to Major Preceptors	52,458	52,458	0
Amount of Business Rates Billed	(54,974)	(41,591)	13,383
Transitional Relief (Recovered)/Payable	(62)	300	362
Other Items Charged to the Collection Fund:			
Appeals and Rateable Value Reductions	1,483	1,834	351
Bad and Doubtful Debts	800	745	(55)
Renewable Energy	99	92	(7)
Cost of Collection	196	196	0
In year (Surplus)/Deficit	0	14,034	14,034
Overall (Surplus)/Deficit on Collection Fund	2,003	16,635	14,632

Council Tax

4. The value of Council Tax receipts collected at the end of January was 94.84% (88.219m), this compares to previous rates of 94.76% in 2020/21 and 95.61% in 2019/20. There is a very slight increase in the amount collected this year, compared to last year, but this is still down on pre-pandemic collection rates in 2019/20.
5. The current economic climate could influence collection rates further with rising inflation and pending energy price increases following the increase in the energy cap by the regulator, households' ability to pay Council Tax through the remainder of the year and moving into 2022/23 could be impacted.
6. Although collection rates in year are showing a slight reduction compared to pre pandemic collection rates, the total amount of historical debt has reduced and therefore the contribution to the bad debt provision has been further reduced by £125,000 from £862,000 in quarter two, to £737,000 in the quarter three.
7. Since the last reporting period there has also been an increase in billing within the current year of £197,000, but this is partly due to a reduction in the accruals assumption for the year.
8. Overall the collection fund for Council Tax is reporting a year end surplus of £4.382m of which Ashford's share of the Council Tax surplus would be £540,000 based on current forecasts. This will form part of the 2022/23 budget.

Table 4 Council Tax Summary

	Outturn (net) to 31/03/22 £'000	Previous Outturn £'000
Opening Deficit/(Surplus)	501	501
Deficit contributed by Major Preceptors	(319)	(319)
2021/22		
Amount of Council Tax to be paid to Major Preceptors	87,670	87,670
Amount of Council Tax billed	(92,971)	(92,423)
In Year Write Off's and Bad Debt Provision increase	737	862
In year (Surplus)/Deficit	(4,564)	(3,891)
Overall (Surplus)/Deficit	(4,382)	(3,709)

Reserves

9. Contribution to and from reserves that were not identified as part of the budget setting process are required to be reported as part of the budget monitoring process.
10. **Table 5** below identifies the reserve movements that have been made since the last monitoring report and this report asks cabinet to note the decision.

Table 5 – Breakdown of Reserve Movements

Purpose	Suggested Reserve	Amount £
Reversal of contribution from reserves to support Tenterden Leisure Centre Operator as now being funded from in year surpluses.	Economic Growth and Risk Fund	300,000
Total		300,000

Recommendation – Cabinet is asked to note the reserve movements in Table 5 above.

Capital Monitoring

General Fund Capital Monitoring

11. This section of the report provides an update on the significant capital programmes being undertaken by the Council for the general fund and the housing revenue account.
12. **Solar PV (various sites)** – Approval of £401,000 for design and build of solar installation at Carlton Road. Other potential sites are still being investigated.
13. **Victoria Park Rejuvenation** - Some minor capital works have begun, although the main contract bids back they have a 10 week evaluation period, so an assessment is ongoing with uplift bids due March 2022.
14. **Stour Centre & Julie Rose Renovations** - The Stour Centre works are now complete and in the 12 month rectification period. The Julie Rose Stadium main contract works, drainage and remodelling of the gym and associated areas are complete and within budget. The track replacement and some landscaping works have yet to commence.
15. **Tenterden Leisure Centre** – Works are still ongoing for re-roofing the Leisure Centre – Please see other items section of this report for further details.
16. **Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme (RSAP)** – the second property of this scheme was purchased in November 2021.
17. **Henwood Temporary Accommodation** – to deliver 23 units manufactured by Zedpods and to be used for temporary accommodation costing £4.7m.

HRA Projects

18. **Street Purchases** - 23 properties have been purchased to date, at a cost of £4.7m.
19. **East Stour Court** - Completion was on 21 September 2021 on the development of 29 units of older person accommodation (24 one bed and 5 two bed apartments). This project has achieved an underspend of around £680,000 and also benefited from £1.1m of Homes England grant funding.
20. **Berry Place (Poplars)** – Works are nearing completion and handover is expected any day.
21. **Oakleigh House Redevelopment** – subject to planning permission to demolish the existing structure and deliver 67 independent living accommodations for older people and adults with learning disabilities by January 2023.
22. **Tile Kiln Road** – currently with planning for pre-application comments before going to public consultation for the 14 units.
23. **New Build Programme Phase 6** - currently still conducting surveys, commissioning initial designs and seeking pre-planning application advice.
24. **Hamlet (Chilmington)** – purchase of 10 S106 affordable homes for £1.97m.

Treasury Management

25. The breakdown of the Capital Charges and Net Interest line is shown below at **Table 6**. This table shows the borrowing and investment budget, Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) and depreciation. The MRP is a statutory payment the Council has to make to offset the costs of capital borrowing over the life of the associated asset.

Table 6 – Net Interest Summary

	2021/22 Current Budget	2021/22 Forecast Outturn at Q3	2021/22 Forecast Outturn at Q2	2021/22 Forecast Variance	Q2 - Q3 Movement
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Interest payable	548	482	548	(66)	(66)
Interest receivable	(1,975)	(2,539)	(2,491)	(564)	(48)
Minimum revenue provision	1,179	1,179	1,179	0	0
Depreciation	(1,939)	(1,939)	(1,939)	0	0
Total Net Interest	(2,188)	(2,817)	(2,703)	(630)	(114)

Interest payable / Interest receivable

26. During the quarter additional savings of £114,000 have been identified with the treasury management function. There has been a further decrease of £66,000 in interest payable with early deals taking us into the new financial year, and before increase in bank rates occurred. There is also £48,000 of additional interest receivable from loans to the Council's subsidiary A Better Choice for Property Ltd.
27. Recent Interest rates rises by the Bank of England to 0.5% have led to increases in the local to local borrowing market in which the Council operates, however the Council will not overly see this pressure coming through until the new financial year when existing loans start to mature.
28. **Investment Capital Values** – the capital value of strategic investments increased since the last reporting by circa £900,000 with growth of £436,000 in the CCLA (Churches Charities and Local Authorities) property fund. The current portfolio has positive growth overall of circa £3m, against it original cost of £30m (Excluding the Property Co.).
29. This net capital gain is driven by the increased value of the Council's long standing investment in the CCLA Property Fund. All the investment fund values (both capital and yield) and strategies will continue to be monitored with the support of the Council's Treasury Management Advisors Arlingclose to ensure they remain a good fit with the Council strategy and risk appetite.
30. Current investment balances, and borrowing portfolios are shown at **Appendix A**.

Other Items

31. This part of the report will be used to report to Cabinet decisions that have been made through various delegations that are then required to be reported to Cabinet through the budget monitoring report.
32. A snapshot of the items is included below although further information can be provided upon request.

Use of standing order 6.8.2 relating to HRA contracts

33. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) issued the following tender “Fabric Upgrade to Trusteel Houses - 7, 12 and 16 Hawthorn, Appledore, 10, 13, 14, 16, 18 and 19 Lloyds Green, Wittersham and 15, 16, 17 and 21 Sackville Close, Hothfield” that was anticipated to come in at £350,000. The winning tender was for £398,665.57 and was subsequently approved by the Head of Housing with agreement from the Head of Finance & IT, as per standing order 6.8.2 evoking the requirement for it to be reported to Cabinet within the Budget Monitoring Report as per standing order 6.8.3.
34. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) issued the following tender “STRUC/21/2: Mass Concrete Underpinning – 2-5 and 6-9 Askes Court and 18 The Chennells in the Borough of Ashford, Kent” that was anticipated to come in at £70,000. The winning tender was for £134,025 and was subsequently approved by the Head of Housing with agreement from the Head of Finance & IT, as per standing order 6.8.2 evoking the requirement for it to be reported to Cabinet within the Budget Monitoring Report as per standing order 6.8.3.
35. This update therefore fulfils standing order 6.8.3.

Chess Project overspend

36. The Chess project was originally £35,000 to provide two projects in two wards. The Violence Reduction Unit funded circa £27,000 with the C3 Collaboration for Health Charity funding the remaining £8,000.
37. However, unforeseen delays due to Covid19 and increased costs of planning, preparation and delivery, the C3 Collaboration for Health Charity are no longer able to fund the proportion of the project as agreed. Therefore to ensure that this project is delivered in the two wards as originally planned, a reserve contribution of £8,000 has been approved by Management Team.

Household Support Fund

38. In October 2021 Kent County Council were awarded grant funding from the Government’s Household Support Fund of which they allocated £183,000 to Ashford Borough Council. The grant funded is required to be allocated to support those most in need with the cost of food, energy (heating, cooking, and lighting), water bills (including sewerage) and other essentials.
39. To ensure that a policy could be adopted and delivered in the timeframe available, a report was presented to Management Team in January 2022 outlining the details of a potential scheme for those most in need across the Ashford Borough.
40. The report was supported by Management Team and supported that the project to be approved under the Chief Executives Urgency Powers. Following the use of these powers the decision is now recorded within the budget monitoring report as required.

Tenterden Leisure Centre Roof

41. The tender for re-roofing the Tenterden Leisure Centre roof was awarded in November 2020 for circa £742,000. Following the award of the contract some additional works were added to the contract to mitigate risks to swimmers while the roof was repaired by installing safety netting adding an additional £67,815 to the cost.
42. However, due to delays in commencing the project and increases in the costs of raw materials during this period, and the identification of further works necessary such as replacing timber decking above the pool that had a significant amount of deterioration due to the humid conditions, the overall anticipated cost of the contract has increased to £1.082m.
43. As this increase in costs is more than 10% of the original tender price accepted it is being reported to Cabinet accordingly.

Portfolio Holder's Views

1. The final budget position continues to forecast a surplus despite removing £300,000 of reserve funding for Ashford Leisure Trust. This is positive position and will preserve reserves which will support financial risk and corporate project delivery moving forward.
2. Despite this positive position, we need to remain mindful of the pressure emerging within service budgets and ensure these are not repeated within 2022/23 when covid19 pressures should start to dissipate and budgets are aligned to new trends.
3. The above comment is particularly pertinent moving into 2022/23 as there are no more plans for government grants to support operational losses, and with recent and further interest rate rises expected, treasury budgets will be under pressure and therefore not generate the surpluses of previous years that have helped support pressures in services.

Contact and Email

4. Lee Foreman - Lee.Foreman@ashford.gov.uk

Treasury Management Positions as at 31 December 2021

Counter Party	Deal Date	Rate %	Amount £	Fair Value £
Investment Accounts				
Goldman Sachs **	Various	0.53%	50,000	52,391
ICD Portal - Blackrock *	Various	0.00%	5,777,300	5,777,300
ICD Portal - BNP *	Various	0.09%	6,984,200	6,984,200
ICD Portal - CCLA *	Various	0.13%	6,989,200	6,989,200
ICD Portal - HSBC *	Various	0.01%	3,896,200	3,896,200
ICD Portal - Invesco *	Various	0.02%	5,087,700	5,087,700
Payden Global MMF **	Various	0.91%	3,000,000	3,006,685
Total Investment Accounts			31,784,600	31,793,676
Long Term Investments				
Property Investment				
A Better Choice of Property Ltd.***	Various		605,001	1,142,785
CCLA Local Authority Property Fund	Various	4.85%	11,000,000	13,236,979
Equity Funds**				
CCLA Diversified Income Fund	Various	3.51%	3,000,000	3,194,193
Investec Diversified Income Fund	28/03/2019	3.74%	2,500,000	2,433,504
Kames Diversified Income Fund	13/05/2019	4.19%	5,500,000	5,631,119
Schroder Income Maximiser	Various	3.06%	3,500,000	3,176,654
UBS Multi Asset Income Fund	Various	4.81%	3,000,000	2,843,719
UBS Global Income Equity Fund	29/07/2019	4.30%	1,500,000	1,426,883
Total Long Term Investments			30,605,001	33,085,836
Total Investment Portfolio			62,389,601	64,879,512
* Money Market Fund (MMF) are AAA rated deposit facilities which have variable rates of interest but have constant net asset values. Interest rates are shown at the time of producing this report.				
** Equity funds and the Property fund have variable rates of interest and also have fluctuating capital values, the amount stated is the current fair value.				
*** A Better Choice Of Property Ltd. is a solely owned subsidiary of ABC (Value at 31/03/2021)				

Debt Portfolio as at 31 December 2021

Counter Party	Deal Date	Rate %	Amount £	Maturity Date
Temporary Borrowing				
Wokingham Borough Council	21/06/2021	0.05%	10,000,000	21/01/2022
London Borough of Sutton	22/06/2021	0.05%	3,000,000	24/01/2022
Vale of Glamorgan Council	19/07/2021	0.08%	2,500,000	13/05/2022
Lichfield District Council	19/07/2021	0.07%	2,000,000	19/04/2022
Wigan Metropolitan Borough Council	20/07/2021	0.05%	5,000,000	20/01/2022
Comhairle Nan Eilean Siar	20/07/2021	0.04%	5,000,000	20/01/2022
Middlesbrough Council	21/07/2021	0.04%	5,000,000	21/01/2022
Tendering District Council	22/07/2021	0.04%	4,000,000	24/01/2022
Cambridge City Council	22/07/2021	0.04%	5,000,000	05/01/2022
Warwickshire County Council	05/08/2021	0.06%	10,000,000	05/04/2022
Middlesbrough Teeside PF	19/08/2021	0.07%	7,000,000	19/04/2022
Bridgend County Borough Council	24/08/2021	0.04%	5,000,000	24/02/2022
Mersyside Fire & Rescue	24/08/2021	0.06%	2,000,000	25/04/2022
North Somerset Council	25/08/2021	0.06%	2,000,000	25/04/2022
West Yorkshire Combined Authority	22/11/2021	0.07%	3,000,000	22/08/2022
New Forest District Council	24/11/2021	0.06%	1,500,000	24/05/2022
Winchester City Council	24/11/2021	0.06%	1,500,000	24/05/2022
Hampshire County Council	24/11/2021	0.09%	3,000,000	24/05/2022
Ryedale District Council	25/11/2021	0.08%	2,000,000	24/11/2022
Oxfordshire County Council	17/12/2021	0.15%	5,000,000	17/10/2022
North East Derbyshire District Council	17/12/2021	0.15%	5,000,000	16/12/2022
Total Temporary Borrowing			88,500,000	
Long Term Borrowing				
Public Works Loan Board - HRA	various	various	121,664,150	various
Public Works Loan Board - GF	13/07/2021	1.56%	17,000,000	13/07/2041
Total Long Term Borrowing			138,664,150	
Grand Total Borrowing			227,164,150	

Detail of PWLB Loans outstanding

Date of Advance	Loan Ref Number	Date of Repayment	Amount Outstanding £	Rate %
28/03/2012	*499500	28/03/2022	7,000,000	0.90%
28/03/2012	499516	28/03/2022	2,000,000	2.40%
28/03/2012	499514	28/03/2023	2,000,000	2.56%
28/03/2012	499507	28/03/2024	3,000,000	2.70%
28/03/2012	499503	28/03/2025	3,000,000	2.82%
28/03/2012	499505	28/03/2026	1,000,000	2.92%
28/03/2012	499496	28/03/2027	1,000,000	3.01%
28/03/2012	499509	28/03/2028	2,000,000	3.08%
28/03/2012	499497	28/03/2029	2,000,000	3.15%
28/03/2012	499510	28/03/2030	2,000,000	3.21%
28/03/2012	499498	28/03/2031	8,000,000	3.26%
28/03/2012	499511	28/03/2032	9,000,000	3.30%
28/03/2012	499499	28/03/2033	10,000,000	3.34%
28/03/2012	499512	28/03/2034	11,000,000	3.37%
28/03/2012	499506	28/03/2035	12,000,000	3.40%
28/03/2012	499513	28/03/2036	9,000,000	3.42%
28/03/2012	499515	28/02/2037	16,713,000	3.44%
29/03/2011	498502	29/03/2061	5,951,150	5.26%
13/07/2021	374159	13/07/2041	15,000,000	1.56%
Total HRA Borrowing			121,664,150	
13/07/2021	374161	13/07/2041	17,000,000	1.56%
Total GF Borrowing			17,000,000	

* Variable Rate Loan, the others are fixed rate

A Better Choice for Property Loans as at 30 September 2021

Loans	Deal Date	Rate %	Amount £	Principal Repaid £	Balance Outstanding £
Loan 3	12/02/2015	2.83%	400,000	79,465	320,535
Loan 9	22/07/2017	3.04%	1,445,000	53,417	1,391,583
Loan 12	25/03/2018	3.06%	240,000	7,657	232,343
Loan 13	04/05/2018	3.13%	2,490,000	66,335	2,423,665
Loan 14	05/06/2018	3.06%	1,196,311	32,440	1,163,871
Loan 15	05/07/2018	3.10%	113,000	3,032	109,968
Loan 16	25/09/2018	3.19%	823,000	21,512	801,488
Loan 17*	17/10/2018	3.45%	659,000	13,220	645,780
Loan 18	02/11/2018	3.31%	820,000	17,144	802,856
Loan 19	09/11/2018	3.29%	6,517,425	136,855	6,380,570
Loan 20*	01/02/2019	3.10%	93,890	2,083	91,807
Loan 21*	04/02/2019	3.10%	7,103,180	157,699	6,945,481
Loan 22	22/02/2019	3.03%	809,240	18,324	790,916
Loan 23*	04/03/2019	3.10%	941,360	20,921	920,439
Loan 24	17/06/2019	2.80%	160,000	3,075	156,925
Loan 25	01/07/2019	2.81%	91,776	1,758	90,018
Loan 26	06/09/2019	2.24%	568,400	12,904	555,496
Loan 27	08/09/2019	2.24%	3,821,595	54,957	3,766,638
Loan 28*	16/04/2020	3.57%	1,208,000	9,108	1,198,892
Loan 29*	16/10/2020	3.84%	1,029,820	3,543	1,026,277
Loan 30	20/11/2020	3.61%	2,175,000	12,171	2,162,829
Total loans to A Better Choice For Property Ltd			32,705,997	727,621	31,978,376
* These loans have been subsequently loaned to the companies subsidiary A Better Choice for Property Development Ltd.					

Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme – Funding Round Three

Overview

1. The Public Sector Decarbonation Scheme (phase 3) has received £1.425 billion of funding over the period 2022/23 to 2024/25. Ashford Borough Council submitted an application and has been successful with an award of £2,010,500. The projects are to be designed by Leisure Energy, they also designed the Stour Centre scheme, once this is done the Council will then tender and deliver the scheme. The Phase 3 projects are required to be complete by 31st March 2023, the Council is confident it can meet the terms of the grant.

Drawdown of funding

2. Drawdown of funding will be outlined in the agreed Project Programme on commitment of the funding. Interim payments can be made prior to completion in stages. The final grant payment is provided on completion and will require the Council to issue a Completion Certificate.

Delivery milestone	Y/N	Date milestone to be completed	Costs associated with completion of milestone	Date payment request/claim to be submitted to Salix
Project approval		01/03/2022		
Pre-design stage				
Designs complete		01/04/2022	£54,280.00	01/05/2022
Out to tender		14/04/2022		
Tenders complete		01/06/2022		
Orders placed		14/06/2022	£560,490.00	01/07/2022
Works in progress on site		06/08/2022	£934,150.00	01/09/2022
Completed on site		01/03/2023	£351,680.00	01/04/2023
Final commissioning		28/03/2023	£109,900.00	01/04/2023

3. The amount applied for in the scheme was £2,198,000, however the Council has been granted £2,010,500 (detailed above). The shortfall of £187,500, for design works will be funded from the Repairs & Renewal reserves. The total project design works will cost £241,780 of which £54,280 is funded from the grant.

Key points

Civic Centre

4. Removal of the gas fired heating plant, the Council currently has 3 no. Hamworthy 220kw boilers. To be replaced with air to water heat pumps. **144 carbon tonne annual reduction.**
5. **Project cost: £936,000**

Tenterden Leisure Centre

6. Removal of the gas fired heating plant, currently 3 no. Hamworthy 180kw boilers. To be replaced with air to water heat pumps. Installation of PV system to pool roof. **230 carbon tonne annual reduction.**
7. **Project cost: £1,263,000**

Next Steps

8. Leisure Energy will design both schemes. The phase 3 scheme had tight deadlines so understanding the Council's decarbonisation agenda officers worked hard to submit the applications on time. Officers applied for the maximum amount of funding possible, understanding the delivery timescales are tight. Once designed and costs are worked up, if there are surplus funds the Council could further invest if the projects are approved.
9. Once Council has approved the spend of this funding the Property Team will deliver the project to the timetable.

Recommendation

10. Cabinet is asked to recommend to Full Council approval of the project and related spend.

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ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Agenda Item No:

Report To: Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Cabinet

Date of Meeting: Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 8th February
Cabinet: Thursday 24th February

Report Title: Performance Report, Quarter 3 2021/22

**Report Author &
Job Title:** Tom Swain
Governance and Data Protection Officer

**Portfolio Holder
Portfolio Holder for:** Cllr. Neil Shorter
Finance and IT

Summary: Following the presentation to Cabinet in July 2020 of the Recovery Plan which set out the council's approach to making a timely and successful recovery from the impact of the coronavirus, this periodic report summarises performance against the performance indicators introduced in that Recovery Plan. A new Corporate Plan 2022 to 2024 was adopted by the Cabinet in November 2021 which will inform this performance reports from Quarter 1 of 2022/23.

Key Decision: No

**Significantly
Affected Wards:** None

Recommendations: **Overview and Scrutiny
Cabinet, is asked to:-**

I. Consider the performance data for Quarter 3 2021/22

Policy Overview: The Recovery Plan as a key strategic document set out how we embrace the 'new normal' to build: a stronger local economy, increased community resilience and public participation.

The Plan covers a 2 year period reflecting economic forecasting for the return of economic stability during the period.

This quarterly Performance Report acts as an opportunity to monitor this Recovery Plan.

**Financial
Implications:** N/A

Legal Implications:	N/A
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.
Data Protection Impact Assessment:	N/A
Risk Assessment (Risk Appetite Statement):	N/A
Sustainability Implications:	N/A
Other Material Implications:	N/A
Exempt from Publication:	No
Background Papers:	The Recovery Plan 2020
Contact:	Tom.Swain@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330432

Report Title: Performance Report, Quarter 3 2021/22

Introduction and Background

1. This report seeks to provide an overview of performance against the council's key performance indicators for Quarter 3 2021/22. The council's performance framework captures key performance data from across council services as it relates to the themes of the Recovery Plan 2020, that of Economic Recovery, Community Recovery, Place Making, Regeneration, and Infrastructure and Organisational Change and Workforce Development.
2. The Recovery Plan was developed to put in place a framework to enable a timely and structured recovery from the economic and social impact of the coronavirus pandemic. The plan sets out to deliver a number of actions that will allow the council to re-configure how it works and can most effectively deliver services to residents and how, in collaboration with others, help mitigate the negative impacts of the pandemic on the local economy, communities and residents.
3. This quarterly performance report monitors the key performance measures set out in the Recovery Plan and by doing so forms part of a comprehensive and regular review of the plan ensuring our recovery remains focused and on track to deliver a timely recovery, that is inclusive, and ensures those hardest hit by the coronavirus pandemic are not disadvantaged.
4. A new Corporate Plan 2022 to 2024 was adopted by the Cabinet in November 2021 which will inform the performance reports from Quarter 1 of 2022/23. Set out in the Corporate Plan are the indicators which will be measured in order to demonstrate how we are delivering against our objectives. The new measures will be a combination of existing measures that have been monitored since the adoption of the Recovery Plan and new ones to reflect the Corporate Plan themes.

Areas of Note

5. **Covid Omicron variant.** During this reporting period Covid cases saw a significant increase due to the prevalence of the Omicron variant, as can be seen by the Covid related measures (RPKPI84 Number of positive Covid 19 cases & RPKPI85 Website visits to Covid 19 pages). This has had an impact across the council as our residents adapt once more to the changing Covid landscape. Additional support grants for our local hospitality and leisure businesses were made available and needed administrating by the council and test and trace support payment requests also saw a significant increase.
6. **Food Hygiene Rating (RPKPI-31).** This indicator measures the percentage of businesses in the borough with a food hygiene rating above 3*; this has consistently remained above target throughout the pandemic. The measure had, however, for some previous quarters, been flagged as an area of

concern with this figure covering all inspections, including those which were overdue for their next inspection. With the aid of additional resources, efforts continue to be directed into getting the inspection program up to date following Covid related delays. A recovery plan confirmed to the Food Standards Agency is now well underway which continues to direct resources to the highest priority premises first.

7. **Planning measures**, the Council's ability to determine applications in the Stour catchment part of the Borough, continues to be constrained with the potential impact new residential accommodation could have on the Stodmarsh Lakes European Designated Sites. A Nutrient Mitigation Strategy for the Stour Catchment in Ashford Borough is being pursued as a matter of urgency. In the meantime, this is likely to have a negative impact on the ability of the Council to approve applications and this is starting to be reflected in the related performance measures. The number of live planning caseworks now stands at 846 well above the 550 capacity figure for the service, evidencing the strain this service continues to experience.
8. **Covid related measures**. With this performance report reflecting the performance measure identified as part of the Recovery Plan, many of these measures are linked directly to coronavirus related matters. Whilst the period has seen a spike in cases due to the Omicron variant, with the ending of shielding advice, related data sharing agreements with the NHS and DEFRA, the ending of many of the Covid related business support and other support schemes, reportable data will begin to come to an end and related measures where no further data is being collected will be removed from this report. Measures reflecting VERA funded foodbanks and emergency assistant grants removed as of Q2 (RPKPI24, 25 & 26).

Next Steps

9. The focus of the council in 2020 - 2021 was to respond to the coronavirus pandemic. This paused the bringing together of the next Corporate Plan whilst the impacts of the pandemic were realised and the immediate priorities to aid a timely recovery were agreed and the Recovery Plan adopted.
10. The Recovery Plan did not lose sight of the long-term ambition agreed by stakeholders to form the cornerstone of the Corporate Plan. The Ashford Ambition carries forward, together with the three themes of Green Pioneer, Caring Ashford and Targeted Growth, into the Corporate Plan 2022-2024 which has now been agreed.
11. Going forward, from Q1 2022/23 this performance report will reflect the priorities set out in the Corporate Plan 2022-2024 with a suite of performance measures in keeping with the themes of the Corporate Plan 2022-2024.






Our Recovery Plan 2020 - 22

The Ashford Ambition: to be a thriving, productive and inclusive borough in 2030 and beyond; a vital part of Kent and the South East where local businesses, social enterprises, communities and the public sector provide collective leadership to promote shared prosperity, happiness and wellbeing.

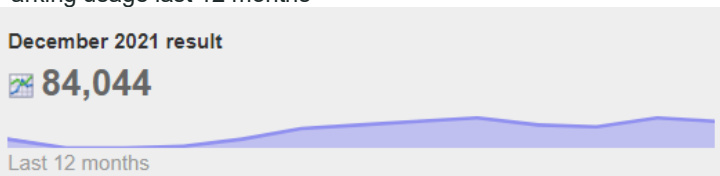


Recovery Plan, Quarterly Performance Indicators, Q3 2021/22

Key:

	Alert
	Warning
	OK

Economic Recovery

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2021/22			Q2 2021/22			Q3 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI30	Parking usage	187,472			251,662			250,281			Parking usage last 12 months
	Ashford and Tenterden Car Parks										<p>December 2021 result</p> <p> 84,044</p> <p>Last 12 months</p>

Overview on Car Park and on Street Sales for December 2021

Slight decrease from last month which is seasonal trend as evidenced in 2019 and 2018 figures.

Civic Centre provides ABC staff with free parking.

Elwick Place Car Park provides free parking after 15.00pm and again last month of all users, Cinema users here receive free parking up to 3 hours. This car park is popular and a prime location.

Elwick Rd Car Park will continue to provide free parking for MITIE staff who support Victoria Rd test centre. There are over 100 staff on rotation.

Victoria Road Car Park is still being used solely as COVID testing site into 2022.

Top Performing Car Parks

- Recreation Ground in Tenterden moves into top position this month with average dwell times of 1.25. Vicarage Lane moves to 2nd place, with average dwell times of 1.4 hours, and in 3rd Elwick Place Car Park with 2 hours. These are all short stay car parks supporting High Street economy

Figures

Income decreased in December to £200,276 from £207,375.00 from November 2021

Pre COVID, stats in December 2019 = £216,054.99

Our grand total for sales income is £1,611,947.10, our projected annual forecast income is £2,125,210

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2021/22			Q2 2021/22			Q3 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	

Our projected monthly target was set at beginning of financial year as £177k per month and figures show £179K average at this time.

Expectations

- Henwood and Flour Mills Car Park to be redeveloped, however there will be little impact on income
- New Country Car Park at Conningbrook. This will be wholly cashless, with EV chargers, with perhaps just 2 parking charges for up to 4 hours and then all day charge
- Victoria Park Car Park. Once back in Parking's, the site will provide long stay parking, with overflow parking for new Hilton Hotel and season tickets for residents who do not meet on street criteria.

News

1. Card and Cashless make up 69% of payments with coin 31%.
2. We have 3 x cabinet papers awaiting for approval which include;
 - Further Electric Vehicle charging point expansion and request for additional funding
 - Expand ANPR into both or either Edinburgh Rd Car Park and Park Mall
 - Reduce parking tariffs in above car parks
3. Park Mall now closed and will be having extensive works, expected this opening sometime new financial year.
4. Tenterden Leisure centre closed in mid-October due to roof damage and repairs and likely not to be open until 2022.
5. RingGo will be providing further marketing signs to drive and assist with our cashless agenda. These will cover some of the tired and discoloured signs around our car parks in Ashford and Tenterden.

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RPKPI51 Vacancy rates (in our corporate property)	Vacancy rates (in our corporate property)	11.3%	4.3% *Please note Square ft figures have been reviewed this quarter so figures are not directly comparable	10.1%	Percentage Occupancy Rate			
					Site	Square foot let	Total square foot	Percentage let
					Ellingham	69,336 sf	69,336 sf	100.00%
					Carlton Road	42,325 sf	50,046 sf	84.6%
					Elwick Place	52,100 sf	66,185 sf	78.7%
					International House	72,800 sf	77,462 sf	94%
					Total	236,561 sf	263,029 sf	89.9%
					Major sites that we acquired for commercial/investment purposes included. Please note Park Mall and the Commercial Quarter are not included as these were purchased for development and regeneration purposes.			

Corporate Property Performance Annual Report 2020/21 reports on the revenue performance of the Council's corporate property portfolio during the financial year 2020-2021. It also advises of the work undertaken to increase and maintain the profitability of the portfolio. [Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 28th October, 2021, 7.00 pm - Modern Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2021/22			Q2 2021/22			Q3 2021/22			Latest Note			
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status				
RPKPI80 Business survival - current vacancy rates	Business survival, measure based upon our business rates records	8.2%			8.46%			8.2%			Date	No of properties	Exemptions	Empty 'reliefs'
											1.10.21	5175	254	165
											1.11.21	5268	283	151
											1.12.21	5269	287	144

Business survival, measure based upon our business rates records, comparing the total number of rated premises against those which have an empty property exemption or relief applied to their accounts

Q4 20/21, 5161 rated properties in the borough with 266 exemptions and 165 empty reliefs.

Q1 21/22, 5168 rated properties in the borough with 241 exemptions and 168 empty reliefs.

Q2 21/22, 5175 rated properties in the borough with 254 exemptions and 165 empty reliefs

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RPKPI81 Percentage business survival of those who have received support during the pandemic	Percentage business survival of those who have received support during the pandemic -	<p>The Chancellor announced on 21 December 2021 that new Covid grant funding would be made available to help businesses in the leisure and hospitality sectors.</p> <p>This has been made up of: The Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant 2021/22 - Businesses with a business rates account in the Hospitality, Leisure or Accommodation sectors & The Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) – December 2021 - Businesses impacted by the Omicron variant but not eligible for the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant (OHLG).</p> <p>As of the writing of this report these schemes are open for applicants and our Economic Development and Revs and Bens Teams are working at pace to deliver this funding.</p> <p>Summary of support provided to businesses March 2020 – September 2020:</p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Small Business Grants</td> <td>1,757 grants paid</td> <td>£17,570,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Retail Hospitality (RHL) Grants</td> <td>560 grants paid</td> <td>£10,205,000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Discretionary Grants</td> <td>175 grants paid</td> <td>£1,351,000</td> </tr> </table> <p>Schemes from November 2020 onwards:</p> <p>Local Restrictions Support Grants</p>													Small Business Grants	1,757 grants paid	£17,570,000	Retail Hospitality (RHL) Grants	560 grants paid	£10,205,000	Discretionary Grants	175 grants paid	£1,351,000
Small Business Grants	1,757 grants paid	£17,570,000																					
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Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2021/22			Q2 2021/22			Q3 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
	November										
	Tier 3										
	Tier 4										
	Wet-led pub										
	January										
	One-off										
	February										
	Restart										
	Restart (non-essential retail)										
	Restart (other)										
	Total LRSG/Restart										
	Additional Restrictions Grants										

Information on the support provided is available on our [webpages](#).

More information on the prosperity of our local businesses is available within the Kent and Medway COVID-19 Economic Recovery Dashboard. [The Economic Recovery Dashboard](#) (XLSX, 1.3 MB). This dashboard has been developed to help support the economic recovery from COVID-19 in Kent and Medway. It draws from a range of economic indicators and uses modelled data to help identify the possible impact on local economies and those areas which may be more economically vulnerable.

Town Centre Support Grant recently launched - A grant scheme was available to support businesses to improve the visual appearance of Ashford Town Centre and to support businesses/landlords to improve their premises or attract investment into empty units. Made up of two grant streams - Shop Improvement Grant and an Empty Premises Grant. More information is available on the [business support webpages](#).

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2021/22			Q2 2021/22			Q3 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI82 Unemployment	Unemployment figures taken monthly from Kent County Councils Economy and employment data.	5%			4.4%			4.1% (latest available data Nov 2021)			<p>Source: ONS Claimant Count Presented by: Kent Analytics, Kent County Council</p>

November 2021	Number	% rate	Number change since October 2021	% change since October 2021	Number change since November 2020	% change since November 2020
Ashford	3,245	4.1%	-30	-0.9%	-1,370	-29.7%
Kent & Medway	49,365	4.4%	-875	-1.7%	-18,685	-27.5%

More information available within [Kent County Councils Economy and Employment data](#)

RPKPI83 Unemployment 18-24yr olds	Unemployment 18-24yr olds taken monthly from the Kent County Council economy and employment data	9%	6.9%	6.5%(latest available data Nov 2021)	<p>Source: ONS Claimant Count Presented by: Kent Analytics, Kent County Council</p>
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Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2021/22			Q2 2021/22			Q3 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	

Unemployment by age group in Ashford

November 2021	Number	% rate	Number change since October 2021	% change since October 2021	Number change since November 2020	% change since November 2020
18-24	565	6.5%	-10	-1.7%	-390	-40.8%
25-49	1,865	4.7%	-10	-0.5%	-585	-23.9%
50-64	805	3.0%	-10	-1.2%	-390	-32.6%

More information available within [Kent County Councils Economy and Employment data](#)

Latest available data on Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) is available from [here](#).

Presentation on youth unemployment recently given to the Overview and Scrutiny committee, presentation is available to view at: [Agenda for Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday, 8th June, 2021, 7.00 pm - Modern Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

Community Recovery

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2021/22			Q2 2021/22			Q3 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI01 Rent arrears/loss		376,024.12			542,151.59			430,313.92			We saw the collection rate of rents drop to 96.41% from 97.36% in Q3, this is as expected with the Xmas Period. We have also been working hard with the Benefits team to utilise Covid related hardship funding targeted towards our most vulnerable tenants.
RPKPI04 Homelessness presentations	No. of homelessness presentations	323			403			323			Numbers always low during December due to the Christmas period, with January being exceptionally busy
RPKPI05 Homelessness Preventions (still in accommodation)	No. of households where homelessness was prevented	29			26			28			

With the cost of living soaring and the effects of the pandemic ongoing, [Ashford Borough Council has received £175,000 to help prevent homelessness](#). The government grant will help tackle rent arrears that have built up as a direct result of Covid-19.

The latest data tables on local government housing including Ashford Borough Council, covering social housing sales, homelessness, and affordable housing supply are available at the following links: [Social housing sales](#) [Homelessness](#) [Housing statistics](#) [Affordable housing supply](#)

Report on the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme, presented on the November Cabinet agenda [Rough Sleeper Accommodation Project Move On - Update Report.pdf \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#) along with [First Homes.pdf \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2021/22			Q2 2021/22			Q3 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI06 Number of new complaints cases opened	No. of complaints regarding poor conditions and/or ASB in the private rented sector resolved with formal action	6			14			6			Electrical safety standards in the private rented sector had been implemented during the previous Q2 period with notices issued on properties found to be in breach of this regulation. Q3 saw complaint cases fall back.
RPKPI07 Gas Safety Certificates	% of ABC properties with up to date gas safety certificates	99.98%	100%		99.84%	100%		99.48%	100%		All overdue properties are being managed within current guidelines.
RPKPI08 Disabled Facilities Grants Completed	No. of disabled facilities grants administered by the council	17			21			18			Number of grants completed for the period is about average for this time of the year. Over the next couple of months this figure will start to increase as we approach the end of the financial year

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2021/22			Q2 2021/22			Q3 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI31 Food Hygiene Rating	% of businesses in the borough with a food hygiene rating above 3*	98.6%	98.5%		98.5%	98.5%		99%	98.5%		The team are making strides against the current inspection programme. The support of the Ashford Port Health Authority recommenced in November 2021 and we are collectively working together to achieve our FSA recovery plan. Good progress is being made clearing the backlog for the 2021/2022 inspection programme. A recovery plan has been prepared and confirmed to the Food Standards Agency which continues to direct resources to highest priority premises first.

This figure covers all inspections including for those inspections which are now overdue for their next inspection. The backlog continues to decrease.

Lockdown meant that our food inspection programme was suspended for most of 20/21. However, the team have made contact with most of the premises due an inspection to provide advice and gather key information to help prioritise and speed up the physical inspection process.

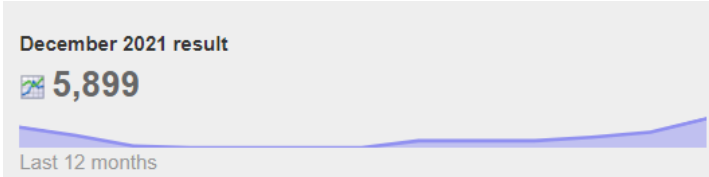
The figures are based on inspection data which is no longer current. Many inspections could not be completed during the last year because of restrictions on visits during the pandemic. The Food and Health & Safety team have contacted almost all the premises that were due an inspection in this period to establish what they are doing and to support them where they have changed their business offer. Many new businesses have been registered which have not yet been inspected.

RPKPI62 Benefit Change of Circumstance Processing	Average time taken to process a benefit change of circumstance in no. days	1.75	10		1.94	10		2.02	10		Benefit change of circumstance and new claims processing time continues to remain on target.
RPKPI63 Benefit New Claim Processing Time	Average time taken to process a new benefit payment claim in no. days	26.35	28		24.27	28		25.2	28		

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2021/22			Q2 2021/22			Q3 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI64 Universal credit new claims	Universal credit Monthly new starts	688			735			321			October 2021 result 

This looks at the number of starts to Universal Credit. The figures show the number of claims which have gone through the application process and been awarded Universal Credit. This data is available to Jobcentre Plus areas. The Jobcentre Plus office at which a claimant is recorded at is based upon the postcode of where the claimant lives. There are thirteen Jobcentre Plus areas in Kent and Medway and this figure is associated to the Ashford office.

RPKPI67 Welfare intervention new cases	Welfare intervention new cases	329			279			243			<p>Officers continue to make pro-active calls. Officers have been calling people who haven't paid any council tax offering help and financial advice. Increase in cases expected with courts starting to operate again properly.</p> <p>The welfare intervention officers are continuing to process test and trace support applications with number increasing across the period</p> <p>Oct-21 - 126 Nov-21 - 176 Dec-21 - 377</p>
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RPKPI84 Number of positive covid 19 cases	Number of positive covid 19 cases source	352			4,110			11,216			December 2021 result  <p>Number of people with at least one positive COVID-19 test result, either lab-reported or rapid lateral flow test (England only), by specimen date. Cumulative cases as 31 December - 25412</p>
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Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2021/22			Q2 2021/22			Q3 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI85 Website visits to covid 19 pages	Website visits to covid 19 pages	14,526			13,167			15,085			Decembers Unique page views: 7,631 (59.84% increase on November) Top 5 pages: Covid Testing Site News Article (1,978), Test and Trace Support Payment (1,385), Covid Homepage (967), Coronavirus Posters (738), Covid Business Grants (307).
RPKPI86 Number of referrals to voluntary sector	Number of referrals to voluntary sector	17			<p>NHS Digital has now begun a managed closure of the shielded patient list with updates of clinically vulnerable individuals no longer shared with the council.</p> <p>Non-Shielding Vulnerable priority supermarket delivery slot scheme closed for referrals in June 2021 and subsequently the data sharing agreement with Defra terminated.</p> <p>This measure will stop being reported upon going forward.</p>						

Whilst covid related shielding advice and support has previously stopped, during this period The Household Support Fund, a government grant that is aimed to support households in the most need over this winter period has launched. The fund is running between now and the end of March 2022.




Ashford Borough Council have been allocated a sum of this national funding pot and we are now accepting applications for this fund. Any vulnerable household in Ashford are now able to apply for support through this fund to help with essential household costs across the remainder of January, February and March 2022 whilst the country continues to recover from the coronavirus pandemic, Covid-19. More information available from our [webpages](#).

Place Making, Regeneration and Infrastructure

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2021/22			Q2 2021/22			Q3 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI02 Council Affordable Housing - New Build	No. of additional new build affordable homes delivered by council housing	65			29			0			No completions in this period - still two sites on site - Berry Place will complete in February 2022 and Halstow Way has been pushed back to June 2022. But for this quarter no new completions.
RPKPI03 Council Affordable Housing - On-Street Purchases	No. of additional on-street purchase affordable homes delivered by council housing	10			4			5			Street purchase – 5 'normal' (that is to say traditional acquisitions completed for HRA use, with a further 3 normal pending completion. Please note the vast majority of 1-4-1 monies has now been utilised as such, these acquisitions are more strategic now and are fewer in number, and going forward will be in line with the HRA Business Plan agreed by members in December 2021. 1 RSAP completion. (this relates to the rough sleeper accommodation programme but is temporary accommodation that will sit in the General Fund and is not acquired through the same mechanism).

During the period a [consultation was launched on plans for temporary accommodation for homeless people at Henwood Car Park](#), The council has appointed ZedPods, who build high-quality factory-produced modular units, to supply 23 homes for the site. They are highly-insulated, triple-glazed homes with heat recovery ventilation and featuring 175 solar panels integrated into the roof. The fabric of the building is designed to create net-zero carbon homes with very low running costs.

Ashford Borough Council re-opening £7.1m [East Stour Court](#) - provides 29 homes for affordable rent for older people, comprising 24 one bedroom and five two-bedroom apartments, built to a high quality that are care ready.










RPKPI10 Planning Application Approvals	% of planning applications approved	84%	90%		86%	90%		88%	90%		
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Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2021/22			Q2 2021/22			Q3 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	




The Council's ability to determine applications in the Stour catchment part of the Borough continues to be constrained at present by the potential impact of new residential accommodation on the Stodmarsh Lakes European Designated Sites, which lie east of Canterbury. Without necessary mitigation of additional nitrates caused by new residential development, the granting of planning permission may be regarded as unlawful. A strategic mitigation plan may enable permissions to be granted to the Stour catchment area when secured. In the meantime, this is likely to have a negative impact on the ability of the Council to approve applications. Advice has been given by Natural England on Nutrient Neutrality for new developments in the Stour catchment and more information is available on the planning pages of our [website](#).

A Nutrient Mitigation Strategy for the Stour Catchment in Ashford Borough, the first steps to mitigating the issue of water quality degradation at Stodmarsh Lakes, which has impacted new housing development in the Ashford borough, is set to start with Ashford Borough Council's Cabinet agreeing that land acquisition options for new wetland areas should now be explored and pursued as a matter of urgency. [Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 29th July, 2021, 7.00 pm - Modern Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

Page 228	RPKPI11 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)	94%	65%		45.45%	65%		91%	65%		<p>The latest data tables on local government Planning including Ashford Borough Council, covering the speed and quality of planning decisions are available at the following link: Live tables on planning application statistics</p> <p>Performance has significantly improved across the year and remains good in respect of major application determinations, although it is recognised that the impact of the Stodmarsh Lakes habitats issue on the ability to determine applications is starting to result in a delay to determination timescales in the short term for residential proposals in the Stour catchment area. Officers will continue to work closely with applicants to ensure that potential solutions can be identified and revised timescales for determination agreed where possible.</p>
	RPKPI11A % of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling month	% of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling month	78%	75%		85%	75%		87%	75%		<p>Given the below target Q2 measure which is acknowledged this measure is being closely monitored by the planning team. Given the relatively small number of major applications, a small number of applications delayed beyond the 13 week window can have a significant impact on the reported figure.</p>

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2021/22			Q2 2021/22			Q3 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI12 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).	96%	75%		90%	75%		90%	75%		<p>The latest data tables on local government Planning including Ashford Borough Council, covering the speed and quality of planning decisions are available at the following link: Live tables on planning application statistics</p> <p>Performance in non-major schemes remains strong and above target. Enhanced use of officer delegations is helping to maintain performance levels.</p>
RPKPI12A % of non majors determined within 8 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling month	% of non majors determined within 8 weeks amended to reflect 24 rolling month	88%	80%		89%	80%		91%	80%		
RPKPI14 Number of live planning casework reducing backlog	Number includes all conditions applications, pre-app cases, as well as applications for outline, full or reserved matters consent. Reducing backlog with a capacity set at 550 open cases	797	550		759	550		846	550		<p>Application numbers have continued to increase across 2021 and a combination of Stodmarsh plus a high number of vacant posts in the team from Spring onwards has contributed. Consultant support has partially filled the gap but not wholly.</p> <p>In order to ensure cases may be determined as swiftly as possible once a strategic mitigation solution for Stodmarsh is brought forward and consented, officers are taking cases to the point where proposals can be agreed in all other aspects pending the nutrient mitigation solution. This includes any applications where a Committee resolution may be required and/or a Section 106 Agreement to deal with other matters.</p>




Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2021/22			Q2 2021/22			Q3 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI21 % of working population cycling to work (at least once per week)	% of working population cycling to work based on the national walking and cycling data statistics (data is from the National Travel Survey and Active Lives Survey)	Cycling for travel - (the data set we're using for cycling to work as our closest cross reference stat) – the overall percentage of people surveyed that said they cycled for travel has increased from 9.1% in 2019 to 12.4% in 2020. However the relative number of journeys across the sample has reduced by 31%.									We believe this reduction in number of journeys is due to the impact of Covid and the numbers of people staying home to work from March 2020 to December 2020. An increase in the number of people using a bike to travel in the Borough during the pandemic is encouraging and, with further engagement and promotion of walking and cycling, we expect the number of journeys to improve over 2021 as society opens back up.
		Cycling for leisure – the overall percentage of people surveyed that said they cycled for leisure has increased from 26% in 2019 to 35.4% in 2020. The relative number of journeys increased by 95%.									
RPKPI22 Number of organisations committed to active travel plans cycling/walking	Number of organisations committed to travel plans cycling/walking	The specification for the active travel commissioning is being finalised with a contractor lined up to deliver the first phase of the pilot scheme. It is intended that a large local employer and Ashford Borough Council will be the first organisations to benefit from the formalising of Active Travel Plans to support the move to other ways of traveling around the town and borough.									

RPKPI40 Recycling Rate	% of borough waste recycled or composted	51.67%	50%		55.33%	50%		51%	50%		Figures based on Oct/Nov with Decembers figures awaiting. Collection patterns are returning to pre-covid trends with improved recycling. A contamination campaign has been running promoting Christmas recycling. There is distortion in November's figures due to it being a five week period, three of which were waste collection.
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Ashford's recycling rate remains comfortably above the national target of 50%, and the overall figure for Ashford (54.2% for the previous year) places us 48th in the country, 16th in the South East and top in Kent. These statistics form part of [DEFRA's nationwide recycling league tables](#).

Waste data from UK local authorities is reported to WasteDataFlow with statistics available at the following links.

[WasteDataFlow Waste and recycling statistics](#)

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2021/22			Q2 2021/22			Q3 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI41 Refuse Collection Success Rate	% of successful refuse collections per 100,000 refuse collections made.	99.96%	99.97%		99.93%	99.96%		99.95%	99.96%		Service pressures continued in October. The missed rate per 100,000 bins 51 per 100,000. Whilst higher than normal, it is still a good achievement. 99% of bins continue to be serviced on time. In December contractor achieved better than target (99.97%)

Waste data from UK local authorities is reported to WasteDataFlow with statistics available at the following links.

[WasteDataFlow](#)

[Waste and recycling statistics](#)

Organisational Change and Workforce Development

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2021/22			Q2 2021/22			Q3 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI50 Contribution to budget from commercial investments	Contribution to budget from commercial investments	70%			65%			85%			Contribution to budget from commercial investments utilising the budgeted figures provided as part of the councils budget books.

Figure based on Ellingham, Carlton Road, Elwick Place, International House, Matalan and Wilkos.

Corporate Property Performance Annual Report 2020/21 this reports on the revenue performance of the Council's corporate property portfolio during the financial year 2020-2021. It also advises of the work undertaken to increase and maintain the profitability of the portfolio. [Agenda for Cabinet on Thursday, 28th October, 2021, 7.00 pm - Modern Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

We have seen a decrease in vacancies due to a number of new leases being signed. However, we have seen a percentage decrease in expected income due to the ongoing impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

Corporate Property Income Schedule 2020/2021

2020/21 Corporate Property Income Schedule	Commercial Quarter	Court Wurtin	*Industrial Estates	*Garages	Carlton Road	Elwick Place	Stanhope Shops	Wilkinson 1 Park Mall	Park Mall	*Bockhanger Com Props & Centre	*Brookfield Com Prop	International House	Matalan	*Civic Centre	Tenterden Gateway	Sustainable Energy Project	Minor Land Holdings	Conningbrook Barn & Cottage	138 Beaver Road/140 Beaver Lane	*Minor Holdings	Total
Total income	452,074	24,620	465,331	631,275	47,202	77,275	97,034	314,000	434,111	34,916	49,730	1,640,304	365,000	115,066	49,470	58,081	19,837	38,286	5,093	63,216	4,918,704
Total expenditure	(415,582)	0	(22,176)	(179,772)	(188,577)	(197,723)	(1,840)	0	(591,338)	590	(730)	(761,286)	0	(576,621)	(74,565)	(262)	(38,512)	(1,119)	84	(39,547)	(3,049,428)
Surplus/Deficit	36,492	24,620	443,155	451,502	(141,375)	(120,447)	95,194	314,000	(157,226)	35,506	49,000	879,018	365,000	(461,555)	(25,095)	57,819	(18,675)	37,167	5,177	23,669	1,869,276
Historical Cost	0	0	2,780,000	2,820,200	7,128,954	36,950,639	1,032,000	3,560,000	823,500	217,000	467,200	7,900,000	5,030,939	202,900	0	185,000	0	0	0	1,045,700	
Return	0.0%	0.0%	15.9%	16.0%	(2.0%)	(0.3%)	9.2%	8.8%	(19.1%)	16.4%	10.5%	11.1%	7.3%	(227.5%)	0.0%	31.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.3%	
Less internal recharges	(982)	(46)	(115,493)	(16,944)	(3,366)	(2,960)	(163)	0	(62,660)	(7,547)	(26,927)	(66,836)	(12)	565,726	(8,756)	(332)	(10,978)	(16,184)	0	(27,162)	225,540
Rent income form GF	0	0	0	0	56,293**	0	0	0	24,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	80,293
Net income after recharges	35,510	24,574	327,662	434,558	(88,449)	(123,408)	95,031	314,000	(195,886)	27,959	22,073	812,182	364,988	104,172	(33,851)	57,488	(29,653)	20,983	5,177	(3,493)	2,175,109
Return on investment including recharges	0.0%	0.0%	11.8%	15.4%	(1.2%)	(0.3%)	9.2%	8.8%	(23.8%)	12.9%	4.7%	10.3%	7.3%	51.3%	0.0%	31.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	(0.3%)	
* Based on 2007 Historical value																					
Civic Centre costs based on 15% of overall costs																					
** Internal income from Aspire and ABC Electrical at Carlton Road																					

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2021/22			Q2 2021/22			Q3 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI60 Business Rates Collection	% of national non-domestic rates collected by the council - cumulative figure per month	23.46%	24.75%		51.52%	49.5%		79.36%	74.25		Government finance including Ashford Borough Council, covering borrowing and investment, capital payments and receipts, local Council Tax support, quarterly revenue outturn and receipts of Council Taxes and national non-domestic rates are available here
RPKPI61 Council Tax Collection Rate	Council Tax Collection Rate	29.72%	24.57%		57.48%	49.14%		85.37%	73.71%		

Page 33 RPKPI70 Number of days sickness per full time equivalent	Number of days sickness per full time equivalent	6.45 days For the period 1st April to 30th September	Figures run bi-annually.	<p>Based on the total FTE as at 30th September 2021 average absence due to sickness and coronavirus is 6.45 days (annualised), slightly down from 6.72 days (annualised) in the previous period.</p> <p>A total of 1,447.05 days were lost due to 'normal' sickness.</p> <p>A total of 137 days were lost due to Coronavirus, less than the 260 days in the previous period and less than the 872 days in the period before that.</p> <p>Average absence due to sickness only in this period was 5.89 days per FTE (annualised)</p> <p>Average absence per FTE due to coronavirus only in this period was 0.55 per FTE (annualised)</p>
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Sickness absence per employee 2020/21

2020/21 was an exceptional year as the majority of our staff worked remotely as per the government's mandate to work from home, and much of the year was impacted by restrictions on social contact. This meant that the transmission of normal seasonal illness was reduced and remote working meant that people were able to continue to work with a minor illness. As a result, our overall sickness absence levels for 2020/21 were low.

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2021/22			Q2 2021/22			Q3 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	

A total of 2,079 days were lost due to sickness absence across the 12-month period from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021. Based on the average number of 441 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) employees across the 12-month period, the total amount of working days lost due to sickness in 2020/21 is 4.7 days per FTE. This is an improvement on the previous year, which was 9.1 days per FTE.

Annual Sickness Report 2020/21 taken to [Septembers O&S committee](#)

RPKPI90 number of ongoing litigation/court proceedings (volume measure)	89	100	114	Measure covers those litigation/court proceedings being furthered by legal services.
RPKPI90A number of cases in which costs have been awarded against ABC (effectiveness measure)	0	0	0	Measure covers those litigation/court proceedings being furthered by legal services.
RPKPI91 number of new 106 files opened	4	3	2	
RPKPI91A number of draft 106 agreements sent out	4	2	3	

Code & Short Name	Description	Q1 2021/22			Q2 2021/22			Q3 2021/22			Latest Note
		Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	Value	Target	Status	
RPKPI91B	number of 106 cases completed	0			1			3			
number of 106 cases completed											

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to form a Task Group to review the council's Section 106 process, recommendations available within the final report. [S106 Task Group - Final Report.pdf \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

RPKPICOM1 Income Generation and Savings	We are in the process of resetting the programme, setting new milestones and fresh KPIs; working with MT on benefits of a cultural shift In line with the formation of the Corporate Plan 2022-24.
RPKPICOM2 Project Completion	In the meantime, however, one of our projects Garden Waste, is nearing completion and we have just heard that the project, as part of our wider commercialisation strategy has been shortlisted as a finalist in the national APSE Awards, in the Commercialisation and Entrepreneurship Initiative Category. Winners to be announced in September, although a great achievement in itself and indication of a very positive direction of travel to date.
RPKPICOM3 Improved Commercial Acumen	Garden Waste Development project, aims to increase customer base through new online payment systems and ability to sign up for annual contract at any time of year are proving successful. Further marketing and route analysis is planned. Other projects that will contribute to overall target require a longer lead in time before financial returns found, e.g. efficiency savings anticipated through the Category Management project which aims to streamline council contracts. Much of the work undertaken this past year will realise revenue and efficiencies in the coming years and is not reflected in the quarterly return. Commercial Services Strategy taken to July's Cabinet .

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Agenda Item No: 10
Report To: Cabinet
Date of Meeting: 24 February 2022
Report Title: Adoption of Egerton Neighbourhood Plan
Report Author: Claire Marchant – Deputy Team Leader (Plan Making and Infrastructure)
Job Title:
Portfolio Holder: Cllr. N Bell
Portfolio Holder for: Portfolio Holder for Planning & Development

Summary:

The Egerton Neighbourhood Plan was submitted in April 2021 for an independent examination which began in August 2021 and the Council received the Examiner's report in November 2021.

The Examiner's report recommended that the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum subject to a number of modifications.

On the 10 February 2021, the amended and final version of the Neighbourhood plan was subject to a local referendum, which was held in the parish. A total of 91.47% voted in favour of the plan.

Following the successful referendum it is now the Local Planning Authority's responsibility to formally 'make' (i.e. adopt) the Plan, which will grant the Plan Development Plan status for decision making purposes.

Formally 'making' the Neighbourhood Plan must be agreed by Full Council. This report recommends that the Cabinet endorse the Neighbourhood Plan and ask Full Council to 'make' it.

Key Decision: NO

Significantly Affected Wards: Weald North

Recommendations: **The Cabinet is recommended to:-**

- I. **Recommend that Full Council 'make' the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan 2021 – 2040 (incorporating the modifications recommended by the Examiner) in accordance with Section 38A(4) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.**

Policy Overview: The adoption of the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan will mean

that it becomes part of the Development Plan and its policies shall have the same weight in decision-making as the policies contained within the Borough Council's own Ashford Local Plan 2030.

Financial Implications:	25% of any Community Infrastructure Levy monies received from development in the Neighbourhood Plan area must be top sliced to the Parish Council, rather than 15% for those parishes without a Neighbourhood Plan.
Legal Implications: <i>Text agreed by Principal Solicitor – Strategic Development on 15 February 2022</i>	None identified with regard to the making of the Plan, other than those set out in this report. Any legal challenge to the making of the Plan must be made within 6 weeks after the Plan is formally made by Full Council. The Examiner found that (as modified by him) the Neighbourhood Plan would be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan, which in this case refers primarily to the Ashford Local Plan 2030. Legal rules exist to resolve any conflicts that may arise in the future between the policies of the Neighbourhood Plan and other policies in the development plan.
Equalities Impact Assessment:	See Attached
Data Protection Impact Assessment:	None
Risk Assessment (Risk Appetite Statement):	None
Sustainability Implications:	The Examiner found that policies within the Neighbourhood Plan will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.
Other Material Implications:	None
Exempt from Publication:	NO
Background Papers:	Egerton Neighbourhood Plan 2021 – 2040 (Appendix 1) Examiner's Report dated 15 November 2021
Contact:	claire.marchant@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330739

Report Title: Adoption of the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan

Introduction and Background

1. Neighbourhood planning was introduced through the Localism Act 2011, and enables local communities to shape development and growth in their area through the production of a neighbourhood development plan, a neighbourhood development order, or a community right to build order.
2. A neighbourhood plan covers a geographic area and can be taken forward by town and parish councils or 'neighbourhood forums'. A neighbourhood plan, if adopted, becomes part of the statutory development plan for that area and will be used in determining planning applications.
3. In this borough, there are four Neighbourhood Plans already adopted, the Wye Neighbourhood Plan, the Pluckley Neighbourhood Plan, the Rolvenden Neighbourhood Plan, and the Boughton Aluph and Eastwell Neighbourhood Plan. There are a number of others in various stages of production. The Egerton Neighbourhood Plan will be the fifth Neighbourhood Plan to be adopted in the borough. It will apply to the whole of Egerton Parish.
4. Work commenced on the production of the Neighbourhood Plan in 2017, and the process has involved significant consultation with the local community. Throughout the process, planning policy officers from the borough council have supported the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to ensure that the eventual Plan met not only the aspirations of local residents, but also fulfilled the tests of compliance with national and local planning policy.
5. In accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 ('the SEA Regulations'), as part of the Plan preparation process officers from the borough council screened the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan against the need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitat Regulation Assessment (HRA). A Screening Report was originally issued by the borough council in September 2020, and was subsequently updated in March 2021.
6. The March 2021 Screening Report concludes that the policies in the Neighbourhood Plan will not have significant negative effects on the environment, and therefore an SEA is not required. The Habitats Regulation Assessment screening concludes that in respect of six designated Natura 2000 sites there is unlikely to be significant environmental effects on these sites. It also concludes that there is no longer the potential for a likely significant effect to result to the Stodmarsh Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar Site and the Stodmarsh Site of Special Scientific Interest and so a full Appropriate Assessment of the Plan is not required.

7. Following two formal stages of public and stakeholder consultation on the draft Plan, the Council appointed an Independent Examiner to formally consider whether the Plan met the necessary 'basic conditions' tests set down in legislation. The examination followed the written representation procedure throughout autumn 2021. In November 2021, the Council received the examiner's report which concluded that, subject to a number of modifications, the Plan was sound and did meet the 'basic conditions' tests. It should be noted that the Examiner agreed with the borough councils conclusions set out in the SEA and HRA Screen Report March 2021. The Examiner states "on the basis of the information provided and my independent consideration of the SEA/HRA Screening Report and the Plan itself, I am satisfied that the Plan is compatible with EU obligations under retained EU law".
8. In his conclusions the examiner advised that the Plan should progress to the final stage of the Neighbourhood Plan process – a local referendum.
9. The local referendum on the Plan, as amended in accordance with the examiner's modifications (see Appendix 1), was held in Egerton parish on 10 February 2022. Of the 434 people who voted (a turnout of 50%), 91.47% supported the Plan.

Proposal

10. As more than 50% of those who voted in the local referendum were in favour of the Plan, the Local Planning Authority must 'make' (adopt) the Plan within 8 weeks of the date of the referendum.

Implications and Risk Assessment

11. The 'making' of the Neighbourhood Plan will confer full Development Plan status on its policies. This means that for decision-making purposes, applications should be determined in accordance with its policies unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The Neighbourhood Plan should therefore play a central role in guiding the Local Planning Authority in assessing planning applications in the parish, alongside the policies in the Ashford Local Plan 2030 and any other relevant plan policies.

Equalities Impact Assessment

12. Members are referred to the attached Assessment. Although the Neighbourhood Plan has been drafted and modified by others, it is necessary to consider EIA if the Council is to adopt its policies.
13. It is concluded that the policies contained within the Neighbourhood Plan do not prejudice any protected groups. The Plan provides a framework for development that will support all sections of the local community.

Consultation Planned or Undertaken

14. As set out in the background section of this report, significant consultation has taken place on the Plan, in accordance with the relevant statutory requirements, which has helped to shape the Plan.

Other Options Considered

15. The Council must 'make' (adopt) the plan unless it considers that the making of the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any human rights. In my opinion, there is no such incompatibility and therefore, the Council should progress to formally 'make' the Plan.

Reasons for Supporting Option Recommended

16. The Council are required to 'make' the Plan, following the supportive referendum result, unless the making of the plan would breach, or would otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any human rights, and there are no such reasons.

Next Steps in Process

17. If the Cabinet agree the recommendation, then it will be for the Full Council to approve and formally 'make' the Neighbourhood Plan so that it becomes a part of the Development Plan for the borough, alongside the Local Plan 2030 and other Development Plan documents.
18. In addition, following the Full Council's decision, the relevant regulations require the Borough Council to publish this decision on the council's website and also a statement setting out the reasons for making that decision. This should also be published and made available locally within the parish. The adopted version of the Neighbourhood Plan will also be made available on the Borough Council's website.

Conclusion

19. The Parish Council as a whole and the members of the Neighbourhood Planning Group in particular, deserve much credit for undertaking and persevering with the Parish Neighbourhood Plan through to its conclusion. The referendum result shows support for the Plan by the local community and demonstrates the efforts to engage the community throughout the process.
20. It is recommended that Cabinet endorse the Neighbourhood Plan and request that Full Council formally 'make' the Plan to form part of the Development plan for the borough.

Portfolio Holder's Views

21. I am very supportive of local communities taking an active role in the future evolution of their environment. These plans then inform future decisions being taken by the Local Planning Authority to develop a comprehensively beneficial place for all. The work and commitment of all having undertaken this exercise is to be commended.

Contact and Email

22. Claire Marchant – Deputy Team Leader (Plan Making and Infrastructure)
claire.marchant@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330739

Equality Impact Assessment

1. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a document that summarises how the council has had due regard to the public sector equality duty (Equality Act 2010) in its decision-making. Although there is no legal duty to produce an EIA, the Council must have **due regard** to the equality duty and an EIA is recognised as the best method of fulfilling that duty. It can assist the Council in making a judgment as to whether a policy or other decision will have unintended negative consequences for certain people and help maximise the positive impacts of policy change. An EIA can lead to one of four consequences:

- (a) No major change – the policy or other decision is robust with no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. Opportunities to promote equality have been taken;
- (b) Adjust the policy or decision to remove barriers or better promote equality as identified in the EIA;
- (c) Continue the policy – if the EIA identifies potential for adverse impact, set out compelling justification for continuing;
- (d) Stop and remove the policy where actual or potential unlawful discrimination is identified.

Public sector equality duty

2. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on the council, when exercising public functions, to have due regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - (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 (ie tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups).

3. These are known as the three aims of the general equality duty.

Protected characteristics

4. The Equality Act 2010 sets out nine protected characteristics for the purpose of the equality duty:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership*
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

*For marriage and civil partnership, only the first aim of the duty applies in relation to employment.

Due regard

5. Having 'due regard' is about using good equality information and analysis at the right time as part of decision-making procedures.
6. To 'have due regard' means that in making decisions and in its other day-to-day activities the council must consciously consider the need to do the things set out in the general equality duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. This can involve:
- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
 - taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics when these are different from the needs of other people.
 - encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where it is disproportionately low.

7. How much regard is 'due' will depend on the circumstances. The greater the

potential impact, the higher the regard required by the duty. Examples of functions and decisions likely to engage the duty include: policy decisions, budget decisions, public appointments, service provision, statutory discretion, decisions on individuals, employing staff and procurement of goods and services.

8. In terms of timing:

- Having 'due regard' should be considered at the inception of any decision or proposed policy or service development or change.
- Due regard should be considered throughout development of a decision. Notes shall be taken and kept on file as to how due regard has been had to the equality duty in research, meetings, project teams, consultations etc.
- The completion of the EIA is a way of effectively summarising this and it should inform final decision-making.

Armed Forces Community

9. As part of the council's commitment to the Armed Forces Community made through the signing of the Armed Forces Covenant the council's Cabinet agreed in November 2017 that potential impacts on the Armed Forces Community should be considered as part of the Equality Impact Assessment process.

10. Accordingly, due regard should also be had throughout the decision making process to potential impacts on the groups covered by the Armed Forces Covenant:

- Current serving members of the Armed Forces (both Regular and Reserve)
- Former serving members of the Armed Forces (both Regular and Reserve)
- The families of current and former Armed Forces personnel.

Case law principles

11. A number of principles have been established by the courts in relation to the equality duty and due regard:

- Decision-makers in public authorities must be aware of their duty to have 'due regard' to the equality duty and so EIA's must be attached to any relevant committee reports.
- Due regard is fulfilled before and at the time a particular policy is under consideration as well as at the time a decision is taken. Due regard involves a conscious approach and state of mind.
- A public authority cannot satisfy the duty by justifying a decision after it has been taken.
- The duty must be exercised in substance, with rigour and with an open mind in such a way that it influences the final decision.
- The duty is a non-delegable one. The duty will always remain the responsibility of the public authority.
- The duty is a continuing one so that it needs to be considered not only when a policy, for example, is being developed and agreed but also when it is implemented.
- It is good practice for those exercising public functions to keep an accurate record showing that they have actually considered the general duty and pondered relevant questions. Proper record keeping encourages transparency and will discipline those carrying out the relevant function to undertake the duty conscientiously.
- A public authority will need to consider whether it has sufficient information to assess the effects of the policy, or the way a function is being carried out, on the aims set out in the general equality duty.
- A public authority cannot avoid complying with the duty by claiming that it does not have enough resources to do so.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has produced helpful guidance on "Meeting the Equality Duty in Policy and Decision-Making" (October 2014). It is available on the following link and report authors should read and follow this when developing or reporting on proposals for policy or

service development or change and other decisions likely to engage the equality duty. [Equality Duty in decision-making](#)

Lead officer:	Claire Marchant
Decision maker:	Council
Decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy, project, service, contract • Review, change, new, stop 	New planning policy – Adoption of Egerton Parish Neighbourhood Plan
Date of decision: The date when the final decision is made. The EIA must be complete before this point and inform the final decision.	22 February 2022 – Cabinet meeting
Summary of the proposed decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims and objectives • Key actions • Expected outcomes • Who will be affected and how? • How many people will be affected? 	<p>The adopted plan will form part of the Council’s development plan, and need to be taken into account in making decisions on planning applications within Egerton Parish.</p> <p>The adoption of the Plan impacts upon planning decisions within the parish of Egerton. There is a potential impact upon residents, landowners and businesses in the parish of Egerton.</p>
Information and research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the information and research that has informed the decision. • Include sources and key findings. 	<p>The production of the Neighbourhood Plan has been through its statutory process, being produced by the Egerton Parish Council.</p> <p>Following a successful referendum the Local Planning Authority is required to ‘make’ (adopt) the Plan.</p>
Consultation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What specific consultation has occurred on this decision? • What were the results of the consultation? • Did the consultation analysis reveal any difference in views across the protected characteristics? • What conclusions can be drawn from the analysis on how the decision will affect people with different protected characteristics? 	<p>The Parish Council has carried out informal and formal consultation in accordance with the statutory requirements. Consultation has taken place with the local community, businesses, landowners and other statutory stakeholders.</p> <p>The Council has also carried out a consultation on the plan with all of the above. Responses received to the consultation, raised specific issues about the Plan’s proposals and were taken into account during Independent Examination of the Neighbourhood Plan. The consultation analysis did not reveal any difference in views across the protected characteristics.</p>

Assess the relevance of the decision to people with different protected characteristics and assess the impact of the decision on people with different protected characteristics.

When assessing relevance and impact, make it clear who the assessment applies to within the protected characteristic category. For example, a decision may have high relevance for young people but low relevance for older people; it may have a positive impact on women but a neutral impact on men.

Protected characteristic	Relevance to Decision High/Medium/Low/None	Impact of Decision Positive (Major/Minor) Negative (Major/Minor) Neutral
<u>AGE</u> Elderly	None	Neutral
Middle age	None	Neutral
Young adult	None	Neutral
Children	None	Neutral
<u>DISABILITY</u> Physical	None	Neutral
Mental	None	Neutral
Sensory	None	Neutral
<u>GENDER RE- ASSIGNMENT</u>	None	Neutral
<u>MARRIAGE/CIVIL PARTNERSHIP</u>	None	Neutral
<u>PREGNANCY/MATERNITY</u>	None	Neutral
<u>RACE</u>	None	Neutral
<u>RELIGION OR BELIEF</u>	None	Neutral
<u>SEX</u> Men	None	Neutral
Women	None	Neutral
<u>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</u>	None	Neutral
<u>ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY</u> Regular/Reserve personnel	None	Neutral
Former service personnel	None	Neutral
Service families	None	Neutral

Mitigating negative impact: Where any negative impact has been identified, outline the measures taken to mitigate against it.	N/A
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Is the decision relevant to the aims of the equality duty? Guidance on the aims can be found in the EHRC's Essential Guide , alongside fuller PSED Technical Guidance .	
Aim	Yes / No / N/A
1) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	No
2) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	No
3) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	No

Conclusion:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider how due regard has been had to the equality duty, from start to finish. There should be no unlawful discrimination arising from the decision (see guidance above). Advise on whether the proposal meets the aims of the equality duty or whether adjustments have been made or need to be made or whether any residual impacts are justified. How will monitoring of the policy, procedure or decision and its implementation be undertaken and reported? 	<p>The Neighbourhood Plan has been drafted by others, but the Council has considered the Equalities Act when providing comments advice to the Parish Council regarding the Plan.</p> <p>The policy is not specifically relevant to any of the protected characteristics. The Neighbourhood Plan seeks to bring forward development that will benefit the parish as a whole. It is concluded that the policies contained within the Neighbourhood Plan do not prejudice any existing groups. The Plan provides a framework for development that will support all sections of the local community.</p> <p>The monitoring of development outcomes will form part of the Council's wider development monitoring activities. The Annual Monitoring report will be vehicle by which any specific outcomes can be noted as well as periodic reports on the delivery of infrastructure through Section 106 Agreements</p>
EIA completion date:	11 February 2022



Intelligent Plans
and examinations

Report on Egerton Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2040

An Examination undertaken for Ashford Borough Council with the support of Egerton Parish Council on the April 2021 Submission version of the Plan.

Independent Examiner: Derek Stebbing BA (Hons) DipEP MRTPI

Date of Report: 15 November 2021

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Main Findings - Executive Summary

From my examination of the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan) and its supporting documentation including the representations made, I have concluded that subject to the modifications set out in this report, the Plan meets the Basic Conditions.

I have also concluded that:

- the Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body – the Egerton Parish Council (the Parish Council);
- the Plan has been prepared for an area properly designated – the Egerton Neighbourhood Area, as identified on the map at page 7 of the Plan;
- the Plan specifies the period to which it is to take effect – from 2021 to 2040; and,
- the policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood plan area.

I recommend that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum on the basis that it has met all the relevant legal requirements.

I have considered whether the referendum area should extend beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates and have concluded that it should not.

1. Introduction and Background

Egerton Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2040

- 1.1 The Parish of Egerton is situated to the north-west of the Ashford urban area and covers an area of around 4.8 square miles. The main settlement of Egerton stands on a prominent Greensand ridge, from which there are long views of the Low Weald and beyond to the south-west and of the North Downs to the north-east. The smaller settlement of Egerton Forstal lies to the south-west of Egerton village, and the parish also contains a number of small hamlets. The Greensand Way, an important long-distance footpath, crosses along the northern part of the parish, and this is used by many walkers and ramblers.
- 1.2 The parish has a rich architectural heritage, with 84 Listed Buildings and structures of architectural interest. Over 50 historic farmsteads in the parish are listed in the Kent Historic Environment Record. The centre of Egerton village containing many Listed buildings was designated as a Conservation Area in 1976. In addition to the Greensand Ridge, which supports arable farming on higher ground and fruit orchards on lower, more sheltered land, the landscape of the parish contains other distinctive areas with some significant areas of woodland, including a number of

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areas of ancient woodland. There are several designated Local Wildlife Sites within the parish.

- 1.3 The parish is characterised by its network of minor roads and byways but with no major roads. This means that there is little through traffic passing through the parish, adding to the peaceful and tranquil rural nature of the area.
- 1.4 The parish has a strong sense of community, and prior to the preparation of the Plan, a Parish Design Statement had been prepared in 2005 and a Parish Plan was published in 2015. In addition to the draft policies contained in the Plan, it also includes a number of Community Aspirations some of which reflect the objectives of the Parish Plan.
- 1.5 Overall, the parish has a very rural character, supporting a largely agricultural-based economy. There has only been limited new development in recent years, with the main period of growth occurring during 1961-2011 when the population of the parish increased from 773 to 1,083. The recently adopted Ashford Local Plan 2030 contains only one site allocation (Policy reference S30) in the parish for future residential development, with an indicative capacity of 15 dwellings.

The Independent Examiner

- 1.6 As the Plan has now reached the examination stage, I have been appointed as the examiner of the Plan by Ashford Borough Council (the Borough Council), with the agreement of the Parish Council.
- 1.7 I am a chartered town planner, with over 45 years of experience in planning. I have worked in both the public and private sectors and have experience of examining both local plans and neighbourhood plans. I have also served on a Government working group considering measures to improve the local plan system and undertaken peer reviews on behalf of the Planning Advisory Service. I therefore have the appropriate qualifications and experience to carry out this independent examination.
- 1.8 I am independent of the qualifying body and the local authority and do not have an interest in any of the land that may be affected by the Plan.

The Scope of the Examination

- 1.9 As the independent examiner, I am required to produce this report and recommend either:
 - (a) that the neighbourhood plan is submitted to a referendum without changes; or
 - (b) that modifications are made and that the modified neighbourhood plan is submitted to a referendum; or

(c) that the neighbourhood plan does not proceed to a referendum on the basis that it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.

1.10 The scope of the examination is set out in Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) ('the 1990 Act'). The examiner must consider:

- Whether the plan meets the Basic Conditions.
- Whether the plan complies with provisions under s.38A and s.38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) ('the 2004 Act'). These are:
 - it has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body, for an area that has been properly designated by the local planning authority;
 - it sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land;
 - it specifies the period during which it has effect;
 - it does not include provisions and policies for 'excluded development'; and
 - it is the only neighbourhood plan for the area and does not relate to land outside the designated neighbourhood area.
- Whether the referendum boundary should be extended beyond the designated area, should the plan proceed to referendum.
- Such matters as prescribed in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) ('the 2012 Regulations').

1.11 I have considered only matters that fall within Paragraph 8(1) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act, with one exception. That is the requirement that the Plan is compatible with the Human Rights Convention.

The Basic Conditions

1.12 The 'Basic Conditions' are set out in Paragraph 8(2) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act. In order to meet the Basic Conditions, the neighbourhood plan must:

- have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State;
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development;

- be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area;
- be compatible with and not breach European Union (EU) obligations (under retained EU law)¹; and
- meet prescribed conditions and comply with prescribed matters.

1.13 Regulation 32 of the 2012 Regulations prescribes a further Basic Condition for a neighbourhood plan. This requires that the making of the Neighbourhood Plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('the Habitats Regulations').²

2. Approach to the Examination

Planning Policy Context

- 2.1 The Development Plan for this part of Ashford Borough Council, not including documents relating to excluded minerals and waste development, is the Ashford Local Plan 2030 (ALP), which was adopted on 21 February 2019.
- 2.2 The Basic Conditions Statement (at Sections 4 and 6) provides an assessment of how each of the policies proposed in the Plan have regard to national policy (Section 4) and are in general conformity with the relevant strategic policies in the adopted Local Plan (Section 6). Having been adopted in February 2019, the Local Plan provides a relatively up-to-date strategic planning context for the Neighbourhood Plan, and this has been beneficial to the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan and its policies. A review of the Local Plan has not yet been progressed.
- 2.3 The planning policy for England is set out principally in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) offers guidance on how this policy should be implemented. A revised NPPF was published on 20 July 2021. All references in this report are to the 2021 NPPF and its accompanying PPG.

Submitted Documents

- 2.4 I have considered all policy, guidance and other reference documents I consider relevant to the examination, including those submitted which comprise:

¹ The existing body of environmental regulation is retained in UK law.

² This revised Basic Condition came into force on 28 December 2018 through the Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning (Various Amendments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2018.

- the draft Egerton Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2040 (Submission Version April 2021);
- the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment Screening Report and Determination Report (March 2021);
- the Basic Conditions Statement (undated);
- the Consultation Statement and Appendices 1-13 (undated);
- the Site Assessment Report (April 2021); and
- all the representations that have been made in accordance with the Regulation 16 consultation.³

Supporting Documents

2.5 I have also considered the following supporting documents⁴ which have informed the Plan's preparation and its policies and content:

- Egerton Parish Plan (2015)⁵;
- Egerton Parish Design Statement (2005)⁶;
- Local Green Spaces Assessment (including Revision F map) (September 2019);
- Housing Needs Survey Report (November 2018) and Summary (January 2019);
- Local Heritage Assessment and Listing (Website); and
- Views and Vistas Report (undated).

Preliminary Questions

2.6 Following my appointment as the independent examiner and my initial review of the draft Plan, its supporting documents and representations made at the Regulation 16 stage, I wrote to the Borough Council and the Parish Council on 26 August 2021⁷ seeking further clarification and information on nine matters contained in the submission Plan, as follows:

- firstly, with regard to Policy P3 (Local Green Spaces), I noted that the policy simply lists the proposed five Local Green Spaces but contains no further policy text regarding the protection of the sites and future management of development. Therefore, I invited the Parish Council to provide me with a note setting out some appropriate draft text for incorporation within the policy, which I may consider as a potential modification to the Plan. I also noted that the policy should also provide a cross-reference to the maps on Page 75 of the Plan and that maps for Sites d. (Pembles Cross) and e. (Stonebridge Green) are not included on Page 75, and I considered

³ View at: <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/planning-and-development/planning-policy/neighbourhood-plans/egerton-neighbourhood-plan/>

⁴ Subject to footnotes 5 and 6, view at: <http://egertonnp.co.uk/>

⁵ View at: <http://www.egerton-kent.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Parish-Plan.pdf>

⁶ View at: <http://www.egerton-kent.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Egerton-Parish-Design-Statement.pdf>

⁷ View at: <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/planning-and-development/planning-plans/egerton-neighbourhood-plan/>

that the site maps on pages 22 and 23 of the Local Green Spaces Assessment report should be added at Page 75. I further noted that the site map (on page 75) for the proposed Local Green Space at Site b. (Green space off Elm Close and behind Rock Hill Road) differs from that shown as Revision f to the Local Green Spaces Assessment report, and I sought confirmation which of the two maps shows the full extent of land proposed for designation as a Local Green Space.

- secondly, with regard to Policy P4 (Key Views and Vistas), I requested that the Parish Council confirm whether there is any further supporting evidence beyond the text on pages 32 and 33 (and the photographs on pages 80-82) to justify the identification of the proposed Key Views and Vistas listed in the policy.
- thirdly, with regard to Policy P5 (Non-designated Heritage Assets), I noted that Appendix 2 includes seven heritage assets that are coded "Red – No", and which from my initial assessment should not be listed within Appendix 2 (and therefore not subject to Policy P5). I requested that the Parish Council confirm whether my assessment was correct and, if so, that the seven heritage assets concerned are not being proposed as non-designated heritage assets as part of the Plan.
- fourthly, with regard to Policy P6 (Light Pollution and Dark Skies), I considered that, as drafted, some of the requirements set out with Part b) of this policy are excessively detailed (and therefore probably difficult to enforce by the Borough Council) and detract from the underlying purpose of this policy. I considered that proposals for new developments in the Plan area should, where appropriate, be required to include details of any external lighting scheme (which would include the type of detailed specification presently set out within the policy), and I invited the Parish Council to consider redrafting the policy to set out the fundamental purpose of the policy and to seek the submission of details for any proposed external lighting scheme as part of relevant planning applications for development in the Plan area.
- fifthly, with regard to Policy S1 (Community Facilities), I requested that the Borough Council and/or the Parish Council confirm that The George Public House and the Egerton Post Office and Stores are the only registered Assets of Community Value within the Plan area.
- sixthly, with regard to Policy D4 (Local Needs Affordable Housing) and paragraphs 7.26-7.29 of the supporting text, I noted that the Government had recently published details of its new 'First Homes' policy initiative. The 'First Homes' section of the PPG now requires that neighbourhood plans are expected to contain First Homes policies. However, transitional arrangements apply to draft plans already being prepared, and thus the Plan is covered by those transitional arrangements. Nevertheless, I considered that the Plan would benefit from a reference to the provision of First Homes (at a level of at least 25% of all affordable housing to be provided), possibly as an additional paragraph of text. I therefore invited both the Borough Council and the Parish Council to consider this matter, and if appropriate to provide draft text to address this point.

- seventhly, with regard to Policy D5 (Land at Orchard Nurseries, Egerton), I considered that this policy required some re-drafting, as I

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considered that it should not refer to “a *by-product of the value of the gifted site*” which would seem to relate to a future capital receipt. I therefore invited the Parish Council to consider providing re-drafted text for the policy which should not include details of any financial benefits that might arise from the development proposal. I also considered that the policy should identify the proposed vehicular access arrangements to serve the site, which was a matter also raised by Kent County Council in its representations.

- eighthly, with regard to Policy D7 (Water Supply and Drainage), I noted that this policy is entitled “Water Supply and Drainage”. However, Clause 4. of the policy (and paragraph 7.49 of the supporting text) seemed to relate to waste disposal infrastructure (as opposed to waste water drainage). I therefore requested that the Parish Council confirm that Clause 4. does relate to waste disposal, and, if so, this would fall within the category of ‘Excluded Development’ (being matters concerning Minerals and Waste) for the purposes of neighbourhood planning, and I would therefore be required to recommend the deletion of this part of the policy.
- finally, with regard to the revised NPPF published by the Government in July 2021 alongside the final version of the National Model Design Code, I requested that the Borough Council and the Qualifying Body advise me whether they consider any modifications in relation to the non-strategic matters covered by the Plan are necessary as a result of both publications and, if so, what they are.

2.7 In response to my letter of 26 August 2021, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group provided me with responses to the preliminary questions on 15 September 2021 and the Borough Council provided me with specific responses to the fifth, sixth and ninth questions on 16 September 2021.⁸ I have taken full account of the additional information contained in these responses as part of my assessment of the draft Plan, alongside the documents listed at paragraphs 2.4 and 2.5 above.

2.8 I also received further correspondence via the Borough Council from a member of the public dated 9 September 2021 relating to the seventh preliminary question summarised above. I accepted that correspondence on the basis that it provided me with some additional information, but I also invited the Parish Council to make any further comments that they wished to make on that correspondence. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group wrote to me on 17 September 2021 with additional comments arising from that correspondence.⁹

⁸ View at: <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/planning-and-development/planning-policy/neighbourhood-plans/egerton-neighbourhood-plan/>

⁹ View at: <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/planning-and-development/planning-policy/neighbourhood-plans/egerton-neighbourhood-plan/>

Site Visit

- 2.9 I made an unaccompanied site visit to the Neighbourhood Plan Area on 18 September 2021 to familiarise myself with it and visit relevant sites and areas referenced in the Plan, evidential documents and representations.

Written Representations with or without Public Hearing

- 2.10 This examination has been dealt with by written representations. I considered hearing sessions to be unnecessary as the consultation responses clearly articulated the objections and comments regarding the Plan and presented arguments for and against the Plan's suitability to proceed to a referendum. I am satisfied that the material supplied is sufficiently comprehensive for me to be able to deal with the matters raised under the written representations procedure, and that there was not a requirement to convene a public hearing as part of this examination. In all cases, the information provided has enabled me to reach a conclusion on the matters concerned.

Modifications

- 2.11 Where necessary, I have recommended modifications to the Plan (**PMs**) in this report in order that it meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. For ease of reference, I have listed these modifications in full in the Appendix.

3. Procedural Compliance and Human Rights

Qualifying Body and Neighbourhood Plan Area

- 3.1 The Plan has been prepared and submitted for examination by the Egerton Parish Council. An application to the Borough Council for the Parish Council area to be designated a neighbourhood planning area was made on 30 March 2017 and was approved by the Borough Council on 13 July 2017, following public consultation between 24 March and 5 May 2017.
- 3.2 The designated Neighbourhood Area comprises the whole of the Parish of Egerton. The designated area is shown on the map at Appendix 1 in the Basic Conditions Statement and on the map at page 7 in the submission Plan. The Egerton Neighbourhood Plan is the only neighbourhood plan in the designated area.
- 3.3 Egerton Parish Council is the Qualifying Body for the preparation of the Plan. The preparation of the Plan has been led by a Steering Group, which was established in November 2016, initially comprising a combination of Parish Councillors and local residents.

Plan Period

- 3.4 The draft Plan specifies (on the front cover) the period to which it is to take effect, which is for the period 2021 to 2040. However, I note that the Plan (at paragraph 1.7 and at various other points) states that it covers the period 2020-2040. I am satisfied that the correct Plan period is 2021-2040, as this was the basis upon which the Plan was published for statutory consultation under Regulation 16¹⁰ and accordingly the date at paragraph 1.7 and elsewhere in the Plan should be amended to read 2021-2040. This is addressed by my recommended modification **PM18** which sets out amendments that are necessary to the Plan. The Plan period encompasses the remaining part of the plan period for the adopted ALP (up to 2030), with provision for review every 5 years to ensure that the strategic policies of the Development Plan may be taken into account when they are updated. I make a further recommendation in regard to the Plan's review in **PM12** (see paragraph 4.51 below) specific to housing need.

Neighbourhood Plan Preparation and Consultation

- 3.5 The Consultation Statement and its Appendices sets out a comprehensive record of the Plan's preparation and its associated engagement and consultation activity during 2017-2021. The decision to undertake the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan was taken in late-2016, following an exploratory public meeting held in October 2016. Following the designation of the Neighbourhood Area in July 2017, a series of three workshops were held in September 2017, seeking residents' views on the future development of the parish. Further community engagement continued during late 2017 and 2018 with a number of workshops and information events, such as the Parish Assembly. During this period, a Call for Sites was launched in May 2018 resulting in ten sites being put forward by landowners in the parish. The Site Assessment report (at Section 4) describes this in greater detail.
- 3.6 A Housing Needs Survey was undertaken between October 2018 and January 2019 by Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK), with a survey form distributed to every household in the parish. This resulted in a 40% responses rate.
- 3.7 At the Parish Assembly held in March 2019, there was general support for the Vision and Key Objectives of the emerging Plan. This was followed later in 2019 by two workshops, the first of which considered the initial drafts of the Plan's policies and the supporting studies that had been completed. A full draft of the emerging Plan was presented at the second workshop, together with further supporting material such as the Green Space Assessment. The comments and feedback from residents attending

¹⁰ View at <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/news/latest-news/consultation-opens-on-egerton-neighbourhood-plan/>

these workshops are recorded in Appendices to the Consultation Statement.

- 3.8 Work then commenced on the preparation of the Regulation 14 draft Plan which was published for public consultation for six months between late-April and September 2020. The length of this consultation period was due to the prevailing coronavirus situation and the inability to hold public events, such as meetings, exhibitions and workshops during that period. However, the consultation was accompanied by extensive local publicity across the parish using social media, posters, public notices, the Neighbourhood Plan website and by placing copies of the draft Plan at prominent public locations. A total of 40 statutory and non-statutory consultees were contacted separately, including the Borough Council, utility companies and adjoining Parish Councils.
- 3.9 The Consultation Statement, and particularly Appendices 9-11, sets out a full record of the responses received to the Regulation 14 consultation and the subsequent actions that were taken to amend or modify the draft Plan following those responses.
- 3.10 The Parish Council duly resolved on 2 March 2021 to submit the Plan to the Borough Council for examination under Regulation 15, and the Plan was formally submitted in April 2021. Regulation 16 consultation was then held for a period of six weeks from 25 June to 6 August 2021. I have taken account of the 105 responses then received, which include signatories to a petition regarding Policy D4 in the Plan, as well as the published Consultation Statement. I am satisfied that a transparent, fair and inclusive consultation process has been followed for the Plan, that has had regard to advice in the PPG on plan preparation and is procedurally compliant in accordance with the legal requirements. I have also received a commentary on the above-mentioned petition that was published by the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group in August 2021, but I have only considered that commentary on the basis that it sought to provide further information, and it has not affected my full consideration of the points that were raised by the petitioners.¹¹

Development and Use of Land

- 3.11 Subject to the modification I recommend to Policy D5 (**PM14**), the draft Plan sets out policies in relation to the development and use of land in accordance with s.38A of the 2004 Act.

¹¹ View at: <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/planning-and-development/planning-policy/neighbourhood-plans/egerton-neighbourhood-plan/>

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Excluded Development

3.12 From my review of the documents before me, the draft Plan does not include policies or proposals that relate to any of the categories of excluded development.¹²

Human Rights

3.13 Neither the Borough Council nor any other party has raised any issues concerning a breach of, or incompatibility with Convention rights (within the meaning of the Human Rights Act 1998). From my assessment of the Plan, its accompanying supporting documents and the consultation responses made to the Plan at the Regulations 14 and 16 stages, I am satisfied that the Plan has had regard to the fundamental rights and freedoms guaranteed under the European Convention on Human Rights and complies with the Human Rights Act 1998. I consider that none of the objectives and policies in the Plan will have a negative impact on groups with protected characteristics. Many will have a positive impact.

4. Compliance with the Basic Conditions

EU Obligations

- 4.1 The Borough Council first issued a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report in accordance with the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 ('the SEA Regulations') in September 2020, and this was subsequently updated in March 2021. This Screening Report is submitted alongside the draft Plan and concludes (at paragraph 4.8) that the policies in the draft Plan will not have significant negative effects on the environment, and therefore an SEA is not considered to be required. The Screening Report was the subject of consultation with the Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England between 21 May and 2 July 2020 (as set out at Appendix 2 in the Screening Report). Notwithstanding the overall conclusion that an SEA is not required, I have given careful consideration to the responses from each of the statutory bodies, including a further response from Natural England dated 11 January 2021 (see also below).
- 4.2 I have considered the SEA methodology set out in the Screening Report (at Section 4) and process by which the Plan was duly screened to determine whether the Plan is likely to have significant environmental effects, bearing in mind also that the policies in the adopted ALP, were subject to sustainability appraisal at the relevant stages, most recently in 2016/17. Overall, I am satisfied that a proportionate approach has been taken and that the Plan was screened to take full account of any potential

¹² The meaning of 'excluded development' is set out in s.61K of the 1990 Act.
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effects upon interests of environmental, landscape, historic and heritage importance.

- 4.3 The Plan was also screened by the Borough Council in order to establish whether the Plan required HRA under the Habitats Regulations. There are six sites of European importance within 20 kilometres of the Plan area boundary, comprising the North Downs Woodlands, the Wye & Crundale Downs and the Queendown Warren Special Areas of Conservation (SACs); The Swale Special Protection Area (SPA); and the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay and The Swale Ramsar sites. The HRA Screening Assessment, which is also contained within the Screening Report, concluded (at paragraphs 5.9 and 5.10) that the draft Plan does not include any proposals that would be likely to adversely affect the integrity of the European sites or in combination with other projects and plans and that a full HRA Appropriate Assessment of the Plan is not required. I have noted that Natural England's further response, dated 11 January 2021, has not raised any concerns regarding the necessity for an HRA, which reflects an updated position from that set out in a previous response dated 15 July 2020.
- 4.4 Therefore, I consider that on the basis of the information provided and my independent consideration of the SEA/HRA Screening Report and the Plan itself, I am satisfied that the Plan is compatible with EU obligations under retained EU law.
- 4.5 The Plan at paragraph 1.9 refers to the SEA/HRA Screening Report dated September 2020. This paragraph should be updated to now refer to the March 2021 report prepared by the Borough Council and to reflect the conclusions of that report, and this is a further matter addressed by recommended modification **PM18**.

Main Assessment

- 4.6 The NPPF states (at paragraph 29) that "*Neighbourhood planning gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. Neighbourhood plans can shape, direct and help to deliver sustainable development, by influencing local planning decisions as part of the statutory development plan*" and also that "*Neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than set out in the strategic policies for the area, or undermine those strategic policies*". The NPPF (at paragraph 11) also sets out the presumption in favour of sustainable development. It goes on to state (at paragraph 13) that neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies contained in local plans; and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies.
- 4.7 Having considered above whether the Plan complies with various legal and procedural requirements, it is now necessary to deal with the question of whether it complies with the remaining Basic Conditions (see paragraph 1.12 of this report), particularly the regard it pays to national policy and

guidance, the contribution it makes to sustainable development and whether it is in general conformity with strategic development plan policies.

- 4.8 I test the Plan against the Basic Conditions by considering specific issues of compliance of the Plan's 17 policies, which address the following themes: Protecting and Conserving Egerton's Original Character and Environment; Ensuring a Sustainable Future for Egerton; and, Development to Meet Current and Future Need. As part of that assessment, I consider whether the policies in the Plan are sufficiently clear and unambiguous, having regard to advice in the PPG. A policy should be drafted with sufficient clarity that a decision maker can apply it consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. It should be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence.¹³ I recommend some modifications as a result.

Overview

- 4.9 The Plan is addressing a period up to 2040 and seeks to provide a clear planning framework to guide residents, businesses, the Borough Council and developers as to how the community wish to shape the development and growth of the parish during that period. Sections 5-7 of the Plan contain specific policies in respect of each of the themes listed above.
- 4.10 Section 1 of the Plan provides an introduction to the Plan following the designation of the parish as a Neighbourhood Area in July 2017 and includes a map of the designated area (on page 7). It provides a brief synopsis of the Neighbourhood Plan process, and the key issues facing Egerton Parish. It states that the Plan provides an opportunity to protect the individual character and environment of Egerton, ensure a sustainable future for the village, improve the health and wellbeing of all residents, facilitate the development of housing to meet the needs of local people and contribute to the local architectural character.
- 4.11 Section 2 provides a brief description of how the Plan has been prepared since 2017. It notes that, following extensive consultation during the course of the Plan's preparation, it has been the majority view from the many consultation responses that has prevailed in the final submission Plan which is the subject of this examination.
- 4.12 Section 3 is entitled 'Egerton Now' and provides a description of the key landscape characteristics, the settlement pattern, economic activities and community facilities within the parish.
- 4.13 The parish covers an area of about 1,130 hectares, of which less than 3% is developed with buildings and roads. The population of the parish was 1,075 persons in 2013, with the largest concentrations of people living in the main settlements of Egerton village and Egerton Forstal, as well as in

¹³ PPG Reference ID: 41-041-20140306.

the smaller hamlets of Mundy Bois, Newland Green, Pemples Cross and Stonebridge Green. A characteristic of the parish is that it does not contain any major roads but instead is crossed by many minor roads and byways. There are around 40 Public Rights of Way within the parish, the most important of which is the Greensand Way, and this makes it an attractive area for walkers and ramblers. All businesses within the parish are small and locally-based and increasingly residents are choosing to work from home. The principal community facilities are located in Egerton village, notably the Millennium Hall (completed in 1999) which provides a focus for many community events. There is a Primary School within Egerton, but children attending secondary school travel by bus or car to Ashford, Lenham and Tenterden. A Pre-School is presently based at the Millennium Hall. There are 84 Listed Buildings and structures of architectural interest in the parish, and the centre of Egerton village is a designated Conservation Area containing 23 Listed Buildings.

- 4.14 Section 4 sets out the Vision and Key Objectives for the Plan. The Vision for the future of Egerton combines the need to protect and conserve the quality of community life and the parish environment as identified by its residents; to ensure that there is a sustainable future for the people who live and work in the parish including access to housing, infrastructure, business and leisure/community facilities; and, to develop housing and supporting infrastructure that is sensitive to the distinctive character of the parish and meets the needs of local people.
- 4.15 The Plan contains four Key Objectives, as follows:
- to protect the local environment;
 - to maximise the opportunities of the Public Rights of Way network and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) for health and wellbeing, tourism and local sustainable transport;
 - to ensure a sustainable social and economic future for all residents; and
 - to develop appropriate housing to meet local needs.
- 4.16 The Basic Conditions Statement (at Sections 4 and 7) describes how the Plan, and its objectives and policies, has regard to national policies contained in the NPPF and contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Section 6 sets out how the Plan, its Vision and its policies, contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Sections 5 and 7 set out how each of the Plan's 17 policies are in general conformity with the strategic policies in the adopted ALP 2030.
- 4.17 I consider that overall, subject to the detailed modifications I recommend to specific policies below, that individually and collectively the Plan's policies will contribute to the achievement of sustainable patterns of development. There are also a number of detailed matters which require amendment to ensure that the policies have the necessary regard to national policy and are in general conformity with the strategic policies of

the Borough Council. Accordingly, I recommend modifications in this report in order to address these matters.

Specific Issues of Compliance

4.18 I turn now to consider each of the proposed policies in the draft Plan, which are contained in Sections 5-7 of the Plan, and I take into account, where appropriate, the representations that have been made concerning the policies.

Protecting and Conserving Egerton's Individual Character and Environment

4.19 Section 5 addresses the theme of Protecting and Conserving Egerton's Individual Character and Environment in the Plan area and contains six policies (Policies P1-P6).

4.20 Policy P1 (Distinctive Landscape Character and Biodiversity) seeks to ensure that all new development is sensitive to the individual character and richness of Egerton's landscape, preserving and enhancing specified distinctive features and biodiversity.

4.21 In my assessment, the policy reflects a key objective of the Plan to protect the local environment, which is well described in paragraphs 5.1-5.10. However, as drafted, I consider that the policy is not entirely consistent with current national policy and advice in that Clause 3. of the policy states that development proposals should offer a net biodiversity gain. Whilst the Environment Act has recently received royal assent (10 November 2021), the mechanisms which may be employed to achieve the legislative aims (for example off site provision of gains, the purchase of 'credits' and the application of the 'biodiversity metric') are yet to be refined'.¹⁴ Accordingly, I consider that this clause does require amendment to ensure that it is consistent with national policy and advice. Furthermore, I note that Clause 5. of the policy relates to the provision of sustainable drainage systems but is not referenced in the supporting justification to the policy. I consider that this drainage requirement should be more appropriately placed within Policy D7 (Water Supply and Drainage). Additionally, I note that previous advice from the Borough Council to include a map within the Plan showing the location of the distinctive character areas and sunken lanes referenced in clauses 1 and 2 of the policy has not been taken forward. I consider that such a map is necessary for users of the Plan to be able to interpret whether the requirements of this policy affect prospective development proposals. Therefore, I recommend modification **PM1** to encompass the necessary revisions to this policy and the inclusion of a suitable map in the Plan.

4.22 Policy P2 (Trees, Hedges and Woodland) seeks to ensure that ancient woodland, individually important trees and hedgerows in the Plan area are protected. The policy also requires that new developments should include

¹⁴ View progress at: [Environment Bill - Parliamentary Bills - UK Parliament](#)
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tree and/or hedge planting with native species and should seek to enhance the biodiversity of development sites. I am satisfied that the policy is appropriately drafted and fully reflects the justification set out in paragraphs 5.11-5.20. A minor correction is needed to Clause 1. of the policy for accuracy, and this is addressed by recommended modification **PM2**.

4.23 Policy P3 (Local Green Spaces) seeks to designate five areas of green space in the parish as Local Green Spaces. The proposed designation of the Local Green Spaces is supported by a Local Green Spaces Assessment report (September 2019), prepared by the South Downs National Park Specialist Advisory Service. This report sets out the policy and guidance relevant to the designation of Local Green Spaces and evaluates a total of 24 potential sites against these. The report assesses the sites against the NPPF criteria (contained in NPPF paragraph 102) which states that the Local Green Space designation should only be used where the green space is:

- a) *in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves;*
- b) *demonstrably special to a local community and holds a particular local significance, for example because of its beauty, historic significance, recreational value (including as a playing field), tranquillity or richness of its wildlife; and*
- c) *local in character and is not an extensive tract of land”.*

The sites were also assessed in the context of two further criteria:

- public access – this criterion was added to assist in identifying where public access is necessary in order to fulfil the criterion for recreational value.¹⁵
- layers of designation – PPG notes that, where there are already protective designations on a site, consideration is given to the additional benefit Local Green Space designation would offer.¹⁶

4.24 The five proposed Local Green Spaces set out the policy comprise three sites (The Glebe, Green space off Elm Road and Lower Recreation Ground) which were evaluated in the report as meeting the above criteria in full, and two additional sites (Pembles Cross and Stonebridge Green) which were proposed following public consultation, and particularly in recognition of their historic and amenity value. Maps of three of the sites are shown as part of Map 4 on page 75 of the Plan, but maps for the sites at Pembles Cross and Stonebridge Green are presently omitted. I visited each of the proposed sites during the course of my site visit.

4.25 The proposed Local Green Space described as The Glebe, The Street is a small area of land within the centre of Egerton village. It is owned and managed by the Parish Council. In my assessment, it is a very attractive area of green space which provides an important area for informal

¹⁵ Note: public access is not always a prerequisite. See PPG Reference ID: 37-017-20140306.

¹⁶ PPG Reference ID: 37-011-20140306.

recreation and contributes significantly to the setting of the village as a whole. I observed that it is clearly well used and maintained, and that it provides a focal point for the community. I consider that its designation as a Local Green Space is fully justified, and it is important that it be protected for the Plan period and for future generations in Egerton

- 4.26 The proposed Local Green Space described as the green space off Elm Close and behind Rock Hill Road, but also known as the Upper Recreation Ground, is a relatively large site and is the main recreation ground for the village. It contains a number of elements (cricket pitch, football pitch, skate park and children's play facilities) but also occupies an elevated area of ground with panoramic views over the Low Weald. It is well located for residents being adjacent to The Millennium Hall. I observed that it is well used for both formal and informal recreation and that it clearly constitutes an important recreational asset for the community. I consider that its designation as a Local Green Space is fully justified.
- 4.27 The proposed Local Green Space described as the Lower Recreation Ground Site, Rock Hill Road directly adjoins the above-mentioned site, but occupies lower ground to its south-west. The site is located further from the centre of the village but nevertheless is well used for informal recreation purposes. The site is managed for both informal recreation and grazing and contains areas of recent tree planting. In my assessment, it is an important area for informal recreation and I consider that its designation as a Local Green Space is fully justified, in view of that importance.
- 4.28 The proposed Local Green Space at Pemples Cross, which is a hamlet in the west of the parish, is a small area of land at the junction of three roads. Its principal feature is a large Ash tree which occupies a significant part of the site. There is also a small stream crossing the site. The site contains an oak bench and it is clearly used primarily as a resting spot for walkers and cyclists within the area. It represents a focal point for those users. In that context, I consider that the site is worthy of designation as a Local Green Space and I recognise that it is regarded as a site that is demonstrably special to the local community.
- 4.29 The proposed Local Green Space at Stonebridge Green, which is a hamlet north-east of Egerton village, is a small area of land at the junction of Stonebridge Green Road and two minor roads. Its principal features are a listed K6 telephone kiosk which is maintained by the local community and a traditional cast iron signpost, and these features do give the site an important historical value. However, as presently managed, the site has limited value for recreational purposes, although I do consider that it could be an attractive focal point for local residents and for walkers and cyclists in the area. Its designation as a Local Green Space could provide the impetus to enhance the attractiveness of the site for informal recreation. I recognise that the site has particular local significance because of its historical features, and it is that factor that leads me to the conclusion that its designation as a Local Green Space is justified.

- 4.30 After my initial assessment of this policy, I raised a number of detailed points concerning the policy text and its accompanying mapping as one of the matters where I sought additional information and clarification from the Parish Council, as set out at paragraph 2.6 above. I have taken account of the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group's response to me on those matters.
- 4.31 With regard to the policy text, and specifically in relation to managing development within a Local Green Space, this should be consistent with those for Green Belts (NPPF paragraph 103), and development should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Therefore, I recommend that the policy text be modified to reflect that requirement. It is my conclusion that, having regard to NPPF paragraphs 101-102 and the guidance in the PPG, the five sites identified within the policy should be designated as Local Green Spaces and that the policy (as proposed to be modified) meets the Basic Conditions. I further recommend that the necessary revisions to the mapping of the Local Green Spaces, as set out in the Steering Group's response dated 15 September 2021, be made. Modification **PM3** addresses the necessary amendments to the policy and to Map 4 to give effect to my recommendations.
- 4.32 Policy P4 (Key Views and Vistas) seeks to protect, and, where possible enhance, eight key views and vistas from viewpoints within the Plan area. These views and vistas are described at paragraph 5.29 in the supporting justification for the policy. The policy further states that the Grade I listed parish church of St. James is a focus for many key views and that any new development should be sensitive to this landmark.
- 4.33 After my initial assessment of this policy, I requested, as part of the matters upon which I sought further information and clarification, that the Parish Council confirm whether there is any further supporting evidence for the policy beyond that which is set out at pages 32 and 33 in the Plan and the photographs on pages 80-82 to justify the identification of the key views and vistas listed in the policy. In their response to me, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group stated that an assessment had been undertaken on the basis of advice provided by Historic England. In total, an assessment had been made of 23 potential key views within the Plan area and only those views which were of topographical significance, of green and/or architectural significance and of unique/focal significance were taken forward for identification in the policy. The Steering Group provided me with a copy of the assessment outcomes as part of their response.
- 4.34 I am satisfied that a robust assessment has been undertaken of the key views and vistas identified in this policy, in the context of advice provided by Historic England. I recommend two minor amendments to the text of the policy to provide improved clarity for users of the Plan, and these are addressed by recommended modification **PM4**.
- 4.35 Policy P5 (Local Non-designated Heritage Assets) states that new

development in accordance with the Plan should preserve or enhance the local non-designated heritage assets of historic or social significance to the community. The proposed non-designated heritage assets to be subject to this policy are listed at Appendix 2 to the Plan.

- 4.36 I noted that, as part of my initial assessment of the Plan, that Appendix 2 includes seven assets that do not meet the criteria contained in the advice from Historic England. Accordingly, I raised this point as one of the matters upon which I sought further clarification from the Parish Council in my letter of 26 August 2021. The Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has confirmed that those seven assets are not being proposed as non-designated heritage assets. I therefore recommend modification **PM5** to amend the content of Appendix 2 accordingly. I also consider that the title of the policy and its text should be amended, in view of the fact that it also refers to Listed Buildings and Scheduled Monuments, and these matters are also addressed by modification **PM5**. Accordingly, the listed sites (as proposed to be modified) at Appendix 2 are confirmed as non-designated heritage assets.
- 4.37 Policy P6 (Light Pollution and Dark Skies) sets out measures which are intended to protect, as far as possible, Egerton's current dark skies from further light pollution. As part of my initial assessment of the Plan, I considered that the measures and requirements set out within this policy are excessively detailed, and therefore probably difficult to enforce by the Borough Council. I also considered that they serve to detract from the underlying purpose of the policy. I therefore invited the Parish Council, as one of the matters that I raised in my letter of 26 August 2021 to consider redrafting the policy to set out the fundamental purpose of the policy and to seek the submission of details for any proposed external lighting scheme as part of relevant planning applications for development in the Plan area. In response to that invitation, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has proposed redrafted text for this policy which I have carefully considered. Overall, I consider that the proposed replacement text does represent an improvement upon that contained in the submission Plan, but that it should be further amended in order to ensure its clarity for users of the Plan. I therefore recommend modification **PM6** to replace the text of the policy with revised text.
- 4.38 With recommended modifications PM1-PM6, I consider that the draft Plan's section on Protecting and Conserving Egerton's Individual Character and Environment and its accompanying policies (P1-P6) is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the ALP, has regard to national guidance, would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and so would meet the Basic Conditions.

Ensuring a Sustainable Future for Egerton

- 4.39 Section 6 of the Plan addresses the theme of ensuring a sustainable future for Egerton and contains three policies (Policies S1-S3). It covers the topics of local services and businesses, education, the rural economy,

community facilities and open spaces and Public Rights of Way. The introduction to this section notes that whilst Egerton is a village of small, scattered communities in a relatively inaccessible location, village life has continued to thrive and to support a primary school and pre-school, a shop and post office, a public house and garage, alongside other local businesses.

- 4.40 Policy S1 (Community Facilities) states that proposals for new development will be supported where they comply with the relevant ALP policies to protect the local heritage environment and biodiversity, meet community needs and have no adverse impact on the Conservation Area. The four principal community facilities within the parish are listed in the policy
- 4.41 Paragraph 6.7 identifies the registered Assets of Community Value in the Plan area, and in response to one of the matters that I raised following my initial assessment of the Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group has confirmed that the registration of the Egerton Post Office and Stores expired in early-2021. This will necessitate an amendment to that paragraph.
- 4.42 I also consider that the text of the policy should be amended in order to provide greater clarity for users of the Plan, and I therefore recommend modification **PM7** in order to address amendments to both the policy and paragraph 6.7.
- 4.43 Policy S2 (Community Open Space at Egerton Forstal) is a succinct policy which states that any new development of 5 or more new homes in or close to Egerton Forstal should make provision for new public open space to serve the locality. Whilst the purpose of the policy is to secure the provision of new public open space in Egerton Forstal, which currently has no such provision, I consider that, as drafted, the policy is potentially defective with regard to national policy guidance and will not assist to any great extent in achieving its purpose. Accordingly, I recommend revised text for this policy in recognition of the deficiency in public open space provision at Egerton Forstal, and this is addressed by modification **PM8**.
- 4.44 Policy S3 (Public Rights of Way) states that new development in the Parish shall protect and improve footpaths, byways and other Public Rights of Way, and shall either construct or provide contributions towards improvements to the network. I also consider that this policy, as drafted, is potentially defective with regard to national policy, specifically in relation to the tests for planning obligations. I therefore recommend revised text for this policy, which is addressed by modification **PM9**. Additionally, Kent County Council have advised that paragraph 6.27 contains a factual error, and a recommended correction is also addressed by modification **PM9**.
- 4.45 With recommended modifications PM7-PM9, I consider that the draft Plan's section on Ensuring a Sustainable Future for Egerton and its

accompanying policies (S1-S3) is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the ALP, has regard to national guidance, would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and so would meet the Basic Conditions.

Development to Meet Current and Future Need

- 4.46 Section 7 of the Plan is addressing the theme of development to meet current and future need in the Plan area and contains eight policies (Policies D1-D8). The introduction to this section notes that the Plan provides an opportunity:
- to locate development in the best possible positions geographically, socially and environmentally;
 - to facilitate the development of housing that meets the needs of local people;
 - to contribute to the local architectural character, with sympathetic layout and design; and
 - to provide open green spaces and opportunities for outdoor recreation.
- 4.47 Policy D1 (Development Principles) sets out key planning and design principles which seek to ensure that all development in the Plan area is of the highest design quality and which reflects and respects the local character of Egerton. I am satisfied that the policy provides clear and succinct guidance to assist in the planning of new developments in the Plan area, subject to amendments to Clause 1. to ensure its clarity for future users of the Plan and Clauses 2. and 3. to have regard to national policy. This is addressed by modification **PM10**.
- 4.48 Policy D2 (Application of the Parish Design Statement) is a lengthy policy which seeks to ensure that all relevant development proposals incorporate the principles and guidelines of the Parish Design Statement, which was published in 2005. I consider that it is an important policy as it sets out a number of detailed design criteria, which reflect the guidelines contained in the Egerton Design Statement, and I am satisfied that such criteria are clear and appropriately justified. However, I also consider that the policy should make a reference to other relevant Policies in the Plan which will affect the formulation of proposals for new development, and this addition is addressed by recommended modification **PM11**.
- 4.49 Policy D3 (Housing Policy) sets out a series of policy statements regarding the provision of new housing in the Plan area over the Plan period. Paragraph 7.18 and Table 1 explain how Egerton's housing need for 27 new dwellings over the period 2018-2023 has been calculated, with the principal evidence comprising the Housing Needs Survey prepared in 2018 by ACRK. The site allocation (Policy S30) contained in the adopted ALP for the development of an estimated 15 dwellings at New Road, Egerton is taken into account (in Table 1) in the Plan's proposed development of 34 new homes over the first 10 years of the Plan period (2021-2030), with proposed sites at Gale Field, Egerton Forstal (Policy D4) and Orchard

Nurseries, Egerton (Policy D5) providing 11 new homes and 8 new homes respectively.

- 4.50 Paragraph 7.20 states that any additional housing requirement beyond the five year period covered by the 2018 Housing Needs Survey will be subject to future review every 5-7 years both for affordable local needs and for open market housing. It goes on to state that it is anticipated that any additional requirement for open market housing up to 2040 will be met by a combination of the conversion of redundant farm buildings to residential use, the release of eight larger homes by residents moving to older people's accommodation at the Orchard Nurseries site and by windfall development. I am satisfied that these anticipated additions to the housing stock over the period between 2031 and 2040 are all valid considerations, but account will also need to be taken of any proposals that might be included in a future review of the Ashford Local Plan covering the period beyond 2030.
- 4.51 On the basis of my own assessment of the evidence that supports the policy, I am satisfied that it sets out an appropriate and justified strategy for meeting housing need in the Plan area up to 2030. However, I consider that the policy should include a reference to the need to undertake a future review of housing need for the period beyond 2030 and up to the end of the Plan period in 2040. I also consider that some other amendments are necessary to the text of the policy, for the purpose of improving its clarity. Furthermore, paragraph 7.21 is incomplete and an amendment is therefore necessary to rectify that paragraph. These matters are all addressed by recommended modification **PM12**.
- 4.52 Policy D4 (Local Needs Affordable Housing) proposes the allocation of land at Gale Field, Crockenhill Road, Egerton Forstal for the development of 6-8 local needs affordable homes with access to the site from Crockenhill Road. An indicative layout for new homes on part of the Gale Field site is shown on page 59, but an inset map on the same page shows the full extent of Gale Field, which extends to some 2.1 hectares in size.
- 4.53 This policy has attracted a significant number of representations including a petition opposing the development proposal. In summary, the representations cite an increase in traffic, highway safety, drainage and sewerage capacity, pressure on other utilities such as water supply, the loss of wildlife habitats and a lack of local amenities as the principal reasons for opposing the proposal.
- 4.54 The land was put forward by its owners as a result of the Parish Council's call for sites in 2018. At that stage, the site was offered for up to 10 affordable dwellings, with a mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom properties. The site (with reference ENP4) was then subject to assessment as part of the Site Assessment process, and this is fully described in the Site Assessment report (April 2021). Paragraph 9.1 of that report states that the site should be included in the Plan "*as the only available site for local needs housing to meet NPPF guidelines, Local Plan policies for rural*

exception sites and the requirements for local needs, affordable, rentable housing identified in the Egerton Housing Needs Survey (2018)".

- 4.55 I have given very careful consideration to this policy and its supporting evidence, the Site Assessment process and its conclusions and to the representations that have been made concerning the policy. I have also taken particular note of the point raised by the Borough Council on whether the proposal represents a 'site allocation policy' or whether it is being proposed as an 'exception to policy' (i.e. a rural exceptions housing site in the context of national policy advice). Although the policy (within Clause 1.) refers to the site as having been identified as a rural exception site, I consider that the inclusion of the plans on page 59, and particularly the inset map showing and defining the entire Gale Field site, means that the policy can be interpreted as a formal site allocation policy with potential for a larger residential development than that envisaged.
- 4.56 I am also concerned that the Plan is inconsistent in its estimates of residential capacity at the site. Table 1 (page 55) refers to 11 dwellings, of which ten dwellings are affordable homes and one dwelling is an open-market home. Paragraph 7.27 and the policy itself refer to 6-8 dwellings, but the indicative site layout on page 59 clearly shows more than 8 dwellings. The Site Assessment report refers to 6-10 dwellings, and I note that the indicative layout shown in that report differs from that on page 59 of the Plan.
- 4.57 It is my conclusion that the policy and its supporting justification, as drafted, is flawed and should be redrafted to reflect both national policy guidance and strategic policies in the ALP regarding rural exception sites. However, I do acknowledge that the site at Gale Field does represent a realistic opportunity to secure a rural exception housing scheme to meet an identified local need, but this must be viewed in the context that other suitable sites may come forward during the Plan period. I therefore consider that new paragraph 7.29 can make appropriate reference to the Gale Field site. Recommended modification **PM13** addresses amendments to the policy and to its supporting justification. Additionally, it also addresses a matter that I raised as one of the issues identified as part of my initial assessment of the Plan concerning the Government's recently announced First Homes policy initiative.
- 4.58 Policy D5 (Land at Orchard Nurseries, Egerton) states that land at the former Orchard Nurseries site in Egerton will be developed for up to eight dwellings for older residents in the parish. Paragraph 7.30 describes the development as a rural exception site, but I am satisfied that the policy text and the specific purpose of the proposal to provide new accommodation for older persons constitutes a formal housing site allocation in the Plan, notwithstanding the fact that the site is beyond the Egerton Village Confines as defined on Map 7.
- 4.59 The site is owned by the Parish Council and the principal constraint to its development concerns the necessity to secure suitable access to the site.

Initially, the Parish Council's preferred option was to secure access via the adjacent development of land at New Road, Egerton which is a site allocation (Policy S30) within the adopted ALP. Policy S30 makes no provision for such access, and a resolution to grant full planning permission (ref. 20/01600/AS) was made by the Borough Council on 13 October 2021 for the development of 15 dwellings on that site, without including potential access to the land covered by Policy D5.

- 4.60 As noted at paragraph 2.6, I raised the issue of access to the land at the former Orchard Nurseries as one of the matters where I sought further information and clarification from the Parish Council. I have given careful consideration to the response from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and to the subsequent correspondence that I also received on this specific issue (see paragraph 2.8).
- 4.61 From everything that I have read, and from my own observations during the site visit, I am satisfied that suitable access to the site for vehicles and pedestrians can be achieved. I am also satisfied that the Parish Council is actively pursuing negotiations with relevant landowners to secure such access, and that there is every prospect that this will be achieved.
- 4.62 However, the policy requires amendment to state that the development of the site can only proceed subject to the provision of suitable access, and the policy should also not include any reference to the financial benefits to the Parish Council that might arise from the development of the site. This is not a land use planning consideration and has not had any relevance to my examination of the Plan. Accordingly, I recommend modification **PM14** to address the necessary amendments to the policy and to paragraph 7.30 of the supporting justification.
- 4.63 Policy D6 (Re-use of Redundant Farm Buildings) supports the redevelopment of redundant farm buildings for local business use as well as for residential development where that might be appropriate. I am satisfied that the policy is consistent with national policy advice and the strategic policies of the ALP. However, I consider that Clause 1. of the text of the policy should be amended to provide greater clarity for users of the Plan, and I recommend modification **PM15** to address that matter.
- 4.64 Policy D7 (Water Supply and Drainage) seeks to address current difficulties in the Plan area in relation to water supply and drainage. I have given careful consideration to the representations made by the Borough Council, Kent County Council (as Lead Local Flood Authority), the Environment Agency, South East Water and Southern Water as part of my assessment of this policy. I consider that the policy requires a series of amendments in light of those representations, and these are addressed by modification **PM16**. Additionally, I take account of my assessment set out at paragraph 4.21 and related modification **PM1** concerning the addition of Clause 5. from Policy P1 within this policy. I also take account of the response from the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group to the matter that I raised regarding this policy following my initial assessment of the Plan.

- 4.65 Policy D8 (Renewable Energy and Climate Change Mitigation) sets out a series of seven measures to promote the development of energy efficient buildings, encourage the use of renewable energy systems, promote water efficiency and encourage the provision of charging points for electric vehicles. These measures seek to ensure long-term sustainability and effective climate mitigation for the Parish. They are consistent with Government policy and conform with the relevant strategic policies in the ALP. I consider that a number of amendments are necessary to reflect representations that were made and for accuracy. These are addressed by modification **PM17**.
- 4.66 With recommended modifications PM10-PM17, I consider that the draft Plan's section on Development to Meet Current and Future Need and its accompanying policies (Policies D1-D8) is in general conformity with the strategic policies of the ALP, has regard to national guidance, would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development and so would meet the Basic Conditions.

Other Matters

- 4.67 There is the likelihood that there will be a need to formally review the Plan during the Plan period, particularly following the first review of the adopted ALP. Paragraph 1.7 of the Plan states that it is intended that the Plan will be subject to review at five yearly intervals to ensure that its policies are still compliant with national and local policy, are responsive to climate and other environmental changes and are meeting the overall strategic vision for the future of Egerton. I am satisfied that this adequately addresses the matter of future reviews of the Plan.
- 4.68 The Plan presently contains a number of minor inaccuracies with regard to cross-references to other parts of the Plan. Two examples are that paragraph 3.5 contains a reference to Map 3 on page 73, which should correctly be to page 74, whilst paragraph 7.25 contains a reference to Map 2 on page 72, which should correctly be to page 73. In addition, the Plan contains a number of references to the NPPF (2019), some of which are identified in **PM18**. Further revised references to the NPPF (2021) should be made where appropriate and these could be undertaken as minor, non-material changes.¹⁷ As an advisory comment, when the Plan is being redrafted to take account of the recommended modifications in this report, it should be re-checked for any typographical errors and any other consequential changes, etc. such as those mentioned above.

Concluding Remarks

- 4.69 I conclude that, with the recommended modifications to the Plan as summarised above and set out in full in the accompanying Appendix, the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2040 meets the Basic Conditions for neighbourhood plans.

¹⁷ PPG Reference ID: 41-106-20190509.

5. Conclusions

Summary

- 5.1 The Egerton Neighbourhood Plan 2021-2040 has been duly prepared in compliance with the procedural requirements. My examination has investigated whether the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements for neighbourhood plans. I have had regard to all the responses made following consultation on the Plan, and the supporting documents submitted with the Plan together with the Parish and Borough Councils' responses to my preliminary questions.
- 5.2 I have made recommendations to modify certain policies and other matters to ensure that the Plan meets the Basic Conditions and other legal requirements. I recommend that the Plan, once modified, proceeds to referendum.

The Referendum and its Area

- 5.3 I have considered whether or not the referendum area should be extended beyond the designated area to which the Plan relates. I conclude that the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan 2020-2040, as modified, has no policy or proposal which I consider to be significant enough to have an impact beyond the designated Neighbourhood Plan boundary, requiring the referendum to extend to areas beyond that boundary. I therefore recommend that the boundary for the purposes of any future referendum on the Plan, should be the boundary of the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area.

Overview

- 5.4 It is clear that the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan is the product of much hard work undertaken since 2017 by the Parish Council, its Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and the many individuals and stakeholders who have contributed to the preparation and development of the Plan. In my assessment, the Plan reflects the land use aspirations and objectives of the Egerton community for the future planning of their Parish up to 2040. The output is a Plan which should help guide the area's development over that period, making a positive contribution to informing decision-making on planning applications by Ashford Borough Council.

Derek Stebbing

Examiner

Appendix: Modifications

Proposed modification number (PM)	Page no./ other reference	Modification
PM1	Page 26	<p><u>Policy P1 – Distinctive Landscape Character and Biodiversity</u></p> <p>Clause 1. – Amend 2nd sentence of text to read: “Egerton areas of distinctive character have been identified as follows and are shown on Map 10 on page --:”</p> <p>Clause 2. – Amend 2nd sentence of text to read: “These have been identified as the sunken lanes listed below which are shown on Map 10 on page --:”</p> <p>Clause 3. – Delete existing text in full and replace with: “Development proposals should seek to include measures which will promote and enhance biodiversity, for example by safeguarding existing habitats, by including appropriate landscaping schemes and by maintaining wildlife corridors.”</p> <p>Clause 5. – Delete this clause, and place the text of this clause, without amendment, as new Clause 5. within Policy D7 on Page 66 (see also PM16).</p> <p>Include an additional map at an appropriate scale, to be numbered Map 10 (and to follow Maps 1-9 on pages 72-82) showing the location of the distinctive character areas and sunken lanes referenced in Clauses 1 and 2 of the policy.</p>
PM2	Page 29	<p><u>Policy P2 – Trees, Hedges and Woodland Space</u></p> <p>Clause 1. – Amend “Conservation area trees” in the 3rd sentence to read “Conservation Area trees”.</p>
PM3	Pages 31 and 75	<p><u>Policy P3 – Local Green Spaces</u></p>

		<p>Delete existing text in full and replace with:</p> <p>“The following sites are designated as Local Green Spaces as defined on the inset maps contained at Map 4 on page 75:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Glebe, The Street b. Green Space off Elm Close and behind Rock Hill Road c. Lower Recreation Ground, Rock Hill Road d. Pemples Cross e. Stonebridge Green <p>Proposals for development at the sites identified on the inset maps at Map 4 as designated Local Green Spaces will be considered in line with national planning policy on Green Belts. Proposals which would result in the loss of all or part of any designated Local Green Space will not be supported.”</p> <p>Add inset maps for Sites d. (Pemples Cross) and e. (Stonebridge Green) to the suite of maps at Map 4 on Page 75 (as contained in the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Groups response dated 15 September 2021).¹⁸</p> <p>Delete existing inset map for Site b. (Green space off Elm Close and behind Rock Hill Road) at Map 4 on Page 75 and replace with the map at Revision f. to the Local Green Spaces Assessment report.</p>
PM4	Page 33	<p><u>Policy P4 – Key Views and Vistas</u></p> <p>Add new sentence to Clause 1. of the text of the policy (to follow the list of views and vistas a)-h)), as follows:</p> <p>“These views and vistas are shown on the photographs and inset maps at Map 9 at pages 80-82.”</p> <p>Amend the first sentence of Clause 2. of the policy text to read:</p>

¹⁸ View at <https://www.ashford.gov.uk/media/rc0lmv3j/epc-response-to-examiner-s-questions-website-version.pdf>

		“The Grade I Listed Parish Church of St. James is a focus for many key views towards and within the village.”
PM5	Pages 35 and 84	<p><u>Policy P5 – Local Non-designated Heritage Assets</u></p> <p>Amend the title of the policy to read “Local Heritage Assets”.</p> <p>Delete existing text in full and replace with:</p> <p>“Proposals for new development in the Plan area should preserve or enhance the existing designated heritage assets and their settings.</p> <p>Such proposals should also preserve or enhance the non-designated heritage assets which are listed at Appendix 2 at page 84 and, where appropriate, the setting of those assets.”</p> <p><u>Appendix 2 – Non-designated Heritage Assets</u></p> <p>Delete Assets numbered HS07, HS14-HS18 and HS23 from the listing in this Appendix, and re-number Assets HS08-HS13/HS19-22 as Assets HS07-HS16.</p>
PM6	Page 37	<p><u>Policy P6 – Light Pollution and Dark Skies</u></p> <p>Delete existing text in full and replace with:</p> <p>“1. Proposals for new development in the Plan area should be accompanied by a proposed lighting scheme which meets the requirements set out in Policy ENV4 of the adopted Ashford Local Plan and the guidance contained in the Borough Council’s ‘Dark Skies’ SPD.</p> <p>2. Development proposals in the main settlement areas of Egerton and Egerton Forstal should seek to avoid the use of external lighting unless it is required for security and health and safety reasons, in order to avoid increased light pollution and a further reduction in the dark skies in those areas. Where external lighting is necessary for the reasons stated, lamps should be of 500 lumens or less for</p>

		<p>domestic purposes and are installed at the lowest possible height to achieve the necessary level of lighting.</p> <p>3. In all other parts of the Plan area, external lighting schemes should only include lamps of 500 lumens or less for domestic purposes and only use lamps above that level where required for agricultural use or security and where they are installed in suitable fixtures which prevent the upward spillage of light. All external lighting should be installed at the lowest possible height to achieve the necessary level of light."</p>
PM7	Pages 39 and 43	<p><u>Policy S1 – Community Facilities</u></p> <p>Amend Clause 1. of the text of the policy to read:</p> <p>"Proposals for the development of new community facilities in the Plan area will be supported where they comply with the relevant policies in the adopted Ashford Local Plan for the protection of the environment, biodiversity and heritage assets and where the development is designed to meet community needs in accordance with Policy COM1 of the adopted Local Plan."</p> <p>Amend Clause 2. of the text of the policy to read:</p> <p>"The principal existing community facilities in the Plan area are:</p> <p>The Millennium Hall</p> <p>The Games Barn</p> <p>The Sports Pavilion</p> <p>The Barrow House (formerly The George Public House) – a registered Asset of Community Value"</p> <p>Paragraph 6.7 – delete the final sentence of this paragraph.</p>

PM8	Page 44	<p><u>Policy S2 – Community Open Space at Egerton Forstal</u></p> <p>Delete existing text in full and replace with:</p> <p>“Proposals for new residential development within or adjacent to the defined Village Confines of Egerton Forstal, as shown on Map 8, will be supported where such proposals include provision of suitable accessible public open space for use by the community as a whole.”</p>
PM9	Pages 46 and 47	<p><u>Policy S3 – Public Rights of Way</u></p> <p>Delete existing text in full and replace with:</p> <p>“Proposals for new development in the Plan area should seek to protect and, where appropriate, provide improvements to the network of Public Rights of Way in the Parish.</p> <p>The Parish Council will work in partnership with Kent County Council to secure improvements to the network of Public Rights of Way, through the County Council’s Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Where appropriate, contributions will be sought from new developments towards the implementation of such improvements.”</p> <p>Paragraph 6.27 - delete the words “have included it in their PRow Improvement Plan” in the final sentence.</p> <p>Paragraph 6.27 – amend “AW68” to read “AW368” in the final sentence.</p>
PM10	Page 51	<p><u>Policy D1 – Development Principles</u></p> <p>Amend Clause 1. of the policy text to read:</p> <p>“Proposals for new development in the Plan area should seek to achieve a high quality of design, as defined in Policy SP6 of the adopted Ashford Local Plan, and to make a positive contribution to the local character and environment of Egerton (see also Policies P4 and D2 in this Plan).</p>

		<p>Delete the words “innovative and” from the second sentence of Clause 2.</p> <p>Add to the end of Clause 3.:</p> <p>“New developments should also take account of the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code.”</p>
PM11	Page 52	<p><u>Policy D2 – Application of the Parish Design Statement</u></p> <p>Add new Clause 3. to the text of the policy to read as follows:</p> <p>“3. Development proposals should also take into account all other relevant policies in this Plan.”</p>
PM12	Page 57	<p><u>Policy D3 – Housing Policy</u></p> <p>Clause 3. – Delete existing text and replace with:</p> <p>“3. Where there is a mix of affordable and open market housing provided on a development site, the affordable housing should be appropriately integrated with open market housing in the site layout.”</p> <p>Clause 4. – Delete existing text in full and replace with:</p> <p>“4. Proposals for new residential development should take into account all other relevant policies in this Plan.”</p> <p>Add new Clause 5. as follows:</p> <p>“5. Housing need in the parish for the period 2031-2040 will be subject to future review in light of an updated Housing Needs Survey and a review of the adopted Ashford Local Plan.”</p> <p>Paragraph 7.21 – add the word “Plan.” to the end of the existing text.</p>
PM13	Pages 55, 58-60	<p><u>Policy D4 – Local Needs Affordable Housing</u></p> <p>Delete existing text in full and replace with:</p> <p>“1. The Parish Council will support the development of a rural exception site for</p>

		<p>local needs affordable housing in order to meet an identified need for such housing. Proposals should comply with national policy and the relevant policies of the adopted Local Plan concerning rural exception housing schemes.</p> <p>2. The Parish Council will work in partnership with landowners and affordable housing providers to identify opportunities for rural exception sites to meet the local needs identified in the Housing Needs Survey (2018) and any subsequent reviews of local housing need.”</p> <p>Insert new Paragraph 7.26 as follows:</p> <p>“7.26 The Government’s recently published guidance on First Homes recognises the need for lower cost (entry level) market housing for first time buyers, at a level of at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations. First Homes must be offered at a minimum of 30% discount against market value, with a maximum price after discount of £250,000. On first sale, a restriction on the title of properties sold as First Homes, will ensure that the discount is passed on to any subsequent eligible owners. In due course, a number of new homes in the Plan area may be built as First Homes, thereby contributing to the provision of affordable housing.”</p> <p>Re-number existing Paragraph 7.26 as 7.27, and add the following text at the end of the first sentence:</p> <p>“who wish to stay in the village because of their family links and commitments, such as children attending the local school or employment in local farms and businesses.”</p> <p>Re-number existing paragraph 7.27 as 7.28.</p> <p>Delete paragraphs 7.28 and 7.29 in full.</p>
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		<p>Delete the inset map of Gale Field and the indicative layout of the Gale Field site on page 59.</p> <p>Insert new paragraph 7.29 as follows:</p> <p>“The Parish Council will work in partnership with landowners and affordable housing providers to identify and secure the development of a suitable site as a rural housing exception site, of sufficient size to develop up to 10 affordable homes for local residents. The call for sites undertaken in 2018 as part of the preparation of this Plan, and the subsequent site assessment process, that was undertaken, identified land at Gale Field, Crockenhill Road, Egerton Forstal as a potential suitable site for such a scheme. The Parish Council will continue to work with the landowner, local residents, the Borough Council and other partners to establish whether a scheme can be delivered in the period up to 2030.”</p> <p>Table 1 (Page 55) – re-title as “Table 7.1” as referenced in paragraph 7.18 and delete text in first column “Gale Field” and replace with “Rural Housing Exception Site”. Adjust capacity for that entry to read 10 Homes total, 10 Affordable Homes (as existing) and delete entry of 1 (one) Open Market home. Adjust total provision figures in final row accordingly, viz:- 33, 16, 17. Delete footnote ii. with footnote iii being re-numbered as ii.</p>
PM14	Pages 60 and 61	<p><u>Policy D5 – Land at Orchard Nurseries, Egerton</u></p> <p>Delete existing text in full and replace with:</p> <p>“1. Land at the former Orchard Nurseries, Egerton, as shown on the inset plan on page 61, is proposed for the development of up to eight dwellings suitable for occupation by older persons presently living in less suitable homes within the community. The development of these dwellings will be restricted to occupation by older persons.</p>

		<p>2. The development of the site will only proceed when arrangements for suitable access to the site have been secured, and which meet the requirements of Kent County Council as Highways Authority.”</p> <p>Paragraph 7.30 - 3rd sentence: delete all text after the word “Chairman”.</p>
PM15	Page 64	<p><u>Policy D6 – Re-use of Redundant Farm Buildings</u></p> <p>Clause 1. – delete existing text and replace with:</p> <p>“The conversion or redevelopment of redundant farm buildings to provide small-scale business units (up to a maximum of 10 single units or on a footprint equivalent to the floorspace of the redundant buildings) will be supported. The conversion or redevelopment of such buildings to provide residential or visitor accommodation will also be supported, where such proposals conform to all other relevant Policies in this Plan and the adopted Local Plan, and where suitable sustainable transport connections, such as for walking and cycling, can be achieved.”</p>
PM16	Page 66	<p><u>Policy D7 – Water Supply and Drainage</u></p> <p>Delete existing text in full and replace with:</p> <p>“1. All proposals for development in the Plan area must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the relevant statutory undertakers that adequate capacity is available within the sewerage, drainage and water supply network to meet the requirements of the development proposed and that the development will not lead to any increase in flood risk.</p> <p>2. In situations where it is not possible to make a connection to the sewerage network, proposals for new development should provide an on-site solution to manage drainage and sewage which does not lead to any adverse impacts upon the</p>

		<p>local community or to the natural environment.</p> <p>3. All proposals for new development within Flood Zones 2 and 3 in the Plan area must be supported by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment*.</p> <p>4. Development proposals should retain and protect the local drainage network and adopt a sustainable drainage (SuDS) approach to protect capacity and water quality in the Plan area.”</p> <p>*Retain existing footnote to this policy.</p>
PM17	Page 70	<p><u>Policy D8 – Renewable Energy and Climate Change Mitigation</u></p> <p>Clause 2. – amend “Passive House” to read “Passivhaus” (correct spelling).</p> <p>Clause 3. – Add the following text:</p> <p>“Water efficiency measures should be included in all new residential developments – with a maximum usage of 110 litres per person.”</p> <p>Clause 4. – amend the second sentence to read:</p> <p>“More effective land drainage will be promoted by the Parish Council through a collaborative approach with property owners and landowners and with Kent County Council as Highways Authority and Lead Local Flood Authority, to help mitigate the effects of climate change.”</p>
PM18	Various	<p>The following minor amendments are necessary:</p> <p>Page 7 – paragraph 1.7 – amend “2020-2040” to read “2021-2040”.</p> <p>Page 8 – paragraph 1.9 –delete existing text in full, and replace with:</p> <p>“Ashford Borough Council undertook full assessments and presented their report (Egerton Neighbourhood Plan Environmental Assessment (SEA)</p>

		<p>Screening Report and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report) in March 2021.</p> <p>The Screening Assessment concluded that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assessment finds that no significant negative effects will occur as a result of the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan. It is therefore concluded that a full SEA is not required at this time. <p>The Habitats Regulation Assessment screening concluded that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In respect of six designated Natura 2000 sites there is unlikely to be significant environmental effects on these sites. • Based on the latest communication from Natural England (January 2021) there is no longer the potential for a likely significant effect to result to the Stodmarsh Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar Site and the Stodmarsh Site of Special Scientific Interest. Consequently, a full Appropriate Assessment of the Plan is not required." <p>Page 48 – amend "Key Aims for Development 2020-2040" title to read "Key Aims for Development 2021-2040"</p> <p>Paragraphs 1.4, 5.24, 6.1, 7.1 and 7.38 should all refer to "the National Planning Policy Framework 2021".</p>
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EGERTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN 2021-2040



REFERENDUM VERSION

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- ENP P2 Trees, hedges and woodland (p 29)*
- ENP P3 Local Green Spaces (p 31)*
- ENP P4 Key Views and Vistas (p33)*
- ENP P5 Local Non-designated Heritage Assets (p35)*
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Footpath AW368 (p47)

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1



INTRODUCTION

What does neighbourhood planning mean for Egerton?

1.1 Neighbourhood plans form part of the Government's overall approach to planning and aim to give local people more say about development in their area. The Egerton Parish Plan (2016) covers a wider range of issues than the Neighbourhood Plan but does not include planning and development and does not have legal status. If the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan is passed at a referendum, it will be made (adopted) by Ashford Borough Council and will form part of the Development Plan for Egerton Parish. It will also have legal status and becomes a material consideration which must be taken into account as part of the response to all planning applications in the parish of Egerton, carrying greater weight than some other local planning documents such as parish plans, community plans and village design statements.

1.2 Neighbourhood planning has given people in the parish direct power to develop a shared vision for the long-term future of the parish and the distinctive countryside in which it is situated. It has allowed local people to shape the development and growth of the parish to ensure its future sustainability. It has enabled us to say where we want new homes or businesses to be built and to suggest what those new buildings should look like and what infrastructure should be provided. Neighbourhood planning has furnished us with a powerful set of tools for all of us to plan for the types of development to meet our community's needs whilst ensuring that the ambition of the neighbourhood is aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area.

1.3 The Egerton Neighbourhood Plan takes as its starting point the principal conclusion of the Egerton Parish Plan as typified in the words of one resident - 'Please don't change too much. We love our village as it is'. Both the Parish Plan and this Neighbourhood Plan recognise that some change is inevitable and necessary for the sustainability of a rural community; and the Neighbourhood Plan, if approved in a Referendum, comes into force as part of the statutory development plan for the Borough and gives local people a voice in the process of change.

This Neighbourhood Plan provides an opportunity to:

- protect the individual character and environment of Egerton
- ensure a sustainable future for the village
- improve the health and well-being of all residents
- facilitate the development of housing in the best positions geographically, socially and environmentally in order to meet the needs of local people
- contribute to the local architectural character, with sympathetic layout and design

How does the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan fit into the planning system?

1.4 The Egerton Neighbourhood Plan (ENP) should be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 and Ashford Borough Council's Local Plan to 2030 (adopted February 2019).

1.5 Neighbourhood Plans must comply with current regulations on strategic environmental assessments and habitats (see 1.9 below) and the NPPF, and generally conform to the strategic policies in the adopted Local Plan. In order to future-proof the Plan, the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group (see Appendix 3 for membership and Terms of Reference) has also ensured through dialogue with Ashford Borough Council that the Plan takes account of up to date evidence of any strategic needs and constraints identified for the area. Any new development should take into consideration the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2013-30 (KMWLP) and the three safeguarded land-won mineral deposits in the parish – Hythe Formation-Limestone (Ragstone) (see para.7.31), Sub-Alluvial River Terrace Deposits and Paulina Limestone.

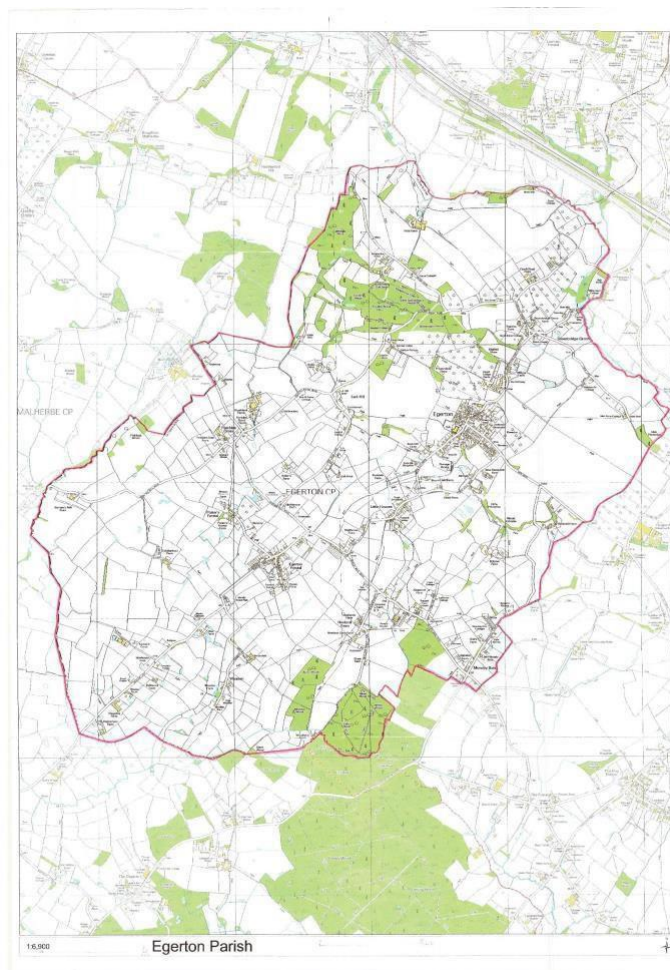
1.6 ENP policies do not duplicate policies already adopted in the Ashford Borough Council 2030 Plan but aim to provide strategic direction specific to Egerton and its environs.

What period does the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan cover?

1.7 The ENP covers the period 2021 - 2040 but will be subject to review at five yearly intervals to ensure that its policies are still compliant with national and local policy, are responsive to climate and other environmental changes and are meeting the overall strategic vision for the future of Egerton.

The Egerton Neighbourhood Area

1.8 In July 2017 Ashford Borough Council approved the designated neighbourhood area as the current parish boundary (see map). The parish covers an area of around 4.8 square miles, mostly farmland with a mix of orchards, arable and grazing with some pockets of woodland. The parish contains the main settlements of Egerton village and Egerton Forstal as well as smaller dispersed communities including Mundy Bois, Newland Green, Pemples Cross and Stonebridge Green.



Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)

- 1.9 Ashford Borough Council undertook full assessments and presented their report (Egerton Neighbourhood Plan Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report and Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report) in March 2021.

The Screening Assessment concluded that:

- The assessment finds that no significant negative effects will occur as a result of the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan. It is therefore concluded that a full SEA is not required at this time.

The Habitats Regulation Assessment screening concluded that:

- In respect of six designated Natura 2000 sites there is unlikely to be significant environmental effects on these sites.
- Based on the latest communication from Natural England (January 2021) there is no longer the potential for a likely significant effect to result to the Stodmarsh Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA), Ramsar Site and the Stodmarsh Site of Special Scientific Interest. Consequently, a full Appropriate Assessment of the Plan is not required.

2



PREPARING THE EGERTON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Planning Process

2.1 In October 2016 Egerton Parish Council publicly announced their decision to develop a Neighbourhood Plan, following completion of the Parish Plan and overwhelming public support at a well-attended public meeting. A Steering Group was formed, composed of a combination of parish councillors and volunteers. Terms of reference for the Steering Group were agreed in early 2017 (see Appendix 3), followed by public consultation to determine the vision for Egerton's future and the key objectives to ensure its achievement.

2.2 In 2018 the Steering Group consulted on key views and vistas in the parish, initiated a Housing Needs Survey conducted on their behalf by Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK) and issued a call for sites followed by workshops with residents to consider the key sites and draft site selection criteria.

2.3 In 2019 the Steering Group undertook, with the support of their consultants - the South Downs National Park Specialist Advisory Service - a Local Green Space Assessment, a Local Heritage Sites Assessment and a refined Site Selection exercise based on criteria conforming with national and local planning policy guidelines. The Steering Group also reviewed the effectiveness of the Parish Design Statement as a guide both to new development and extensions to existing housing over the past ten years. The results of all these initiatives have informed the final plan.

Community Consultation

2.4 There has been extensive consultation with Egerton residents throughout the planning process:

- in a series of open meetings and workshops,
- at each of the annual Parish Assemblies,
- through regular updates at the monthly meetings of Egerton Parish Council,
- in printed fliers and questionnaires,
- in the village's quarterly community magazine, *Egerton Update*,
- on the Neighbourhood Plan web site,
- and in other social media.

At each stage in the process, village residents have been invited to express their views in person or in writing, and a full record of that consultation has been maintained by the Steering Group. All comments and observations made at any stage in developing the Neighbourhood Plan have been conscientiously considered. Whilst some individual comments have been included in the Plan where they capture the majority view, other individual comments that were not in line with the views expressed by the majority have not been included. It is the majority view that has prevailed in the final Plan.

2.5 A full Community Consultation Statement accompanies this Plan.

3



EGERTON NOW

3.1 Egerton parish covers an area of about 2,800 acres (4.8 square miles). Less than 3% of the total area is developed with buildings and roads. Most of the remaining land is farmed with a mix of orchards, arable and grazing for sheep and some cattle, with pockets of woodland.



3.2 The main settlement of Egerton stands on a 350 ft ridge of Greensand 9 miles north-west of Ashford and has one of the most magnificent and easily-accessible views to the south west across the Low Weald and beyond to the High Weald, and to the north east, the North Downs. The tower of the 13th Century Church of St. James dominates the skyline and the many old cottages around it.

3.3 Almost every type of domestic architecture is evident, from Hall Houses, Yeoman Houses, Kentish Barns and oast houses, to modern bungalows, detached, semi-detached and terraced houses. The predominant style in Egerton remains red brick with plain tile roofing, and some white weather boarding or hung clay tiles. Some of the farm houses, buildings and walls constructed with Kentish ragstone, are unique in their local distinctiveness.

3.4 The oldest surviving houses in the village date from about the 15th Century, but the presence of the Church with 13th Century origins clearly indicates that the settlement is older than it appears. The prominently sited long barrow (or tumulus) between Stonebridge Green Road and New Road indicates there was a Neolithic settlement here.

3.5 There are currently 84 listed buildings or structures of architectural interest in the Parish. More than 50 historic farmsteads in Egerton are listed on the Kent Historic Environment Record. The village centre was designated a conservation area in 1976 and contains 23 listed buildings (see Map 3, p 74).

3.6 On the Wealden clay area around and beyond Egerton Forstal there are many natural and man-made ponds, believed to have been dug out for clay. There is evidence of a Roman settlement, based on the finding of the remains of a charcoal-fired furnace to produce wrought iron from the iron ore in the clay and a cremation burial jar, as well as the remains of a Roman road near Bedlam Lane.

3.7 The scattering of dwellings indicates the importance of farming in the Parish, with homesteads built where the land was worked. Damp pasture on the Wealden Clays south of the village still support livestock grazing: richer soils on the better-drained Greensand Ridge support orchards and arable farming.

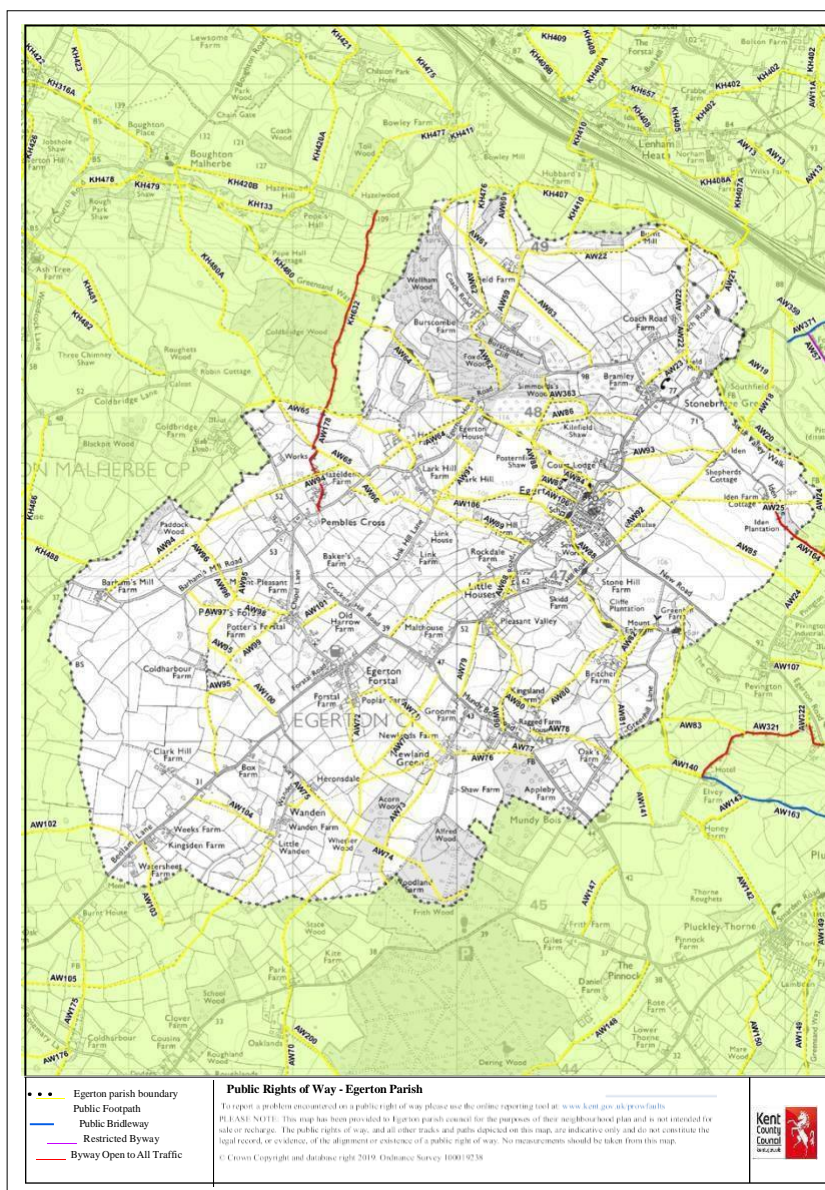
3.8 Much of the farmland is enclosed by mixed hedges and there are many ponds, ditches and streams that feed into nearby rivers. There are springs on the edge of the Greensand Ridge.

3.9 There are also significant areas of woodland, including ancient woodland at Foxden Wood, Welham Wood (Egerton House Road/Coach Road) and Acorn Wood (Newland Green Lane). In addition, there are about 30 individual Tree Preservation Orders, many of which are in the Egerton Conservation Area at the top of the village.

3.10 Kent Wildlife Trust lists several Local Wildlife Sites in Egerton which, although without the legal protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest, are considered important for the protection of wildlife at the local level. These are Dering Wood, Wanden Meadows and School Wood, Egerton Forstal, Foxden Wood and Pasture at Pemples Cross. Wildlife sites may be in private ownership and therefore not open to the public unless crossed by Public Rights of Way.

[see maps of Local Wildlife Sites and of Ancient Woodland and Tree Preservation Orders, pages 77 and 78]

3.11 The parish is criss-crossed by about 40 Public Rights of Way (PRoW), mostly public footpaths with two byways open to all traffic. Kent County Council has a statutory duty to ensure the PRoW network is recorded, protected and maintained in partnership with the parish's Footpath Warden.



3.12 One of the striking characteristics of Egerton is that whilst it is dissected by many roads, these are minor highways and Egerton is not on a direct through route from one village to another. By contrast, Egerton is traversed by frequent ramblers who are walking along the Greensand Way that stretches for miles and crosses the parish. This renders it a peaceful and tranquil location, with no through vehicle traffic, making it one of the most desirable locations in which to live in Ashford borough. This is, however, a double-edged sword: the cost of housing in Egerton is significantly higher than in many other parts of the borough and is out of reach of many of the younger residents still living with their families and who wish to start out on their own.

3.13 The main population concentration is in the centre of the village, as are the church, shop, one of the inns, the school, the Millennium Hall and the garage. The lower part of Egerton, mainly in Egerton Forstal, is formed on Weald clay, where a 19th century Chapel is situated. Smaller communities in the parish include Mundy Bois, Newland Green, Pemples Cross and Stonebridge Green and there are several part-ribbons of development as in Rock Hill Road and Crockenhill. Beyond the settlements lies open countryside, sporadically dotted with farms, cottages, farm buildings and conversions of farm buildings.

3.14 Most communities are just about within walking distance of the main village, on the road or by footpath. Public transport is very limited – only three buses a day to and from Ashford plus a term-time school bus to and from local secondary schools.



View of Egerton Forstal



View of Egerton from the South West

3.15 In 1801, the population was 731; in 1961, the population was 773; in 2011 it was 1,073; in 2013 it was 1,075. The average density is about 230 people per square mile, but this does not reflect the concentration of houses in a few settlement areas. The increase in population over the 50 years from 1961-2011 inevitably required an increase in both affordable and open market housing. Growth appears now to have slowed down, but the 2018 Housing Needs Survey (see paras. 7.22-4) indicates a need for some additional housing for older people, and affordable housing to allow younger people and families to stay in the village.

3.16 In October 2013 the Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) Rural Evidence Project recorded Egerton's **housing stock** as compared with England averages:

- 278 detached houses = 67.3% of dwellings (England average = 22.3%)
- 132 semi-detached houses = 27.2% of dwellings (England average = 30.7%)
- 49 terraced houses = 10.1% of dwellings (England average = 24.6%)
- 18 flats = 3.7% of dwellings (England average = 23.1%)
- 8 mobile homes or other temporary accommodation = 1.6% of dwellings (England average = 0.4%).

3.17 The ACRE parish population statistics also showed some significant divergence from local and national averages, for example:

- 265 people over 65 = 24.9% (England average = 16.3%), and 65 single pensioner households = 14.8% (England average = 12.4%)
- above average owner occupation = 79.9% (England average = 64.1%) and house prices (10-15% above England average)
- above average vacant household space = 6.6% (England average = 4.3%)
- 30 households without cars = 6.6% (England average = 25.8%)
- all travel times to key public services significantly longer than Kent average
- more residents working from home than the England average = 10.9% of people aged 16-74 (England = 3.5%), and higher than average self-employment = 21.1% of people aged 16-74 (England average = 9.8%).

3.18 One of the priorities identified in the Egerton Parish Plan and illustrated by the considerably above-average number of larger, higher-priced detached dwellings and the above average number of older residents, was the need for more housing for local people - both for older people wishing to downsize and stay in the village, and for younger people and those with young families wishing to remain but not able to do so without affordable housing. The statistics also indicate the importance of working from home, and the resultant need for improved telecommunication systems and internet connection, and the paucity of public transport provision which has produced a dependency on private cars. The PRoW network provides important access and connectivity within the parish and, with improvement, could provide alternatives to local car journeys.

3.19 The Ashford Borough Council (ABC) Local Plan 2030 includes residential development for an indicative capacity of 15 units on a site in the north eastern edge of the village on New Road (Policy S30). In addition, an adjoining site became available through a gift of land to the Parish Council as a suitable site for the development of 8 dwellings for older or disabled people in the village who wish to downsize and live in accommodation more appropriate for their needs (see ENP Policy D5, p 61).

Economic Activity

3.20 Although most of the land is farmed, the number of Egerton residents working on the land is small. Ashford borough has the highest number (537) of agricultural holdings in the UK, covering 44,737 hectares and with 1,738 workers (not including the landowners/farmers). Kent overall has 2,714 agricultural holdings employing 12,957 people. Local employment opportunities may increase as diversification in agriculture leads to a greater emphasis on leisure and tourism, more B&B accommodation, and the conversion of farm buildings for wedding venues and/or catering and for permanent and holiday accommodation.

3.21 All businesses in the parish are small and most are family-owned. In addition to Egerton Stores and Post Office (currently closed), two garages, two inns (one closed) and engineering and fencing companies, there are several businesses involved in catering and tourism, and a significant number of sole traders and individuals working full or part time from home. Opportunities for employment for younger people within the parish are limited, but the community consultation undertaken as part of the Neighbourhood Plan indicates that there is a potential demand for local needs housing for younger people who wish to remain in the village while commuting to work or working from home.

3.22 The current status of Egerton Stores is uncertain, but the continuing existence of at least a Post Office and convenience shop and one of the inns is of increasing importance to the sustainability of village life over the next 20 years. Both Egerton Stores and The George (formerly The Barrow House) are listed as Assets of Community Value.

The Community

3.23 Egerton residents have a strong sense of community involvement. They have pride in, and enjoyment of, the beauty of the rural environment. This is evidenced in the Parish Plan Appendices giving survey results (see Evidence Base p 71) and the section on Community in the Parish Design Statement, published in 2009 (see Evidence). There are a number of clubs and societies with active memberships, as well as sports and health clubs which actively encourage involvement in sporting and other physical activities by people of all ages. In a three year cycle, volunteers from the village organise a Village Fete, a Music Festival and a Cricket Week.



Village Assets

3.24 The Millennium Hall, completed in 1999 with a combination of a Millennium Fund grant and funds raised by the village, acts as a venue for many village events as well as for external hire. Although in need of refurbishment, the Games Barn provides opportunities for indoor sport and well-being activities; and the Sports



Pavilion not only provides a centre for the village sports clubs but also for other clubs and societies holding events or committee meetings.

Local Infrastructure

3.25 The village is currently raising funds to move the **pre-school** from its temporary home in the Millennium Hall to dedicated space within the grounds of the Church of England **Primary School**. There are no medical services in the village, the nearest being in the villages of Headcorn, Lenham and Charing. The **bus service** is extremely limited and the **road network** around the village is narrow and winding and in a poor state of repair. The **PRoW** network, with improvement, could provide some local, sustainable transport choices. Mobile **telephone coverage** is poor, although improvement is anticipated in the vicinity of Egerton Forstal with the installation of a new mast on Crockenhill Road/Forstal Road. High speed **broadband** coverage has improved considerably in recent years and it is hoped that Superfast broadband speeds can be achieved in some parts of the parish, to facilitate likely increases in home working over the period of the Plan. In terms of **utilities**, mains gas is only available in the centre of the village and in the Forstal and is unlikely to be extended. Where mains sewerage systems are available (in the centre of the village and in Egerton Forstal), they are already operating close to capacity. Additional development beyond the rural exception sites described in this Plan (see paras 7.28 and 7.29) could require Southern Water to obtain a new or extended Dry Weather Flow (DWF) permit from the Environment Agency.

3. 26 A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis undertaken in consultation with residents as part of the preparation of the Plan is included at Appendix 4.



4



VISION AND KEY OBJECTIVES

Our vision for the future of Egerton is of a rural, relatively secluded community which retains its distinctive character, vitality and sustainability while responding sensitively to social, technical, economic and environmental change.

4.1 The vision and key objectives which follow have been developed after consultation with Egerton residents about their hopes and fears for the future of the village and the surrounding countryside. Egerton's Parish Plan also emerged from extensive consultation from 2013-16. Throughout 2017-21 the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group have consulted on the vision and key objectives of Egerton's Neighbourhood Plan, both in workshops and open meetings and via the Neighbourhood Plan website at www.egertonnp.co.uk, the ENP Facebook page and other social media.

4.2 Our **vision** for the future of Egerton combines the need:

- to **protect** and conserve the quality of community life and the parish environment as identified by its residents;
- to ensure that there is a **sustainable future** for the people who live and work in the parish including access to housing, infrastructure, business and leisure/community facilities; and
- to **develop** housing and supporting infrastructure that is sensitive to the distinctive character of the parish and meets the needs of local people.

4.3 Our **key objectives** for future land use in Egerton are:

- to protect the local environment;
- to maximise the opportunities of the PRoW network and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) for health and well-being, tourism and local sustainable transport;
- to ensure a sustainable social and economic future for all residents; and
- to develop appropriate housing to meet local needs.

Protect

4.4 **Protection** of the overall quality of rural community life includes conservation and enhancement of:

- the distinctive rural, agricultural character of the village landscape that sets it apart from other parishes in the Ashford area, combining Greensand fruit farming in the upper part of the parish with mixed farmlands around Mundy Bois and extensive pasture for grazing on the Low Weald;
- the views and vistas both down from the village centre over the Kent Weald and up from the outlying communities towards Egerton;
- the PRoW network as a valuable resource that provides significant opportunities for both recreation and active travel;
- the conservation area at the heart of the village, its immediate environs and the existing overall settlement pattern of Egerton positioned at the top of a hill on the Greensand Ridge;
- the green spaces which enhance the setting and character of the existing built environment throughout the parish;
- heritage assets such as the church, the significant number and distribution of medieval and later timber frame buildings, Kentish ragstone houses, farm buildings and walls, oast-houses and more modern buildings that have character and prominence such as the Millennium Hall;
- the quality of the physical environment, including trees and deciduous woodland, remnants of former orchards, mixed hedgerows and wildlife.

Sustain

4.5 **Sustainability** of village life includes:

- ensuring that the Parish contains a mix of housing reflecting local needs and therefore increasing the provision of housing for young people, families and older residents;
- providing facilities to support older and disabled people wishing to remain in the community;
- support for the local services and businesses essential to the maintenance of village life such as the local school and pre-school, the shop, garages, inns;
- support for the rural economy, including agriculture, local businesses and individuals working from home;
- maintenance and improvement and more facilities to support residents' health and well-being such as the Millennium Hall, Games Barn, PRow network and recreation ground;
- ensuring continuation of public transport connecting Egerton to other larger centres, of school bus services, and of community transport services such as Wealden Wheels and hospital car services;
- maximizing the PRow and the Kent County Council Rights of Way Improvement Plan (RoWIP) to contribute to sustainable development by providing opportunities for exercise, leisure and open air recreation as well as alternative local transport.

Develop

4.6 Small-scale housing **development** and the infrastructure necessary to support it means:

- affordable, adaptable and smaller homes allowing younger people, older residents and/or families to stay in or return to the parish;
- small-scale local business premises;
- energy-efficient, sensitively laid-out development that conforms with the vernacular materials, density and models described in the Parish Design Statement;
- growth in keeping with the existing character in terms of size, layout, routeways, massing and materials;
- provision of essential services and utilities such as water, sewerage, drainage, high-speed broadband and adequate mobile phone signal.

5



PROTECTING AND CONSERVING EGERTON'S INDIVIDUAL CHARACTER AND ENVIRONMENT

“Please don’t change too much. We love our village as it is.”

This sentiment was voiced by one village resident during the early stage of consultation on the Egerton Parish Plan but was repeated over and over again by the majority of village residents in the course of consultation on both the Parish Plan and this Neighbourhood Plan. It is the richness of the landscape with its combination of sweeping views, historic patterns of agriculture, scattered communities and the serene quality of the natural environment that gives the parish its distinctive landscape character so loved by residents. This abundant and varied landscape also provides a diverse habitat for wildlife.

Distinctive Landscape Character and Biodiversity

5.1 In the Ashford Local Plan (2030), Policy ENV3a *Landscape Character and Design* identifies particular landscape characteristics, including; ‘the pattern and composition of trees and woodland’, ‘the type and composition of wildlife habitats’, field boundaries and ‘the pattern and distribution of settlements, roads and footpaths’. Development is required to be designed to complement the landscape character. In accordance with Policy ENV3a, all new development should conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty and avoid any negative impact on identified areas of distinctive character which are identified in ENP Policy P1 (see p26).

5.2 The Greensand Ridge, with its national public footpath the Greensand Way, crosses the upper part of the parish, with significant views down over the Weald. Although not currently designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) as are other stretches of the Greensand Way in Kent, the proposal from Maidstone Borough Council to extend AONB

protection from the Sevenoaks Commons to Ulcombe reinforces the environmental significance of the Greensand Way right across Kent and is strongly supported by Egerton residents and Egerton Parish Council, on their behalf.

5.3 The Conservation Area at the centre of the main settlement is already recognised and protected as of ‘special architectural and historic interest’ by Ashford Borough Council (ABC) Policy ENV14.

5.4 The Kent Historic Landscape Characterisation (2001) has identified the broad historic character of the landscape of Kent and its development over time. Many elements in Egerton’s landscape go back to medieval times, and field boundaries and hedgerows have often survived Parliamentary Enclosure Acts of the post-medieval period. However, in common with the rest of the country, there has been a loss of hedgerows locally over the past 60 years. The relatively small fields that are bordered by hedgerows and veteran trees present an attractive patchwork landscape which is enhanced further for public enjoyment by an extensive pattern of over 40 footpaths. The tracts of ancient woodland and natural springs, ponds, ditches and grass verges provide the habitat for an abundance of wildlife.

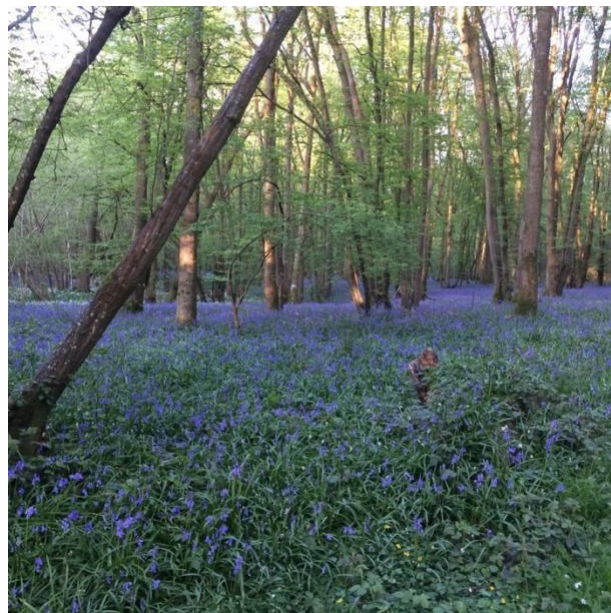
5.5 Ashford Landscape Character Assessment (LCA), June 2009, identifies Egerton as a hilltop settlement on the Greensand Ridge. The LCA also categorises parts of the parish as:

Egerton – Pluckley Greensand Fruit belt, key features of which are the Greensand Ridge, pasture within sheltered valleys and arable land on higher, more open ground, scarp face of the Greensand Ridge which overlooks the landscape to the south, mosaic field pattern with fields of different shapes and sizes, fruit orchards enclosed by shelterbelts within small and regular fields, scattered pockets of broadleaf woodland and chestnut coppice, historic hilltop settlements of Pluckley and Egerton centred around ragstone churches, distinctive architectural detailing with ‘Dering’ windows and chequered brickwork.

Smarden Bell Farmlands character area including Egerton Forstal, key features of which are flat to gently undulating, mixed land use, varied field pattern, hedgerow enclosed pasture with oak hedgerow trees, remnant orchards, plantations, large arable fields, field ponds, traditional timber framed buildings, converted farm buildings, recent housing and static caravans.

Mundy Bois Mixed Farmland characterized by gently undulating landform as part of the foreground to the Greensand Ridge, fields set within a framework of native hedgerows, regular and frequently spaced hedgerow trees, narrow hedge and ditch lined lanes, and large traditional and often converted buildings scattered along lanes and clustered around junctions.

5.6 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland and that these areas should be protected. Some ancient woodland may represent the only link with the original post-glacial ‘wildwood’ and is more likely to contain vulnerable animal and plant species than any other habitat. The rich ground flora of ancient woodlands – bluebells, wood anemones, ramsons (wild garlic) – all of which provide havens for insects and bees - and the bird song of warblers and nightingales are part of the natural beauty and heritage of the parish, and are rapidly disappearing elsewhere. Much of the valued woodland wildlife, invertebrates, lichens and fungi are associated with old trees, deadwood or open ground and are generally restricted to ancient woods and wood pasture but field boundaries and margins can also be a useful sanctuary for plants and creatures.



5.7 Grass verges, springs, streams and ponds, woodland, orchards and hedgerows add to the rural character of the Parish and to



the setting of the dispersed settlements, businesses and residential dwellings. The felling of trees or removal of copses, hedgerows and other natural habitats for development could change the amenity and natural environment of the area, and seriously affect wildlife habitats.

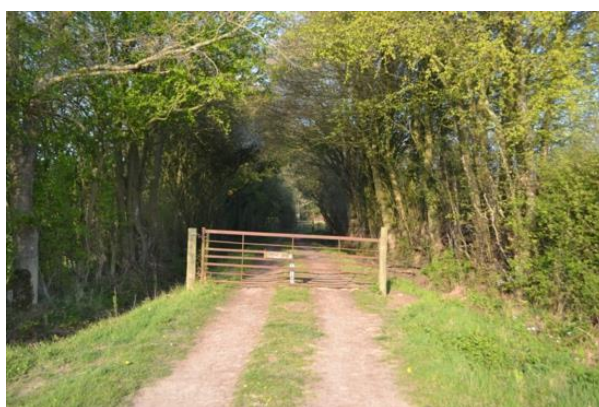
5.8 Alongside its numerous lanes, many of which are enclosed by hedges and banks, Egerton has a large number of wide grass verges, some with ditches containing wildflowers in abundance depending on time of year such as primrose (*primula vulgaris*), cowslip (*primula veris*), lesser celandine (*ficaria verna*), bluebell (*hyacinthoides non-scripta*), cuckoo flower (*cardamine pratensis*), yarrow (*achillea millefolium*), cow parsley/wild chervil (*anthriscus sylvestris*) and wild garlic (*allium ursinum*). Examples of wide grass verges are listed in Appendix 1.

5.9 These wide grass verges in the parish are significant as they contribute to the distinctive character of the environment and provide an essential habitat for wildlife,



especially those with ditches. These should be maintained carefully to take away excess water from the highway, alleviate the effects of flooding in times of heavy rainfall, and contribute to the watercourses that feed rivers such as the Sherway to the south of the Parish and tributaries leading to the Upper Stour which starts just a few miles west of the parish and flows through the northern part of the parish (see Appendix 1).

5.10 The purpose of this Plan is to ensure that all new development is sensitive to the individual character and richness of Egerton’s landscape, preserving and enhancing specified distinctive features and biodiversity. The large number of ponds, the arable field margins and traditional orchards not only contribute to landscape character but are recognised by Natural England as priority habitats for species such as the great crested newt and dormouse, and are essential to the biodiversity



of the parish. Development proposals will, where appropriate, be required to contribute to the protection, management and enhancement of the biodiversity and landscape character of the site and surrounding areas. This should be through green infrastructure plans that include the provision of green spaces, suitable planting of native trees, creating ponds, preserving natural boundaries and ensuring the protection of features that already exist to provide shelter for wildlife, whilst also generating harmony between development and nature. Green corridors will need to be preserved or created to ensure that wildlife has a continued safe haven. This is ever more important in view of the loss of wildlife habitats locally, nationally and universally – and in recognition of the positive part



played by the natural environment in sustaining the world’s ecosystems and in mitigating the effects of climate change (see also ENP Policies D7 and D8, pp 66 & 70). Opportunities to create a community woodland and wildflower meadows will be explored (see Community Aspiration, p 69) to increase wildlife habitat and biodiversity with the additional benefit to all residents now and in the future.



Egerton NP Policy P1 - Distinctive Landscape Character and Biodiversity

- 1. All new development should conserve and if possible enhance the landscape, safeguard the scenic beauty and avoid any negative impact on identified areas of distinctive character. Egerton areas of distinctive character have been identified as follows and are shown on Map 10 on page 84:**
 - a) The Greensand Ridge and Greensand Way**
 - b) the Conservation Area at the centre of the main settlement**
 - c) ancient woodland, hedgerows and orchards**
 - d) the dispersed settlement pattern over the Greensand Ridge, its slopes and the Low Weald**
 - e) field patterns dating from medieval times, surrounded by native hedging and crossed by ancient stone pathways, sunken tracks and bridleways, reflecting the combination of Greensand fruit belt, Pluckley Mixed Farmland and Mundy Bois Mixed Farmland which straddle Egerton and other parishes.**

- 2. All new development should conserve and enhance landscape features of historic and environmental significance. These have been identified as the sunken lanes listed below which are shown on Map 10 on page 84:**
 - a) Egerton House Road,**
 - b) Greenhill,**
 - c) Stone Hill,**
 - d) Stonebridge Green,**
 - e) Pemples Cross, and**
 - f) Field Mill to the boundary of Charing Heath.**

- 3. Development proposals should seek to include measures which will promote and enhance biodiversity, for example by safeguarding existing habitats, by including appropriate landscaping schemes and by maintaining wildlife corridors.**

- 4. Development proposals that have the potential to result in damage to or loss of woodland habitats and wide grass verges or result in the loss of protected ancient trees, ancient woodland, veteran trees or hedgerows and which cause an adverse impact on biodiversity, which cannot be adequately avoided, mitigated or compensated for, or which harm the locality's special qualities, will not be supported (see also ENP P2).**

Trees, Woodland and Hedges

5.11 Ashford borough is the most wooded borough in Kent, and Egerton parish contains several woods and narrow strips of woodland, called shaws.

5.12 Egerton benefits from several significant tracts of woodland high up on the Greensand Ridge: Welham Wood, Foxden Wood, Simmonds Wood, and shaws such as Kinfield Shaw and Iden Plantation. On the Low Weald there is Acorn Wood, Alfred Wood, Frith Wood and Wheeler Wood. The predominant trees are pedunculate (English) oaks but there are also ash, birch, sweet and horse chestnut, black poplar and beech. Willow grows in the wetter low-lying areas.

5.13 The Woodland Trust has an ancient and veteran tree inventory that shows: a veteran pedunculate oak in Newland Green Lane; a veteran hawthorn and notable red horse chestnut in the Recreation Ground; two veteran yews, a veteran ash, a notable horse chestnut and common beech in the Churchyard; and in Foxden Wood, a veteran ash, a veteran sweet chestnut, and notable variegated sycamore, holly, sweet chestnut and common ash. *Tree Preservation Orders* (TPOs) legally protect a *tree* or group of *trees* to prevent them from being heavily pruned or cut down. They keep and protect woodland, individual trees or groups of trees which add to the appearance and character of the locality. There are several Tree Preservation Orders in place within Egerton: All trees in Frith Wood; a swathe above Stone Hill Barn, 11 along the footpath off the Street between Stisted Way and the Glebe, 6 along Mundy Bois Road near the junction with Newland Green Lane, 6 at the lower end of Greenhill Lane, 2 along the track off the Street and 2 in Rock Hill road opposite Old School Court (see Map 6, p76) .

5.14 Hedges in Egerton represent decisions taken by our ancestors over hundreds of years, planted as a result of the enclosures in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, although some new hedges have been planted or replaced more recently. They indicate land ownership and administrative boundaries, assist with livestock management, provide shelter for farm animals and crops, and once would have been a source of timber and fuel. Most of the hedges in Egerton provide wildlife corridors across the landscape, linking small woodlands and other wildlife habitats. The older hedges consist of a variety of trees: field maple, hawthorn, blackthorn, wild rose and hazel. They can harbour many different species of creatures, especially where dense with a bushy base. These include wood mice, shrews, voles, slow worms, and a variety of birds, caterpillars and insects. Trees that have been allowed to grow in the hedges are a characteristic feature of the Low Weald such as in Egerton Forstal, Wanden and Mundy Bois. Most of these trees are oak and ash.

5.15 Trees and hedges are critical for the future of the planet and for our own wellbeing, health and happiness. In just one day, a single tree provides enough oxygen for four people. From the air we breathe to the water we drink, trees are vital to life on earth. They can also:

- reduce air pollution
- absorb CO2 from the atmosphere
- give us shade and shelter
- guard us against flooding
- enhance the attractiveness of an individual house or neighbourhood
- create vital homes for wildlife

- 5.16 Strategically-placed tree planting where there are few trees can make a huge impact on the character and quality of an area. It can also contribute to the mitigation of the impacts of climate change by helping cool those parts of Egerton that are more built-up.
- 5.17 Most of the woodland in and around Egerton has, historically, been coppiced. When undertaken correctly, coppicing creates both natural regeneration from the cut trees and a variety of habitats to support animal and insect life. The continued practice of coppicing should therefore be encouraged as the preferred method of woodland management both for its economic and environmental value.
- 5.18 In order to sustain the unique character, beauty and overall environment of the parish, not only should tree planting schemes be included in all new development plans but also, and in line with national and local policy, additional tree planting throughout the parish will be encouraged as a means of providing locally-sourced renewable energy and carbon offset resources (see also Community Aspiration – Community Woodland and Wildflower Meadows, p68).
- 5.19 Recent research by The Ash Project, The Woodland Trust, Kent Wildlife Trust and other bodies indicates that we may lose as much as 80% of all ash trees, and that the impact of ash dieback could be five times as severe as that of Dutch elm disease. This reinforces the need for a more proactive approach to tree planting and improved woodland management across the parish.
- 5.20 The purpose of policy P2, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Natural England Standing Advice, BS5837:2012 is to preserve ancient woodland, individually important trees and hedgerows for their contribution to the character of the parish (see Map 6, p 76). The policy also seeks improved woodland and hedgerow management and new planting as a means of responding to the climate emergency, providing wildlife habitats and contributing to human well-being.

Egerton NP Policy P2 – Trees, hedges and woodland

- 1. Any new development should include tree and/or hedge planting of native species, and additions to existing planting to ensure succession. All development proposals should seek to enhance the biodiversity of the site and avoid or mitigate against damage to existing trees and/or hedges. The loss of ancient trees, veteran trees, trees that are subject to Tree Protection Orders, Conservation Area trees, trees that are of good arboricultural and amenity value, or loss of native hedges, will not be supported.**

- 2. Proposals should be designed to retain ancient trees or trees of arboricultural and amenity value, allowing for the extent of tree roots and canopy spread which must be protected.**

- 3. Proposals should be accompanied by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment that establishes the health and longevity of any affected trees and any hedges on or bordering the site and ensures that:**
 - a) there is no loss of ancient woodland and no net loss of woods and trees in general;**
 - b) any felled trees are replaced by native amenity trees giving colour, texture and year-round interest on a 3 to 1 ratio in a suitable position; and**
 - c) there is no loss of native hedges except for necessary access points; green spaces with new native hedging should be included in site design and layout to compensate for any loss.**

Local Green Space Policy and Designation

5.21 Protecting and conserving the green spaces which enhance the setting and distinctive character of the existing built environment throughout the parish is one of the key objectives of this Plan.

5.22 There is no single national definition of green space; it can consist of a wide range of land including public parks, sports and recreational areas, allotments, cemeteries and areas with nature conservation importance. Examples of types of green space include land with sports pavilions, boating lakes, land around war memorials, allotments or spaces that provide a tranquil oasis. National guidance and Local Plan policies seek to protect and enhance green infrastructure to help link local green spaces as a means to support healthy lifestyles and to enhance the local environment. The NPPF provides local communities with the opportunity to designate areas that are demonstrably special to the local community as Local Green Space.

5.23 A long list of green spaces (see Appendix 1), considered to reflect the individual open green character of the parish landscape and which provide wildlife habitats and have local amenity value, was drawn up by the Steering Group after consultation with the community at open meetings and through the Neighbourhood Plan web site and social media. After consultation with the landowners, the list included some land that is in private ownership, since there are small fields or paddocks that create useful gaps of green space between existing development that add to the landscape character. The community believes these provide important visual value and should not be used for infill development. Other open spaces on the long list act as informal or formal recreational amenity space to the adjoining residential development as well as provide good sight lines for traffic or safe havens and should be retained.

5.24 The long list was evaluated by the South Downs National Park Specialist Advisory Service and reduced to three sites considered to meet the criteria in the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 (paras. 101-103). All three meet the key objective to maintain and improve facilities to support residents' health and well-being such as the Millennium Hall, Games Barn and recreation field (see maps p 75) and are accessible by Public Rights of Way (PRoW) to support health and well-being and to avoid dependence on private vehicles:

- The Glebe, The Street – designated principally for its recreational value to the community;
- Green space off Elm Close and behind Rock Hill Road, the Upper Recreation Ground comprising the cricket and football pitches – designated principally for its recreational value to the local community
- Lower Recreation Ground, Rock Hill Road – designated principally for its recreational value to the local community.

5.25 In addition, village opinion was strongly in favour of including Pemples Cross and Stonebridge Green in the policy listing for their historic and amenity value.

- Pemples Cross is a sloping green island, providing a semi-wild oasis for wildlife and a resting spot for pedestrians and cyclists, offering far-reaching views over field hedges up towards Bakers Farm, the late medieval Old Harrow farmhouse and Pleasant Valley. It includes a stream, seasonally changing wildflowers, a large ash tree and a substantial oak bench made by a local craftsman.



- Stonebridge Green is a triangular island containing the heritage K6 red telephone kiosk and a traditional cast iron signpost. It faces the former Good Intent Inn, now affordable local housing managed by Egerton Housing Association, with views to the North Downs.

5.26 The purpose of this policy is to designate local green spaces which are demonstrably special to the local community.

Egerton NP Policy P3 - Local Green Spaces

The following sites are designated as Local Green Space as defined on the inset maps contained at Map 4 on page 75 :

- a. The Glebe, The Street**
- b. Green Space off Elm Close and behind Rock Hill Road**
- c. Lower Recreation Ground, Rock Hill Road**
- d. Pemples Cross**
- e. Stonebridge Green**

Proposals for development at the sites identified on the inset maps at Map 4 as designated Local Green Spaces will be considered in line with national planning policy on Green Belts. Proposals which would result in loss of all or part of any designated Green Space will not be supported.

Key Views and Vistas

5.27 The parish as a whole is scenic: attractive views of the surrounding landscape can be seen from most roads, lanes and footpaths. A central focus for many of the key views is the Grade 1 listed Church of St James. The height of buildings is normally maintained at two storeys to ensure there is no adverse impact on key views (see also Policy D2, p 52).

5.28 Through Neighbourhood Plan workshops, website and other media, local people identified a number of notable and uninterrupted views from footpaths and open spaces across the Parish both to the Weald and the North Downs towards the main village and its hamlets – for example, dramatic views can be gained from the Greensand Ridge over the Weald below, notably near Egerton House, from the recreation ground and between Stone Hill House and Greenhill, where the sense of leafy openness is enormous. The findings in our workshops highlighted residents' strong opinions about the importance and need for protection of these shared publicly available views. The most significant are listed in Policy P4 for protection (see Maps and photographs, p79).

5.29 The purpose of this policy is to conserve and enhance certain key views outside the built settlements which contribute to the distinctive character of the parish or which are of historic or environmental significance. All views listed in Policy P4 have been assessed against criteria suggested by Historic England for their topographical significance, their green and/or architectural characteristics and their unique/focal features. They are sweeping panoramic views, with largely uninterrupted lines of sight beyond open foregrounds, and show the historic field and hedge patterns with very little visible development. They are summarized as follows:

Court Lodge Farm to Charing/North Downs - The gently sloping pasture and orchards fall away to sweeping pastoral views across the Upper Stour valley and to the distinctive ridge of the North Downs beyond. The panorama is completed by views across farmland and orchards to the east and south.

New Road to Greenhill/The Weald - Tree and hedge-lined lanes open up to reveal a sweeping panorama, taking in the Greensand Ridge and the outskirts of Pluckley to the South East, and the extensive and largely flat landscape of green pastures and woodland that characterises the Low Weald stretching towards Tenterden to the South. Distant views here extend up to thirty miles to the crests of the South Downs, near Hastings, with the compressed view in between deceptively appearing to be uninterrupted woodlands with little visible built development or human imprint.

New Road to the North Downs - Sloping down over arable, and grazing land with an orchard, to the valley of the River Stour, can be seen a sign of an early prehistoric community, the Bowl Barrow, a funerary monument dated between 2400 to 1500BC. The land rises from the valley to a view of the North Downs and, just visible, the line of the Pilgrim's Way.

Mundy Bois Road to the village/church - The northerly view from the Mundy Bois Road encompasses a farming landscape, with grazing cattle and sheep, that gently rises towards the Greensand Way and the ridge beyond. A variety of waterfowl species visit the lakes nestled between woodland with the Egerton church tower in the view above.

Bedlam Lane to the Greensand Ridge– a far-reaching view across lowland pasture, often with its cattle and sheep immersed in low-level mist at dawn and dusk, yet revealing the distant Greensand Ridge in sharp focus with its contrasting orchards and woodland across several parishes.

Egerton House over the Weald – At almost the highest part of the village, and the start of two of the many footpaths in the Parish. A vast far-reaching view over the Weald in the direction of Ulcombe and Royal Tunbridge Wells, an area which was once heavily wooded but is now mainly pasture. An excellent point to stand and watch the sun set over the vast panorama of the Weald.

Link Hill to Pembles Cross/ The Weald - The ancient country lane descends from the Greensand Ridge, through a landscape characterised by tree fringed fields and mature woodlands, with only occasional glimpses of isolated farm buildings and secluded homesteads. The sequence of interrelated views encompasses the gentle folds of the Greensand Ridge to the North West, more distant open aspects to the South West across the Low Weald to Headcorn and to Cranbrook in the High Weald beyond, and some long distance uninterrupted views to Romney Marsh to the South East.

Elm Close and Recreation Ground to the Weald – a unique panoramic view over many miles of the Kentish Weald, with uninterrupted views beyond Sissinghurst Castle of historic field patterns, hedgerows and trees, and clearly showing the historic pattern of settlement.

Egerton NP Policy P4 - Key Views and Vistas

- 1. Development proposals should protect, and where possible, positively contribute to the following views and vistas. These views and vistas are shown on the photographs and inset maps at Map 9 at pages 81-83:**
 - a) Court Lodge Farm to Charing/North Downs
 - b) New Road to Greenhill/ The Weald
 - c) New Road to the North Downs
 - d) Mundy Bois Road to the village/church
 - e) Bedlam Lane to the Greensand Ridge
 - f) Egerton House over the Weald
 - g) Link Hill to Pembles Cross
 - h) Elm Close and the Recreation Ground to the Weald

- 2. The Grade 1 Listed Parish Church of St James is a focus for many key views towards and within the village. Any new development should be sensitive to this and avoid obscuring this significant landmark.**

Heritage

5.30 The historic centre of Egerton is designated as a Conservation Area as shown on Map 3 (see p 73). The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 empowers the local authority to pay particular attention to proposed development within, and affecting the setting of, a Conservation Area and gives greater control over such matters as demolition, landscaping and trees, and the display of advertisements. Ashford Local Plan (2030) - Policy ENV14 - Conservation Areas states that development should not jeopardise important views into or out of the conservation area.

5.31 Historic England lists two Scheduled Monuments in the Egerton parish;

Bowl Barrow 350m south-east of Egerton church

List entry: 1012266

National Grid Reference: TQ91106 47350

Paddocks within the boundaries of Coldbridge Farm (medieval moated site, fishpond and paddock boundary)

List entry: 1013125

National grid reference: TQ 88375 47545, TQ 88494 47908

There is one Grade I listed building;

Church of St. James

List Entry: 1071496

National Grid Reference: TQ 90815 47556

There are numerous Grade II listed buildings, mainly houses in the parish, but three additional entries have been listed for protection;

Wall and gate piers to churchyard, Church of St. James

List Entry: 1071497

National Grid Reference: TQ 90835 47537

Mounting Block, opposite Rock Hill House

List Entry: 1319909

TQ 90466 47209

K6 Telephone Kiosk, Stonebridge Green

List Entry: 1275166

TQ 91196

5.32 A number of other sites/objects in the archaeological heritage and historic landscape have been identified and reinforce the historic pattern of settlement. For example, a Roman road crosses the south of the parish; a 2nd Century AD cremation burial was found to the west of Potters Forstal with Romano-British pottery sherds; a series of rectilinear cropmarks to the south of Field Farm may be prehistoric in date; a late Mesolithic ‘Thames Pick’ was found at Kingsland Farm in 1966; a polished Neolithic adze was found in 1968 near Stonebridge Green and numerous iron age coins have been found across the parish. In the post-medieval and modern period there are indications of a possible moated manor site at Wanden and a smock mill at New Stone Farm. There is also a designated site on Bedlam Lane where a Hawker Hurricane crashed during the 2nd World War and which is under the protection of the Military Remains Act 1986.

5.33 The ENP steering group organised a village workshop in the summer of 2018 to identify any additional ‘heritage’ sites and features that residents felt were worthy of protection. The list obtained from the workshop, and in subsequent consultation, identified buildings and heritage assets that are currently not on the Ashford Borough statutory list and which are proposed as non-designated Parish Heritage Assets in addition to those buildings or features already protected as Listed Buildings. These have local significance for their historic, archaeological and architectural interest and their contribution to the communal life of the parish. The list has been assessed using Historic England guidelines (Historic England Advice Note 7, Local Heritage Listing) and was endorsed by residents in November 2019. The list will be reviewed by EPC every 5-7 years as there are a number of potential historic assets from the modern era that need investigation as well as assets as yet unknown.

5.34 The purpose of this policy is to ensure the protection of both designated and non-designated local heritage assets.

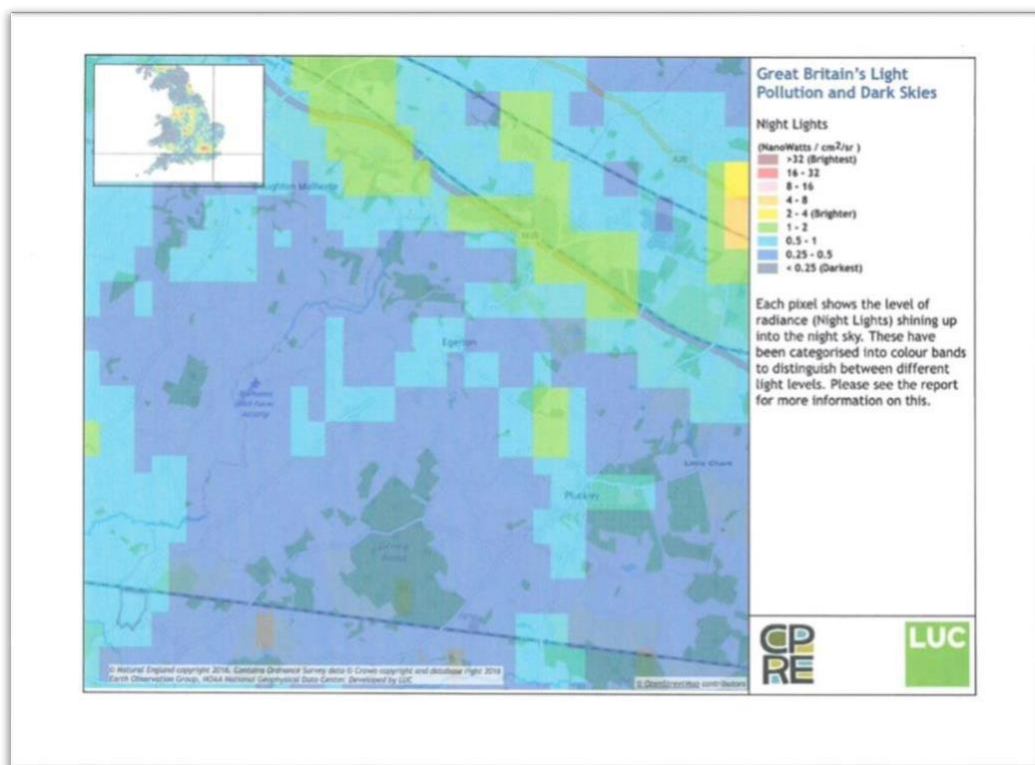
Egerton NP Policy P5 - Local Heritage Assets

- 1. Proposals for new development in the Plan area should preserve or enhance the existing designated heritage assets and their settings.**
- 2. Such proposals should also preserve or enhance the non-designated heritage assets which are listed at Appendix 2 at page 86 and, where appropriate, the setting of those assets.**

Light Pollution – Conserving our Dark Skies

5.35 Dark skies benefit both people and wildlife. Dark skies are a special quality of Ashford Borough – the darkest skies in Kent are above us but they are still not the darkest skies in the country. They are generally defined as skies relatively free of light pollution where you can see a clear starry sky and importantly, our own galaxy the Milky Way, stretching as a ribbon of faint stars across the sky. Sadly, in the last few decades the South East of England has suffered a decline in dark skies quality; dark skies have gradually brightened as urban development and the population grows. The Ashford Local Plan 2030 also recognises the need to minimise the impact of lighting schemes in policy ENV4 Light Pollution and Promoting Dark Skies. All new development should conform to policy ENV4 and to the appropriate ‘Environmental Zone’ (E1 or E2) in para. 9.51 of the Ashford Local Plan 2030.

5.36 In recent years, the areas across Egerton that benefit from really dark sky have reduced. This is due to the effects of more development around us, which tends to bring more lighting, outside and inside, adversely affecting our own local environment. Nevertheless it is the case that most of the uninhabited parts of Egerton are in the second-to-lowest category for light pollution (see map below) and there is still scope to make some efforts to minimise the impact of lighting in our localised area. Wasted light is wasted energy and, in the interests of both energy conservation and preservation of dark skies, policy P6 will apply across the Parish. In addition the Parish Council will encourage residents to reduce light pollution with measures that can be taken at home including switching off lights when not needed, use of proximity sensors and closing curtains at night.



© English Nature and The Ordnance Survey

5.37 The purpose of this policy is to identify measures which will protect as far as possible Egerton's current dark skies from further light pollution and diminution of the dark skies already reduced by surrounding development. There will be a presumption against proposals that detrimentally affect the tranquility of the area including through unnecessary lighting that results in the loss of night time dark skies or causes intrusion to neighbours and wildlife.

Egerton NP Policy P6 – Light Pollution and Dark Skies

- 1. Proposals for new development in the Plan area should be accompanied by a proposed lighting scheme which meets the requirements set out in Policy ENV4 of the adopted Ashford Local Plan and the guidance contained in the Borough Council's 'Dark Skies' SPD.**
- 2. Development proposals in the main settlement areas of Egerton and Egerton Forstal should seek to avoid the use of external lighting unless it is required for security and health and safety reasons, in order to avoid increased light pollution and a further reduction in the dark skies in those areas. Where external lighting is necessary for the reasons stated, lamps should be of 500 lumens or less for domestic purposes and are installed at the lowest possible height to achieve the necessary level of lighting.**
- 3. In all other parts of the Plan area, external lighting schemes should only include lamps of 500 lumens or less for domestic purposes and only use lamps above that level where required for agricultural use or security and where they are installed in suitable fixtures which prevent the upward spillage of light. All external lighting should be installed at the lowest possible height to achieve the necessary level of light.**

6



ENSURING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE FOR EGERTON

Background

6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework 2021 states that ‘the vitality of rural communities’ is essential to sustainable development. As set out in more detail in earlier sections, Egerton is a village of small, scattered communities in a distinctive landscape. Population numbers have fluctuated over the period of census data collection, but village life in a relatively inaccessible location has continued to thrive and to retain a mix of long-established farming families and incomers, still capable of sustaining the primary school and pre-school, a shop and post office, an inn and garage alongside other local businesses.

6.2 The beauty and variety of Egerton's topography, and its seclusion, explains in part the scattered communities, its continuing attraction to incomers and why it is different from many other rural villages with a more homogeneous topographical and settlement pattern. Renewable energy and climate change impacts on environmental sustainability are included in pages 68-69 and in Policy D8. The present and future sustainability of the parish is, however, dependent less on the physical environment than on the spirit of community that has long been recognised as being particularly active and vibrant. In the recent past, the village won Ashford's Community of the Year in 1995, was the winner for Southern and South East England in the Regional Village of the Year Competition in 2001 and was runner up in the National Village of the Year Competition in 2001.

6.3 The range of social, cultural, educational and sporting activities taking place in the village and attracting participants from the surrounding communities is widely considered to be exceptional (see Evidence Base, p71 and www.egertonkent.co.uk). Many of the clubs and societies are well established, well financed and supported by local fund-raising events and volunteers from within the village. They provide education, social gatherings, sport, health and well-being and entertainment for the local community. Their sustainability over the next twenty years is enhanced by the buildings and recreational spaces where these activities take place, provided that these are well maintained and/or enhanced to respond to changing needs. This spirit of involvement and community is also reflected in the groups and individuals who run community initiatives such as the Egerton Over-Sixties Club, Neighbourhood Watch, Community First Responders and Egerton Friends (which raises funds for village causes).

6.4 The continuing existence in the village of a shop and post office, a pub and a garage, will also be essential to the sustainability of the village over the period of this plan, as will the maintenance of bus services to Ashford and the free 'home to school' bus service for secondary school students to Ashford, Tenterden and Lenham. Without these local services there is a risk that dependence on privately owned cars will not only cause environmental damage but will squeeze out lower income families which will, in turn, result in higher house prices and a further imbalance of age groups and income levels in the community. The housing needs survey undertaken in 2018 identified the need for additional local housing for lower income families and individuals (see paras. 7.22-24).

6.5 Provision of housing to meet this need will go some way to offset economic imbalances in the community. In addition, economic opportunities exist in the community in areas outside the traditional agricultural activities and related services - for example there has been modest growth in catering and accommodation for rural tourism, providing local employment and work experience.

6.6 New technologies (including the provision of high-speed broadband) will also allow a greater degree of home-working and help to offset the economic threats to rural communities in the 21st century. Improvements in both mobile phone and high-speed broadband coverage need to focus on assistance for local people and local businesses to ensure that they can adapt and thrive in a changing environment.

Local Services and Businesses Essential to Sustaining Village Life

6.7 Local businesses directly serving the community and providing local employment include 2 pubs and 2 garages. The George's location at the centre of the main settlement makes it a natural focus for certain village activities and for tourists and other visitors. The pub is listed as an Asset of Community Value and, after a recent change of ownership, has re-opened as The George, its original name, rather than The Barrow House. The loss of the Queens Arms as a pub will be a blow to Egerton Forstal. Questions as to its future use will need very careful consideration. The Rose & Crown lies just outside the parish boundary (the pub car park is in Egerton Parish), but the pub itself is a natural part of the Mundy Bois settlement and as such is an important element in the sustainability of one of Egerton's outlying communities. Also important to Egerton's sustainability are the weekly Farmers' Market and Pluckley Farm Shop. Egerton Post Office and Stores has been closed by its present owners pending its sale.

6.8 Other businesses based locally and contributing to the practicalities of sustainable daily life in a rural environment include the garage, building, carpentry, house painting, plumbing, engineering, fencing, hedging and gardening. Health and well-being is also well

served with locally based businesses providing services such as physiotherapy, osteopathy and yoga; while residents can also call on Egerton-based insurance and accountancy services or web design and printing.

Education

6.9 At present there is both pre-school and primary school provision in Egerton. In a survey conducted for the Parish Plan in 2015, 87% of all respondents felt it was essential for the wellbeing of the village to sustain the primary school and the pre-school which feeds into it. Currently the pre-school meets every morning in the Millennium Hall but the relocation of the pre-school, which would enhance its functionality and role, was also considered a priority in the Parish Plan. On the initiative of the Egerton Parish Council, planning consent for a new purpose built facility has already been granted and it is anticipated that, once suitable funding has been obtained, a new building to house the pre-school will be constructed on the primary school site within the next 3 to 4 years. In the event of successful delivery of the Orchard Nurseries site (see Policy D5 – Land at Orchard Nurseries, Egerton), construction of the new pre-school will be the first project to receive funds from the income generated.

Community Aspiration – Egerton Pre-school

Construction on the Egerton Church of England Primary School site of a purpose-built building to house the Egerton Pre-school, based on the planning consent already acquired and subject to funding from the Orchard Nurseries project or other sources.

6.10 Re-location to the primary school site will enable the pre-school to operate in both the mornings and afternoons, which it is unable to do at its present location, and also free up the Millennium Hall for other community uses. The Hall's position with far-reaching views has an attraction for outside organisations running events and release of the space used by the pre-school is expected to generate additional income. The Church of England Primary School has received an overall good rating at its most recent inspection and is highly rated by families within and outside the village. Their current and, in the case of the pre-school, proposed locations at the centre of the main village settlement provide both an essential service within the community and an important opportunity for social connection between families from different parts of the parish.

6.11 Most students at secondary level travel by bus or car to Tenterden, Ashford, Lenham or possibly Maidstone on a daily basis. The continued provision by Kent County Council of free school buses is essential to the sustainability of a rural community where the nearest secondary schools are considerably over the 3-mile limit beyond which 'home to school' transport is currently provided free of charge in most cases.

Rural Economy

6.12 The current range of business activities in Egerton is listed in the Evidence Base. Whilst some aspects of traditional agriculture are under threat, and the post- Brexit economic viability of small-scale farming enterprises is unclear, there are opportunities both to change farming practices and in diversification. Farm buildings may be converted either to provide accommodation and catering for rural tourists who may also take advantage of local activities and services, or into small scale business premises (see Policy D6, p64).

6.13 **Working from home** is expected to play an increasingly important role in a wide range of business activities and provides opportunities in rural communities for parents with young children, as well as individuals, who do not have either the means or the time to commute. There is therefore a requirement not only that all the new small scale developments listed in the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan should be subject to the requirements outlined in policy EMP6 in the Ashford 2030 Plan on the Promotion of Fibre, Fibre To The Premises (FTTP), but also that FTTP, or acceptable alternatives providing speeds in excess of 24Mbps, should be available to all dwellings in all parish settlements.

Maintenance and Enhancement of Village Facilities

6.14 Safe places for residents of all ages are essential to sustain village clubs and societies, the health and well-being of all residents and to respond to future need. Village facilities (not including registered Assets of Community Value) include the Millennium Hall and its possible extension, the Games Barn, the Sports Pavilion and playing fields, recreation areas for younger children and St James' Church and the Chapel with Sunday School. Enhancement of some of these facilities, and a review of how to maximise use of the traditional buildings sympathetically, would provide additional space for both recreational activities and social activities for residents of all ages.

6.15 Community consultation both for the Parish Plan and the Neighbourhood Plan identified a need to protect **the Millennium Hall** and to improve and develop the existing building to facilitate additional space for village activities. If a change of location for the Pre-school is achieved, then medium scale modification to the existing layout and construction of additional room/s could help not only to alleviate the large demand for use of the Hall but possibly allow day-time commercial hire. The Hall is a vital amenity for the community and the income received allows the Hall to be self-funding currently. Any development would need a village fundraising initiative, but this ultimately could provide opportunities for further income generation and therefore help sustain this facility for the future. Some £10,000 has already been raised for this purpose (see Parish Plan).

Images below of The Millennium Hall, the Games Barn, the Sports Pavilion, the village shop and The George Inn (formerly The Barrow House).



6.16 The purpose of this policy is to protect key community facilities which host locally generated activities and are essential to the future sustainability of the rural community.

Egerton NP Policy S1 - Community Facilities

- 1. Proposals for the development of new community facilities in the Plan area will be supported where they comply with the relevant policies in the adopted Ashford Local Plan for the protection of the environment, biodiversity and heritage assets and where the development is designed to meet community needs in accordance with Policy COM1 of the adopted Local Plan.**
- 2. The principal existing community facilities in the Plan area are:**

The Millennium Hall

The Games Barn

The Sports Pavilion

The Barrow House (now The George) Inn - a registered Asset of Community Value.

The MUGA

6.17 There has been interest in developing a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) that could accommodate the sports of 5-a-side football, tennis, netball, basketball and walking football (a sport steering towards the older generation). This would complement the existing sports facilities in Egerton and provide an excellent all year round surface that could also complement the school curriculum. The Egerton Village MUGA Project, in memory of Josh Wilkinson, consulted the Egerton Parish Council and the Playing Fields Committee on two possible sites. A fund-raising initiative is current but no specific location approved. Siting of this proposed facility needs to be accessible but sympathetic to the impact on neighbouring residents, on the environment, its setting and on wider views and vistas.

Community Open Space at Egerton Forstal

6.18 There is currently no recreation or amenity open space for Egerton Forstal residents, in particular families with children. Demand was identified during consultation for this plan at open meetings in 2017 and again in 2019. An opportunity to address this deficit has been identified, subject to the requirements in Policy COM2 of the Ashford Local Plan 2030 and in conjunction with a proposed local needs housing development determined in this Neighbourhood Plan at Section 7. The purchase of the additional space required for community open space adjacent to this development would be funded by donations already committed, and its upkeep would be the responsibility of Egerton Parish Council.

6.19 The purpose of this policy is to secure the provision of a new community open space in Egerton Forstal (see map of Village Confines, Egerton Forstal. p 78) which currently has no public open space provision within the settlement.

Egerton NP Policy S2 – Community Open Space at Egerton Forstal

Proposals for new residential development within or adjacent to the defined Village Confines of Egerton Forstal, as shown on Map 8 at page 80, will be supported where such proposals include provision of suitable accessible public open space for use by the community as a whole.

Community Parking Provision

6.20 Parking for public buildings such as the primary school, the Millennium Hall and the playing fields is limited and is not covered by Ashford 2030 Policies TRA3a & 3b which deal with residential and non-residential parking standards but do not cover public buildings and spaces. Currently planned extensions to both the Games Barn and the Millennium Hall and increasing use of the playing fields and Sports Pavilion, which currently has parking space for only 3 cars, will require additional parking to improve access to these facilities and to the open sports and recreation spaces.

6.21 Additional parking to extend the parking spaces by the Sports Pavilion would be the most immediately beneficial and could be provided by the use of grass protecting matting or a similar permeable surface without damaging the physical character of the landscape or key views.

Community Aspiration – Additional parking

- 1. Egerton Parish Council will work with Egerton Playing Fields to secure funding and to develop approximately 10 additional parking spaces for the Sports Pavilion and Games pitches, using a permeable surface to allow drainage in accordance with Policy ENV9 of the Ashford Local Plan and to maintain the visual appearance of the playing fields.**
- 2. A cycle rack will also be installed in the same location.**
- 3. Where feasible, electric charging facilities will be provided.**

Public Rights of Way, Roads and Transport

6.22 The network of green corridors, public rights of way, quiet rural roads and sunken lanes characterise and support the nature of the parish and should therefore be conserved and enhanced for the convenience and safety of users, for their ecological, landscape and recreational value, and to enhance connections across the village. In order to continue to protect the tranquility of the parish, roads should not be widened to accommodate increased traffic flows or larger vehicles in general. Most of these are protected in the Ashford Local Plan 2030, Policy ENV5 – Protecting Important Rural Features which covers rural lanes and public rights of way. Given the potential impact on non-motorised users (NMUs) of additional traffic, potential developers should submit traffic impact studies to identify negative impacts and mitigation measures.

6.23 **Public Transport** - Bus Services for rural communities such as Egerton are not covered by policies in the Ashford 2030 Plan as they are the responsibility of the Local Highway Authority. As the only bus service at present, maintenance of the bus service to and from Ashford (the 123) is essential. There are no buses at present to and from Maidstone and

Tenterden, or to Pluckley and Headcorn stations, which limits employment and education opportunities for some village residents. Wealden Wheels is a community not-for-profit transport initiative and is supported by Kent County Council, Ashford Borough Council and the Parish Councils of Charing, Chilham, Egerton, Pluckley and Smarden. It supplies mini buses for hire but regulations do not allow it to operate in place of a bus service. Although based in Pluckley, our neighbouring village, an annual donation from the Parish Council contributes to their costs.

6.24 The narrow and winding nature of almost all the roads in the parish make their use by **HGVs** a potential danger to other road users, whether on wheels or on foot. There is no reason to use any road in the parish as a through route to another destination. A 7 1/2 tonne weight limit (except for access) has already been imposed on the approach to the village from Charing Heath and the A20, and this includes several other local lanes. A Highway Improvement Plan should be developed by Egerton Parish Council and representations should be made to Kent County Council to investigate a reduction of the speed limit to 40mph along sections of Mundy Bois Road, Bedlam Lane and New Road in support of safety for all road users and a reduction in pollution levels.

Egerton NP Policy S3 – Public Rights of Way

Proposals for new development in the Plan area should seek to protect and, where appropriate, provide improvements to the network of Public Rights of Way in the Parish.

The Parish Council will work in partnership with Kent County Council to secure improvements to the network of Public Rights of Way, through the County Council's Rights of Way Improvement Plan. Where appropriate, contributions will be sought from new developments towards the implementation of such improvements.

6.25 **Cycling** as an alternative to the car is to be encouraged for both health and well-being and to reduce the number of short car journeys. EPC should consider installation of cycle racks at the Millennium Hall and by the Games Barn to encourage more use of bicycles by providing secure storage. One or two charging points for electric bicycles should also be considered at both locations.

6.26 **Pedestrian routes.** There are some 40 footpaths and other public rights of way across the parish, most of which are used by pedestrians, runners and dog walkers and are of _____

particular importance not only for the general health and well-being of residents but also for their safety by reducing pedestrian use of the narrow, winding roads in the parish. Maintenance and improvement of all existing public rights of way, including replacement of stiles to kissing gates where appropriate, is important to the continued health and well-being of the community by enabling safe and attractive walking connections, and should be carried out to KCC PRoW standards.

6.27 The footpath which begins near the foot of Crockenhill and the junction with Forstal Road (Public Footpath AW368), and which runs from there up to the stile almost opposite the entrance to the memorial trees field (Lower Recreation Ground) in Rock Hill Road provides a safe pedestrian route to the village centre and amenities both from Egerton Forstal and from Crockenhill, minimising the need to walk on the narrow and crowded roads. With the agreement of the landowners, regular cutting of the grass in spring and early summer, regular cutting back of overhanging branches in one location, improvement or replacement of existing stiles and the addition of some gravel, scalpings or other reinforcement where necessary, this footpath would allow children and parents/carers to walk to school when weather permits. Kent County Council have visited the site and have strongly advised inclusion in the Neighbourhood Plan, noting ‘Public Footpath AW368 is identified for particular improvement to provide a safe and attractive route for pedestrians into the village centre facilities (school, shop, church etc.) from such outlying areas as Egerton Forstal and Crockenhill’.

Community Aspiration

Footpath AW368 from Crockenhill to a point on Rock Hill Road opposite Buss’ Farm provides a safe walking route to and from the main village for all residents of Egerton Forstal and Crockenhill, including children’s daily journey to and from the primary school. With the support of Kent County Council, certain areas of the path will be improved and the full length maintained to allow its use in all seasons.

7



DEVELOPMENT TO MEET CURRENT AND FUTURE NEED

Key Aims for Development 2021 - 2040

7.1 Research carried out for the Neighbourhood Plan has demonstrated that there is no local need for substantial new development in the parish in the foreseeable future. Whilst there is a community preference for little or no change to the current level of development beyond the conversion of redundant farm buildings, there is also an acceptance of the need to accommodate changes that inevitably arise as families grow, shrink, divide or relocate in and out of the parish. In line with the National Planning Policy Framework 2021 objective for sustainable development as 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs', this Plan recognizes that local development needs will evolve over time and has therefore identified some new housing development to meet changes in local needs. In this section, the general context for new development is first set out in terms of design quality and is followed by the more detailed assessment of development needs, including mitigation of climate change impacts. Policies P1-P6 are also relevant to any new development as they relate to the protection of distinctive landscape character, trees and hedging, green spaces, key views and local heritage assets, and mitigation of lighting impacts on neighbours, the environment and remaining dark skies.

7.2 Two separate, but related, issues give rise to considerable concern in the parish about any additional development. **Excess surface water** results in regular localised flooding at the entrance to Harmer's Way, on Green Hill Lane and at several locations in Egerton Forstal. Paragraphs 7.46-48 in this Plan cover the requirement for sustainable drainage systems (eg the use of natural land drainage and rainwater management, avoiding its entry into and overloading of the main sewerage system) for all new development and the need for improved maintenance of existing systems. **Utilities** such as water, electricity and sewerage appear to be operating at or close to capacity, resulting in reductions in water pressure, intermittent electrical faults and ongoing failure of the sewerage pumping station at Egerton Forstal. In addition to the provisions of ENP Policy D7 – Water Supply and Drainage (see p66) and ENP Policy D8 – Renewable Energy and Climate Change Mitigation (see p70), Egerton Parish Council (EPC) is committed to scrutinising all development proposals in the parish with a view to ensuring they conform to the policies in this Plan. EPC will play an active role in

encouraging service providers and landowners as appropriate to carry out regular maintenance and upgrading of land drainage systems and other infrastructure serving the parish.

7.3 The NPPF states that the creation of high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. The Ashford 2030 Plan develops these aims in Policy SP6 – Promoting High Quality Design and requires that development proposals should respond positively both to Neighbourhood Plans and Village Design Statements. The 2030 Plan additionally requires ‘layout, design and appearance that is appropriate to and is compatible with the character and density of the surrounding area’ in policy HOU3a for Residential Windfall Development Within Settlements (Egerton Forstal); and that ‘development (and any associated infrastructure) is of a high quality design’ in policy HOU5 for Residential Windfall Development in the Countryside (Egerton main village settlement). The Kent Design Guide, which aims to aid decision-making and to promote good design in public path and countryside access management, complements technical and design information and provides useful guidance and principles for the delivery of sustainable development.

7.4 This Neighbourhood Plan sets out a clear design vision and expectations, so that future planning applicants have as much certainty as possible about what is likely to be acceptable. Design policies were originally developed with the local community in the drawing up of the Egerton Parish Design Statement in 2006 to reflect local aspirations and were grounded in an understanding and evaluation of each area’s defining characteristics. Unfortunately, not all new development in the parish since then has followed that guidance. This Plan aims to steer the design of new development to being more in tune with that guidance, and to place more emphasis on layout to complement and enhance its setting. The NPPF confirms that neighbourhood plans can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of each area and explaining how this should be reflected in development. Thus the Design Statement, which is an official planning document on Ashford Borough Council’s website, will in future be treated as a valued and useful tool in considering planning applications and will be referred to by the Parish Council before making any comments to the planning authority (ABC). Wherever there is scope, the Parish Council will engage with prospective developers before any plans are finalised, in order to influence the design and layout of any new development.

7.5 Without careful planning, the distinctive character and sensitive landscape in Egerton would be under threat from development of an inappropriate scale, location design or layout. Any development must be well integrated into the landscape - for example through the use of existing and new landscape buffers. All new development should engage with Kent County Council regarding impact on the PRow network. Areas of distinctive character within Egerton Parish include (Ashford Landscape Character Assessment 2005) the Greensand Fruit Belt, the Sutton Valence to Pluckley Mixed Farmlands and Mundy Bois Mixed Farmland (see para. 5.5).

7.6 This Neighbourhood Plan provides an opportunity to:

- locate development in the best possible positions geographically, socially and environmentally ;
- facilitate the development of housing that meets the needs of local people;
- contribute to the local architectural character, with sympathetic layout and design;
- provide open green spaces and opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Design

7.7 There are several elements that combine to create good design for built development, including the form, scale, and detailing of the building, the site layout, positioning and spacing, together with its relationship to neighbouring buildings and the wider landscape (see also Policy P1, p 26). New developments often fail to have regard to every aspect, because they have tried to import an alien design at variance from the special local characteristics of the parish.

7.8 The distinctive character of Egerton is informed by those special traits that positively contribute to the local environment, which may not be unique but are typical of the locality. Characteristics which are harmful to the overall appeal of the locality are unworthy of repetition and should be guarded against, if the Neighbourhood Plan is to safeguard the local character. Rather than resisting new development, this means that the Plan should seek to manage it so that it accords with key design principles, without unnecessarily stifling compatible innovative designs.

7.9 Unwelcome aspects in the design of proposed new developments can often be remedied, if they are addressed early on in the design process. Common failings in design are as follows. The *scale* of new buildings is frequently incompatible with neighbouring development and the local context, where designers have looked no further than the site boundary, or simply sought to introduce an alien design. The visual *appearance* of new development can be harmful to its surroundings where inadequate attention has been given to detailing and articulation. The appropriate choice of external building *materials* (masonry, roofing and fenestration) also has a great impact on the compatibility of new buildings with existing development and can assist modern buildings to successfully sit in the historic context. Sensitive choice of *boundary treatment* (trees and hedging, medium height fencing or walling using local materials) helps to assimilate new development in the streetscape and the local landscape, by avoiding unsightly hard edges and the introduction of anachronistic urban and suburban features (such as high walls, security gates and oppressive fencing).

7.10 One of the aspects on Design, that came out of the earlier public engagement workshops, was that many residents wanted to ensure that creative and innovative building

designs were not ruled out by other policies advocating more traditional designs. Both the Neighbourhood Plan and the Parish Design Statement before it aim to avoid stifling any modern approaches to design, if they can be successfully accommodated without eroding the overall special character of the settlement and the surrounding landscape. There are ways of achieving that, apart from seeking a secluded or unobtrusive site, such as respecting the scale and proportions of existing properties, even if the external materials differ or using similar external materials even though the scale and proportions might differ. National planning policy guidance already makes provision for creative designs in the countryside, but only where of exceptional architectural design quality, so the Neighbourhood Plan includes a policy more applicable to lesser grandiose developments.

7.11 The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all development is of the highest design quality which reflects and respects the local character of Egerton.

Egerton NP Policy D1 – Development Principles

- 1. Proposals for new development in the Plan area should seek to achieve a high quality of design, as defined in Policy SP6 of the adopted Ashford Local Plan, and to make a positive contribution to the local character and environment of Egerton (see also Policies P4 and D2 in this Plan).**
- 2. Proposals must respect and enhance Egerton’s distinctive built character and its high quality countryside setting. Where contemporary building designs are proposed, they must be complementary to their local context, and respect the scale, spacing and external materials of existing buildings.**
- 3. All development proposals should take into account the Kent Design Guide, the KCC PRow Improvement Plan and relevant planning and design guidance issued by Ashford Borough Council, of which the Egerton Parish Design Statement forms a part. New developments should also take account of the National Design Guide and National Model Design Code.**

7.12 Reference to the **Egerton Parish Design Statement** at an early stage in the design process would avoid developments that harm the local character, in favour of those that could positively contribute to protecting and maintaining it. In particular, the Design Statement explores the local characteristics of the various parts of the parish and includes recommendations in its Style Guide for different types of development.

7.13 As part of the Neighbourhood Plan preparation, it was decided to assess the effectiveness of the Egerton Parish Design Statement, by examining the built developments that have occurred since in the parish. There have been few substantial developments in Egerton since the Design Statement was published in 2006, with the exception of the local needs housing at Chantler's Meadow. Most developments have been replacement dwellings or domestic extensions, including some major extensions of existing properties. Overall, apart from Chantler's Meadow, there is a disappointing lack of referencing to the Parish Design Statement by the planning applicants, agents and architects, and also by the Local Planning Authority.

7.14 It was concluded that the Neighbourhood Plan itself ought to re-affirm the key principles of the Design Statement, and include some clear policy encouraging developers to refer to the design guidelines before embarking on development projects, rather than unconsciously importing alien designs and materials and eroding the local character of the environment that they have come here to enjoy. Suggested actions included:

- the Parish Council to refer more consistently to the Parish Design Statement in responding to planning applications (whether positively, negatively or neutrally disposed to a particular development proposal);
- policies to be included in the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan to re-affirm the key design principles of the Parish Design Statement, and to encourage developers to take its guidelines into consideration in deciding development proposals; and
- consideration to be given to re-issuing the Egerton Parish Design Statement, to broadcast its key messages and principles, via the village websites and in Welcome Packs for households new to the Parish.

7.15 The Egerton Parish Design Statement has been adopted by Ashford Borough Council as Supplementary Planning Guidance, and is a companion document to the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan, with its contents and principles being broadly supported in more recent public engagement sessions on the Neighbourhood Plan.

7.16 Policy D2 reaffirms the key principles of the Design Statement, and the importance of good design to preserve the distinctive local character of the parish. Building projects which fall outside the scope of planning control should still take into consideration the principles and guidelines of the Egerton Parish Design Statement.

7.17 The purpose of this policy is to ensure all relevant development proposals incorporate the principles and guidelines of the Parish Design Statement and to provide examples of locally distinctive styles, materials and boundary treatments.

Egerton NP Policy D2 – Application of the Parish Design Statement

1. Proposals for all new development in the Parish, including extensions to, and the conversion or replacement of, existing properties, shall include details of how far the principles and guidelines of the Egerton Parish Design Statement have been taken into consideration in formulating the proposals, in order to maintain the special local characteristics of the Parish. In devising and assessing proposals for new development account should be taken where appropriate of:

- a) development that creates places that are sustainable, durable, safe and suitable for their location and use, whilst meeting the relevant policies of the Development Plan;**
- b) building form and style that is valued and promoted locally, including smaller houses with characteristically pitched and/or hipped roofing, richly detailed walls, small panel windows, timber doors, with subservient garaging and outbuildings;**
- c) the use of locally distinctive external building materials, as appropriate to the location, such as clay roof tiles, Kentish ragstone, timber weatherboarding, red stock bricks;**
- d) suitable boundary treatments, such as traditional mixed hedging, red brickwork or ragstone walls, as an attractive method of delineating new boundaries;**
- e) attention to design detail, with the discreet positioning of service features, such as bin stores, cycle stores, meter boxes, flues and ventilation ducts, renewable energy components, external lighting, satellite dishes, aerials, telephone cabling, etc.**
- f) the density of the proposed development and its impact on the character of the existing built environment and of the surrounding, distinctive landscape character.**

2. The height of new dwellings in the parish should normally be limited to two storeys to prevent a prominent visual edge to the village or obscuring key views and vistas (see Policy P4, p.33), including views of the Church tower.

3. Development proposals should also take into account all other relevant policies in this Plan.



Housing

Housing Policy to 2040

7.18 Egerton’s housing need up to 2023 was identified in a Housing Needs Survey (see paras. 7.22 - 24 below) as a requirement for 27 dwellings, of which 12 need to be affordable for local people. The Ashford Borough Council Local Plan (2030) allocates a site on New Road (see Map 2, p 72) for an indicative 15 new homes, of which 40% should be affordable (5/6 affordable homes), with an anticipated mix of 1-2 for rent and the remainder for shared ownership or other forms of affordable ownership. The Orchard Nurseries site owned by Egerton Parish Council (see paras. 7.30-31) could provide 8 open market dwellings for local older residents. Therefore, there remains a shortfall of affordable local needs housing for rent. Following a call for sites and site assessment (see para.7.25) the Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address this shortfall through the provision of up to 8 affordable local needs dwellings on the Gale Field site (see paras. 7.28-29). In combination, the Orchard Nurseries site and the Gale Field site could provide both housing for older residents and affordable local needs housing as rural exception sites. Table 7.1 sets out the housing need for Egerton as identified in the Housing Needs Survey and how this is provided for through the ENP and Ashford Local Plan.

Table 7.1.

	Total No. of homes	Affordable homes	Open Market homes
Housing Needs Survey 2018-2023	27	12	15
Land on New Road (Ashford Local Plan Policy S30)	15	6 ⁱ	9
Rural Housing Exception Site (Policy D4)	10	10	
Orchard Nurseries (Policy D5)	8		8 ⁱⁱ
Total provision in Ashford Local Plan & ENP	33	16	17

ⁱ The HNS analysis of incomes for the local needs affordable housing indicated that 8 should be rented and 1 shared ownership. Only 1-2 houses on the New Road site would meet this need, resulting in a shortfall of 10 local needs affordable dwellings, of which 3 would be for older residents.

ⁱⁱ The open market homes at Orchard Nurseries will be for older people with a local connection to the parish.

7.19 The current housing need can be met by the provision of homes that are:

- a) affordable for local people (see 7.26 - 7.29 below)
 - to rent, or
 - for shared ownership
- b) suitable for local older or disabled people (see 7.30-31)
 - who are owner-occupiers requiring different accommodation
 - to rent.
- c) on a small scale to allow integration with the existing pattern of development.

7.20 Any additional housing requirement beyond the 5 year period covered by the 2018 Housing Needs Survey will be subject to review every 5-7 years both for affordable local needs and for open market housing. It is anticipated, however, that any additional requirement for open market housing to 2040 will be met by a combination of:

- a) the conversion of redundant farm buildings to residential dwellings at a rate of 2-3 per year (analysis of the current rate of conversion over the past 10 years suggests a rate of 2 per year on average – see Evidence Base, p 71):
- b) up to 8 larger houses released by older residents downsizing to the accommodation in Orchard Nurseries, and
- c) applications covered by policies HOU3a and HOU5 in the Ashford 2030 Plan – residential windfall development within settlements and the countryside.



7.21 The purpose of this policy is to define and quantify the local housing requirement to 2023 and beyond as identified in the Housing Needs Survey (November 2018), in addition to the housing already identified in the Ashford Local Plan.

Egerton NP Policy D3 –Housing Policy

- 1. An indicative 16 affordable local needs dwellings, as identified in the 2018 Housing Needs Survey, shall be provided on allocated or exception sites in the parish and delivered over the first 10 years of this plan.**
- 2. An indicative 18 open market dwellings shall be provided on the land on New Road (Ashford Local Plan 2030, Policy S30) and on windfall sites in the parish and delivered over the first 10 years of this plan.**
- 3. Where there is a mix of affordable and open market housing provided on a development site, the affordable housing should be appropriately integrated with open market housing in the site layout.**
- 4. Proposals for new residential development should take into account all other relevant policies in this Plan.**
- 5. Housing need in the Parish for the period 2031-2040 will be subject to future review in light of an updated Housing Needs Survey and a review of the adopted Ashford Local Plan.**

2018 Housing Needs Survey and Results

7.22 The Housing Needs Survey undertaken for Egerton Parish Council by Action with Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK) in 2018 identified a need over the next five years for 27 additional dwellings. Of these, 12 affordable homes for single people, couples and families were identified, 8 of which should be rentable, 3 for older people and 1 for shared ownership. One self-build requirement was also recorded. The survey also identified a need for 12 homes for older households (including the 3 mentioned above), split equally between couples and

single people; plus a need for 6 open market homes excluding those for older households and ranging between single people and couples and families.

7.23 The Ashford Local Plan site, land on New Road (ALP Policy S30) in combination with the ENP Orchard Nurseries site could provide an indicative number of 17-18 open market dwellings i.e. 2-3 more than the 15 open market need identified in the Housing Needs Survey. These sites could also in combination provide 12-13 dwellings to meet identified local needs. The shortfall of affordable local needs housing identified by the Housing Needs Survey is between 6- 10 dwellings.

7.24 One small additional site is therefore required to provide the additional affordable, local needs housing identified above.

Call for Sites and Site Selection

7.25 As part of the preparation of the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan, a call for sites resulted in suggestions from a number of landowners and developers for sites outside the current village confines. A number of the suggestions were ruled out after consultation. The remaining suggestions, with modifications in some cases, were formally assessed against criteria based on national and local policy (see Map 2, p 73 and Site Assessment Process and Conclusions) and the findings of the Housing Needs Survey. Sites proposed after the original Call for Sites were also formally assessed against the approved criteria.



Local Needs/ Affordable Housing

7.26 The Government's recently published guidance on First Homes recognises the need for lower cost (entry level) market housing for first time buyers, at a level of at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations. First Homes must be offered at a minimum of 30% discount against market value, with a maximum price after discount of £250,000. On first sale, a restriction on the title of properties sold as First Homes will ensure that the discount is passed on to any subsequent eligible owners. In due course, a number of new homes in the Plan area may be built as First Homes, thereby contributing to the provision of affordable housing.

7.27 Our research and consultation has established that the main concern of some of the younger people and families in the Parish is the lack of available properties in the village either to rent or at an affordable price for first time buyers who wish to stay in the village because of their family links and commitments, such as children attending the local school or employment in local farms and businesses. There is a continuing demand for the existing 27 local needs housing units already available in Egerton, almost all of which are rental properties (The Good Intent, managed by Egerton Housing Association, Harmer's Way managed by Sanctuary Housing and Chantler's Meadow managed by English Rural Housing). However, there is a shortfall both of rental properties and of very low-cost properties to enable young people to remain in the village.

7.28 An additional scheme is therefore needed to provide affordable housing for local young people in Egerton to rent or buy. The density of housing within the confines of Egerton and Egerton Forstal, and the need to avoid adverse impacts on the Conservation Area in Egerton, mean that a development on the scale of 6-8 dwellings would be on a rural exception site and would be developed either by a recognised developer of affordable housing or by a locally created 'not for private profit' entity, established to provide housing to meet local needs. The land would be acquired at 'exception site' value and the provider would build up to 8 'affordable' units, varying in size from single bed studios to 3 bedroom houses, to meet local needs.

7.29 The Parish Council will work in partnership with landowners and affordable housing providers to identify and secure the development of a suitable site as a rural housing exception site of sufficient size to develop up to 10 affordable homes for local residents. The call for sites undertaken in 2018 as part of the preparation of this Plan, and the subsequent site assessment process that was undertaken, identified land at Gale Field, Crockenhill Road, Egerton Forstal as a potential suitable site for such a scheme. The Parish Council will continue to work with the landowner, local residents, the Borough Council and other partners to establish whether a scheme can be delivered in the period up to 2030.

Egerton NP Policy D4 – Local Needs Affordable Housing

- 1. The Parish Council will support the development of a rural exception site for local needs affordable housing in order to meet an identified need for such housing. Proposals should comply with national policy and the relevant policies of the adopted Local Plan concerning rural exception housing schemes.**
- 2. The Parish Council will work in partnership with landowners and affordable housing providers to identify opportunities for rural exception sites to meet the local needs identified in the Housing Needs Survey (2018) and any subsequent reviews of local housing need.**

Older People's Housing

7.30 One of the requirements in the Egerton Parish Plan (see Evidence Base, p.71) was the creation of dedicated semi-sheltered accommodation specifically to meet local needs and designed to be readily adapted to deal with growing disabilities and other difficulties of old age. A small working group was established by the Parish Council to take this proposal forward. After consideration of several potential sites, a site at Orchard Nurseries was gifted to the Parish in 2017 by Derek Marks, a former Parish Council Chairman.

7.31 The site falls within an area to the east of the Conservation Area in which the safeguarded Hythe-Formation Limestone/Ragstone occurs. The viability of extraction of all the useable mineral on the site has been assessed in accordance with The Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan (KMWLP), Policy DM7: Safeguarding Mineral Resources of the KMWLP and discussed with both Kent County Council and Ashford Borough Council. Exemption from the presumption to safeguard the minerals on the site has been argued on the grounds that ‘extraction of the mineral would not be viable or practicable’ (KMWLP, Policy D7, Clause 2) due to the small size of the site, the proximity of the adjacent housing and the limitations on access. The current workable area of the minerals reserve is less than 1.2 acres, and additionally the site is closely surrounded by built development, making access for any mineral extraction not only difficult but also potentially of significant detriment to residential amenity. Additionally, the small extent of the reserves renders future extraction as commercially unviable, especially given the current generous extent of more readily accessible ragstone reserves elsewhere in the county.



Egerton NP Policy D5 – Land at Orchard Nurseries, Egerton

- 1. Land at the former Orchard Nurseries, Egerton, as shown on the inset plan on page 61, is proposed for the development of eight dwellings suitable for occupation by older persons presently living in less suitable homes within the community. The development of these dwellings will be restricted to occupation by older persons.**

- 2. The development of the site will only proceed when arrangements for suitable access to the site have been secured, and which meet the requirements of Kent County Council as Highways Authority.**

Defining the Village Confines

7.32 Ashford Borough Council's Local Plan (2030) describes the change from the traditional approach of defining a settlement area in a written statement to the use of a boundary line drawn on a map.

7.33 The confines of a settlement are defined as:

'the limits of continuous and contiguous development forming the existing built up area of the settlement, excluding any curtilage beyond the built footprint of the buildings on the site (ie 'garden areas').'

7.34 The Local Plan (2030) also sets out policies for Residential Windfall Development Within Settlements (HOU3a) and Residential Windfall Development in the Countryside (HOU5). HOU3a applies to Egerton Forstal. It limits further development to the current confines in which space is already limited, and confirms the requirements that must be met for residential development 'that can be satisfactorily integrated into the existing settlement', including compatibility with the character and density of the surrounding area and avoidance of 'significant adverse impact on the amenity of existing residents' and 'significant harm to the landscape, heritage assets or biodiversity interests'. HOU5 applies to the main Egerton settlement and covers proposals both for development within the settlement and for 'residential development adjoining or close to the existing built up confines' provided that 'the scale of development is proportionate to the size of the settlement', the design is of a high quality, sustainability criteria are met, and that conservation and enhancement of the natural environment and heritage assets are ensured.

7.35 The built form of the parish comprises two larger settlement areas (the centre of the village and Egerton Forstal), smaller communities such as Stonebridge Green, Mundy Bois and Newland Green, and more isolated farmhouses and farm buildings. After consultation, the village confines have been defined around the two main settlement areas and are shown in the maps at pages 79 and 80.

Brownfield Sites and Small Scale Development

7.36 The reclamation and reuse of brownfield sites is a key factor in the Government's Sustainable Development Strategy integrating a wide range of economic, social and environmental objectives. Brownfield redevelopment can not only clean up environmental health hazards and eyesores, but can also be a catalyst for community regeneration, particularly when communities are brought into the consultation process of site identification and restoration. Managed effectively as a sustainable redevelopment scheme, brownfield sites can provide affordable housing, create opportunities for employment or home working, promote conservation and wildlife, and offer a shared place for play and enjoyment. The transformation of a brownfield site can be a vision of hope for the future.

7.37 **Barn conversions.** Class Q - permitted development rights - was introduced as part of the General Permitted Development Order in 2013 allowing barns in recent agricultural use to be converted to residential use within certain specific criteria. Even new barns - very often, portal frame structures with large spans typically used for housing livestock or farm machinery - can be converted without the need to apply for full planning permission except within the setting of the Egerton Conservation Area or a Listed building. Converting such disused buildings adds to Egerton's housing stock without creating additional development and can free-up homes elsewhere in the housing market with potential to help support the rural economy at the same time. In the past 7 years approval has been granted for 15 homes to be created from barn conversions in Egerton, nearly all in the outer reaches of the parish (see Evidence Base). Future conversions are likely to be in similar locations, distant from village amenities and not strictly fulfilling sustainability criteria. To mitigate this, the materials used should ideally be sourced sustainably to minimise their carbon footprint.

7.38 The National Planning Policy Framework (2021) states that good design is 'a key aspect of sustainable development' and indivisible from good planning (paragraph 126). Developments should 'establish a strong sense of place', and be sympathetic 'to local character and history' including 'the surrounding built environment and landscape setting' (paragraph 130). Kent contains some of the most beautiful timber-framed agricultural structures in England and the most common older barn type in Egerton is the threshing barn - a large, almost two storey structure, often timber frame and weatherboarded on a brick or stone plinth with Kent-peg tiles. Kent Farmsteads Guidance, a collaborative series of publications by Kent County Council, Historic England, Kent Downs and Kent Design, contains practical guidance on redeveloping farmyard sites or redundant farm buildings. Modern underused or redundant farm buildings may provide opportunities for significant enhancement of the site overall, particularly in views to the site from the open countryside. Conversions are expected by planning authorities to be instantly recognisable as buildings that were once barns and this has led to conversions of newer barns reflecting a contemporary style, making use of concrete, steel and glass rather than traditional and reclaimed materials. It is desirable that the setting of the Egerton Conservation Area or a listed building should still be a consideration in the design and exact materials chosen.

7.39 Policies EMP1 (New Employment Uses), EMP3 (Extensions to Employment Premises in the Rural Area) and EMP4 (Conversion of Rural Buildings to Non- Residential Uses) in the Ashford Local Plan (2030) permit conversion of rural buildings for employment provided that there is no adverse impact on the character of the buildings themselves, on the surrounding countryside, on the road network and on neighbouring residential amenities. EMP5 (New Employment Premises in the Countryside) discourages new development in the countryside unless it is essential. Development of brownfield sites will ideally require good sustainable transport connections, both within the community to encourage active travel and links to local amenities and externally to link with the wider transport networks.

7.40 There are several farms in the parish that contain redundant buildings. To date, many of these have been converted to individual dwellings, either for permanent residence or holiday lets. These individual cases would be classed as “windfalls”. A few other such sites exist, somewhat derelict, redundant or partially redundant. Although most of these sites were not put forward by their owners, they need to be borne in mind in the event of proposals for new businesses. One site was put forward as a self-build site to meet local needs and should be considered by Ashford Borough Council as part of the planning application process (Local Plan Policy HOU6) . It would not be appropriate to develop a greenfield site in the open countryside if brownfield sites, and some capacity in already developed sites, exist.

7.41 All brownfield sites need to be assessed by an experienced environmental consultant before they can be redeveloped. This involves an analysis of the soil, groundwater and surface water through testing for hazardous compounds, and ensures that appropriate measures are taken to reduce identified risks and liabilities. Any development plans must comply with regulations. Licences are required to reclaim brownfield sites; strict environmental regulations in relation to wildlife habitat and other issues can be prohibitive for developers. If the environmental assessment is positive and supports the redevelopment, the next step is to take any remedial action needed to render the site safe.

7.42 The purpose of this policy is to support the redevelopment of redundant farm buildings for local business use as well as for residential development, where appropriate.

Egerton NP Policy D6 - Reuse of Redundant Farm Buildings

- 1. The conversion or redevelopment of redundant farm buildings to provide small-scale business units (up to a maximum of 10 single units or on a footprint equivalent to the floorspace of the redundant buildings) will be supported. The conversion or redevelopment of such buildings to provide residential or visitor accommodation will also be supported, where such proposals conform to all other relevant Policies in this Plan and the adopted Local Plan, and where suitable sustainable transport connections, such as for walking and cycling, can be achieved.**
- 2. Development in such cases should not have unacceptable impacts on residential amenity and vehicular movement on the local highway network or on wildlife and landscape.**

Infrastructure and Facilities to Support Current and Future Development

7.43 **Mobile phone reception coverage and broadband coverage.** Good, reliable mobile phone coverage and high-speed or super fast broadband availability over the whole of the parish is essential to replace the currently inconsistent and unsatisfactory provision. Efficient mobile phone technology and consistent high-speed or super fast broadband provision will increasingly be essential for business use and for working at home as an alternative to commuting, as well as for everyday living in rural areas (for example, online shopping and delivery or the installation and operation of smart meters for public utilities). Expansion and improvement will ultimately be a commercial decision taken by private providers, and therefore not directly within the Neighbourhood Plan's scope, but Egerton Parish Council should treat as a priority the need to encourage providers to improve both mobile phone reception and broadband coverage as a means of communication and access to services for the entire local community. A proposal to install a mast on Crockenhill is a valuable step towards better mobile telephone coverage for the Egerton Forstal and Crockenhill communities.

7.44 **Utilities.** All new developments for 10 or more dwellings, must include the provision of adequate water supply and sewerage systems to meet current environmental policy (ABC ENV8) and public health requirements. As the existing sewerage systems serving the centre of Egerton village and Egerton Forstal are already close to maximum capacity, future provision for developments of less than 10 dwellings should also meet the ENV8 requirement. In some cases an individual system will be required and any such system should also meet current environmental policy requirements.

7.45 **Sustainable drainage and flood risk.** In accordance with the Ashford 2030 Plan (ENV9) 'all development should include appropriate sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) for the disposal of surface water, in order to avoid any increase in flood risk or adverse impact on water quality'. Retention and protection of the local drainage network combined with SuDS in any development will avoid capacity reduction or adverse quality impacts. This is of particular importance in Egerton where surface water draining off the hillside regularly causes localised flooding.

7.46 Landowners will be encouraged to maintain and regularly clear ditches and culverts to minimise the risk of surface water flooding. Initiatives to reduce surface water run-off from agricultural land will also be encouraged.

7.47 In line with the ABC Local Plan (2030) – ENV6 – new development will only be permitted where there would not be 'an unacceptable risk of flooding on the site itself, and there would be no increase to flood risk elsewhere'. Drainage systems should be designed to manage both the risk of flooding (groundwater and flash flooding) and surface water run-off.

7.48 Waste Management. There are currently no waste management facilities within the parish and the combined Ashford Waste Transfer Station and Household Waste Recycling Centre at Chart Leacon is at operational capacity. Any increase in waste tonnage by development will require mitigation and a contribution by developer.

7.49 The purpose of this policy is to address current difficulties across the parish in relation to water supply and drainage by requiring the impact assessment of new development on the current water infrastructure, the provision of additional capacity if required and the installation of site specific approved systems where no network connection is possible.

Egerton NP Policy D7 - Water Supply and Drainage

- 1. All proposals for development in the Plan area must demonstrate to the satisfaction of the relevant statutory undertakers that adequate capacity is available within the sewerage, drainage and water supply network to meet the requirements of the development proposed and that the development will not lead to any increase in flood risk.**

- 2. In situations where it is not possible to make a connection to the sewerage network, proposals for new development should provide an on-site solution to manage drainage and sewage which does not lead to any adverse impacts upon the local community or to the natural environment.**

- 3. All proposals for new development within Flood Zones 2 and 3 in the Plan area must be supported by a site-specific Flood Risk Assessment*.**

- 4. Development proposals should retain and protect the local drainage network and adopt a sustainable drainage (SuDS) approach to protect capacity and water quality in the Plan area.**

*see Map 5 Illustrating location and extent of Flooding Risk in the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Screening Report for Egerton Neighbourhood Plan, prepared by Ashford Borough Council.

Renewable Energy and Climate Change Impacts

7.50 Climate change is a key sustainability issue, and it is critical to determine how resilient we are to its potential consequences, such as flooding, heatwaves and drought. The impact of climate change will vary from place to place, and different communities will be more or less resilient (or vulnerable) to these different impacts. Older and listed buildings may present challenges to sustainability and carbon neutrality targets; however, all future development in the parish should be designed to achieve both.

7.51 Parliament has confirmed that climate change represents a national and international emergency. The current figure for production of electricity from renewable energy sources is 40% and this needs to increase if the targets set for 2040 are to be met. Technology is moving rapidly in this area and locally-based small scale schemes, such as locally generated clean energy initiatives should be actively investigated by Egerton Parish Council and positively supported. For sites already allocated within this plan, landowners and developers should work together to deliver exceptional sustainability benefits for the community.

7.52 The highest point in Egerton parish is 116 metres and the lowest point 30 metres above sea level, a drop of 86m in 2 miles. The run-off from the higher area to the low-lying area is significant. Since the low-lying land is mostly Wealden clay, the extremes of climate are observed and experienced more easily: extensive and deep fissures in hard-baked clay in dry spells, waterlogged and equally unworkable during persistent wet weather. In recent years, weather extremes have become more pronounced, with prolonged drought in summer and heavy rain in winter and spring, lasting days and sometimes weeks. This has caused localised flooding in low-lying Egerton Forstal and Mundy Bois at the lower end of Green Hill on numerous occasions in the same year. To some extent this has been exacerbated by a lack of regular ditch and pipe clearance and, in the case of Egerton Forstal, the loss of several ponds. An example of this is in Chapel Lane, where at least 3 significant ponds have been filled in since the 1960s. Where new development took place in Egerton Forstal between 1960 and 1990, many of the ditches too were filled in. Some surface water has been piped beneath the ground but the narrow gauge of pipes used has led to silting up and the responsibility for tackling this problem has not been sufficiently well addressed. Flooding across roads and homes at risk has become a reality. Steps need to be taken to mitigate the risks and this requires a collective effort in and beyond the parish to move this forward positively and constructively.

7.53 All development involving the loss of permeable surfaces, loss of trees, loss of soft landscaping or loss of any other feature that reduces flood risk should therefore use appropriate mitigation measures to prevent an increase in flood risk within the site or elsewhere. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) should be used proportionately to mitigate any predicted increase in flood risk. These may include: i. Planting, particularly trees. ii. Introduction of permeable driveways, parking or other 'hardstanding' areas. iii. Rainwater water harvesting and storage features (including butts). iv. Green roofs. v. Attenuation tanks.

vi. Soakaways. vii. Attenuation ponds. SuDS must be designed as an integral part of the green infrastructure and street network. The system should effectively mitigate any adverse effects from surface water run-off and flooding on people, property and the ecological value of the local environment. A surface water sewer should be seen as a last resort and no surface water will be permitted to enter the public foul sewage network. Where a site is near to areas that are known to flood, developments must provide a SuDS Strategy and drawings showing all SuDS features. This must be supported with calculations showing how surface water flood risk will not increase. All developments must be designed to take into account best practice in water efficiency, such as water efficient fittings and appliances, water harvesting and storage features, and green roofs.

7.54 It is the Government's ambition, expressed in Next Steps to Zero Carbon Homes 26 and elsewhere, to implement zero carbon homes from 2016. Therefore, during the Neighbourhood Plan period, it will be necessary and increasingly possible for developers gradually to improve the energy-saving performance of the dwellings they build. New-build homes will have a lifetime of perhaps 100 years. If new homes are built to a lower than achievable standard, they will be consuming energy in a less than optimal way throughout their lifetime at a cost to the finances of the residents and to our local environment. They will not constitute the "sustainable development" which the NPPF seeks.

7.55 In line with Policy ENV10 in the Ashford Local Plan (2030) renewable and low carbon energy systems will be encouraged, not only on all new buildings and all substantial conversions, but also on existing properties, including solar thermal and photovoltaics panels, ground or air source heat pumps and combined heat and power systems and even using fast-flowing streams or rivers that used to have mills on them - provided that adverse impacts are addressed satisfactorily, including in respect of historic buildings, cumulative landscape and visual impacts on neighbouring properties or on the key views and vistas detailed in this plan. Any larger scale proposal for renewable energy creation should be encouraged if potentially adverse impact on neighbouring properties or on key views and vistas detailed in this plan can be mitigated. With Egerton's well-wooded surroundings, a wood chip enterprise if well-managed in the coppiced areas (and not in the ancient woodland) could prove to be a significant one. Wood chip is one of the key forms of biomass which can be used to create renewable energy. Its use to provide energy to new developments should therefore be supported and any application for development which proposes a biomass facility to generate renewable energy from local sources should be viewed favourably unless the environmental impact outweighs it.

7.56 Energy efficiency in all heating systems and improved insulation for both existing and new developments will be actively encouraged and supported to reduce reliance on finite fossil fuel reserves and to reduce energy bills, reducing fuel poverty and limiting flows of money out of the local economy. The ideal would be to achieve passive housing - a voluntary standard for energy efficiency in a building, which reduces the building's ecological/carbon footprint. It results in ultra-low energy buildings that require little energy for space heating or cooling. There is an example of this in a converted building at Coldharbour Farm. Approved Document L of the Government's Building Regulations provides guidance on the

conservation of fuel and power, which will be followed closely for future amendments to take account of advances in technology.

7.57 Managing water consumption is a strategic objective in the Ashford Local Plan 2030 and, in Policy ENV 7, requires that all new residential development must achieve water efficiency that minimizes water consumption to no more than 110 litres per person per day.



7.58 Planting of indigenous species of trees in new woodland and wildflower meadows, and appropriate management and replacement of existing woodland, will make a further contribution to governmental and local carbon reduction targets, will maintain the distinctive character of the parish and will contribute to residents' general health and wellbeing. With local community support, Egerton Parish Council is encouraged to implement the following Community Aspiration:

Community Aspiration – Community Woodland and Wildflower Meadow/s

Egerton Parish Council (EPC) will explore opportunities to identify a site or sites suitable for the planting of community woodland, made up of indigenous species. and wildflower meadow/s to help mitigate the impact of climate change and for the benefit of the community as a whole.

7.59 The purpose of this policy is to ensure long term sustainability and effective climate change mitigation for the parish as a whole.

Egerton NP Policy D8 - Renewable Energy and Climate Change Mitigation

- 1. Energy efficient building will be expected on the grounds of sustainability and should deliver warmer homes to improve comfort and better health, including a minimum 19% carbon dioxide reduction against Part L (2013) of the Government's Building Regulations on energy conservation through energy efficiency of the building.**
- 2. Use of "Passivhaus" principles will be supported.**
- 3. Water conservation measures such as rainwater harvesting and grey water recycling will be supported. Water efficiency measures should be included in all residential developments - with a maximum usage of 110 litres per person.**
- 4. The creation of ponds, swales and other means to conserve water and minimise flooding should be part of any new development. More effective land drainage will be promoted by the Parish Council through a collaborative approach with property owners and landowners and with Kent County Council as Highways Authority and Lead Local Flood Authority, to help mitigate the effects of climate change.**
- 5. The provision of charging points for electric vehicles will be encouraged.**
- 6. Developments which propose on-site renewable energy generation through the demonstrable use of new technology such as ground or air source heat pumps, local biomass (wood chip) shall be encouraged and considered favourably.**
- 7. Proposals for individual and community scale energy will be supported subject to the following criteria:**
 - the siting and scale of the proposed development is appropriate to its setting and position in the wider landscape;**
 - the proposed development does not create an unacceptable impact on the amenities of local residents; and**
 - the proposed development does not have an unacceptable impact on a feature of natural or biodiversity importance.**

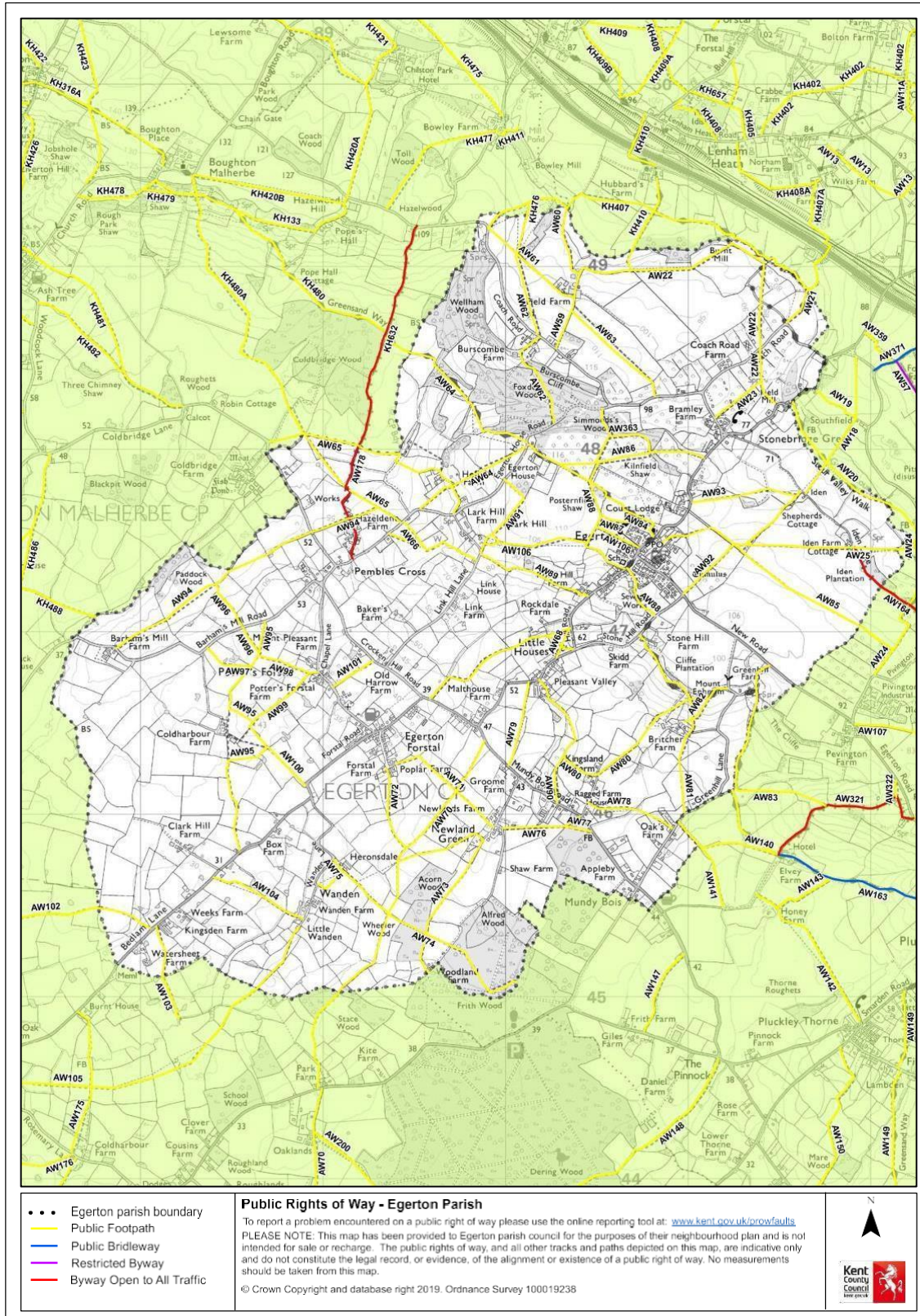
Evidence Base

The Egerton Neighbourhood Plan is based on the views of residents, businesses, statutory consultees and other interested parties gathered during consultation and a range of studies the Egerton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and other parties have carried out. These documents include, but are not limited to the following:

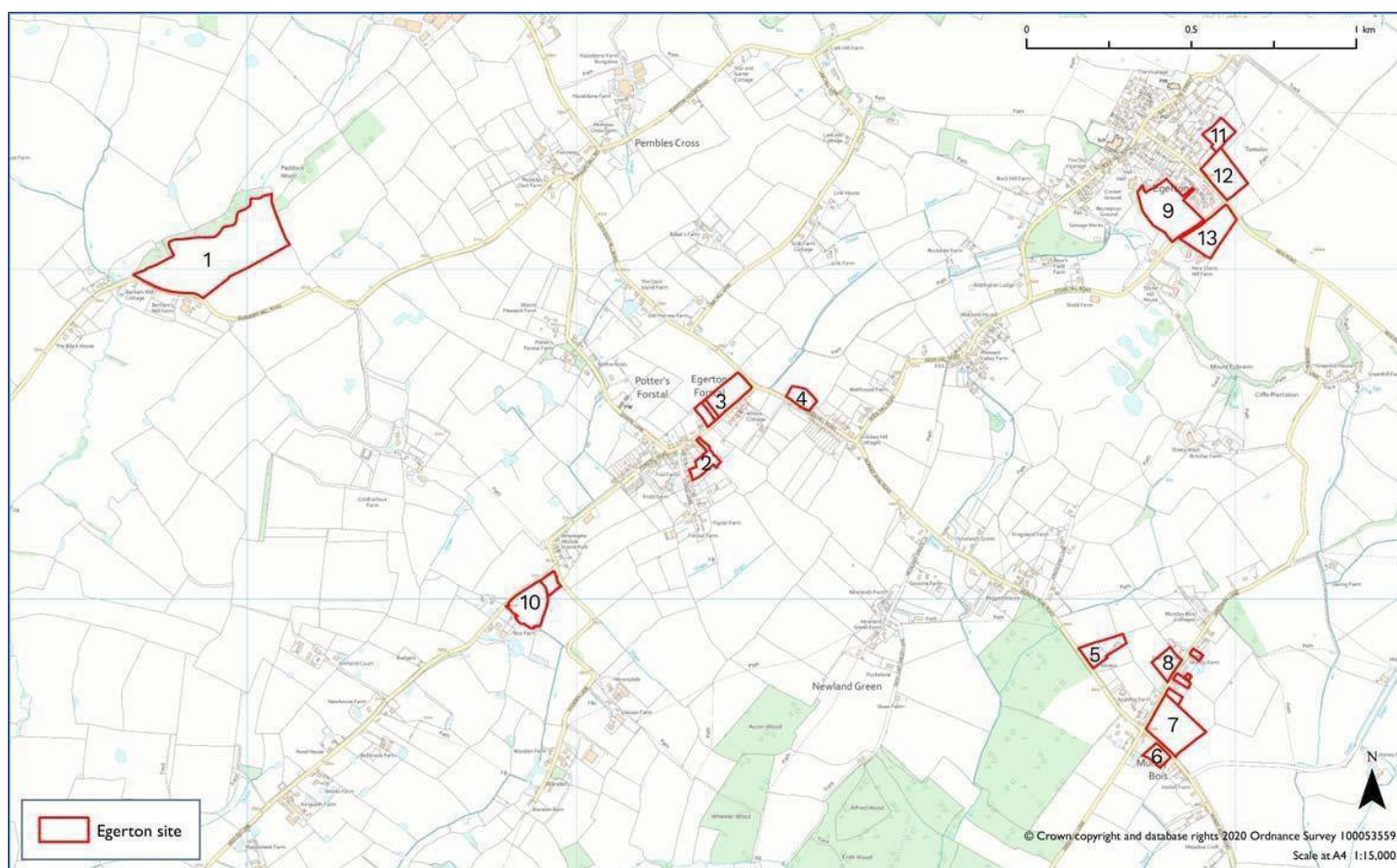
- Egerton Parish Plan (see www.egerton-kent.co.uk)
- Egerton Parish Design Statement (see www.egerton-kent.co.uk)
- Egerton Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group membership and Terms of Reference (see Appendix 3 and www.egertonnp.co.uk)
- Housing Needs Survey Report (see www.egertonnp.co.uk)
- Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) and Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA) Report prepared by Ashford Borough Council (see www.egertonnp.co.uk)
- Community Consultation Statement (see www.egertonnp.co.uk)
- Local Green Spaces Assessment (see www.egertonnp.co.uk)
- Key Views and Vistas – maps and photographs (see Maps, p80-82 and egertonnp.co.uk)
- Village Clubs and activities (see www.egerton-kent.co.uk)
- Business activities in Egerton
- Older People’s Housing Survey Results, 2015-16
- Site Assessment Process and Conclusions (see www.egertonnp.co.uk)
- Application of the Parish Design Statement recommendations on development since its publication – a review
- 10 Year analysis of planning applications (conversion of obsolete farm buildings)

Maps

1. Definitive Map of Public Rights of Way

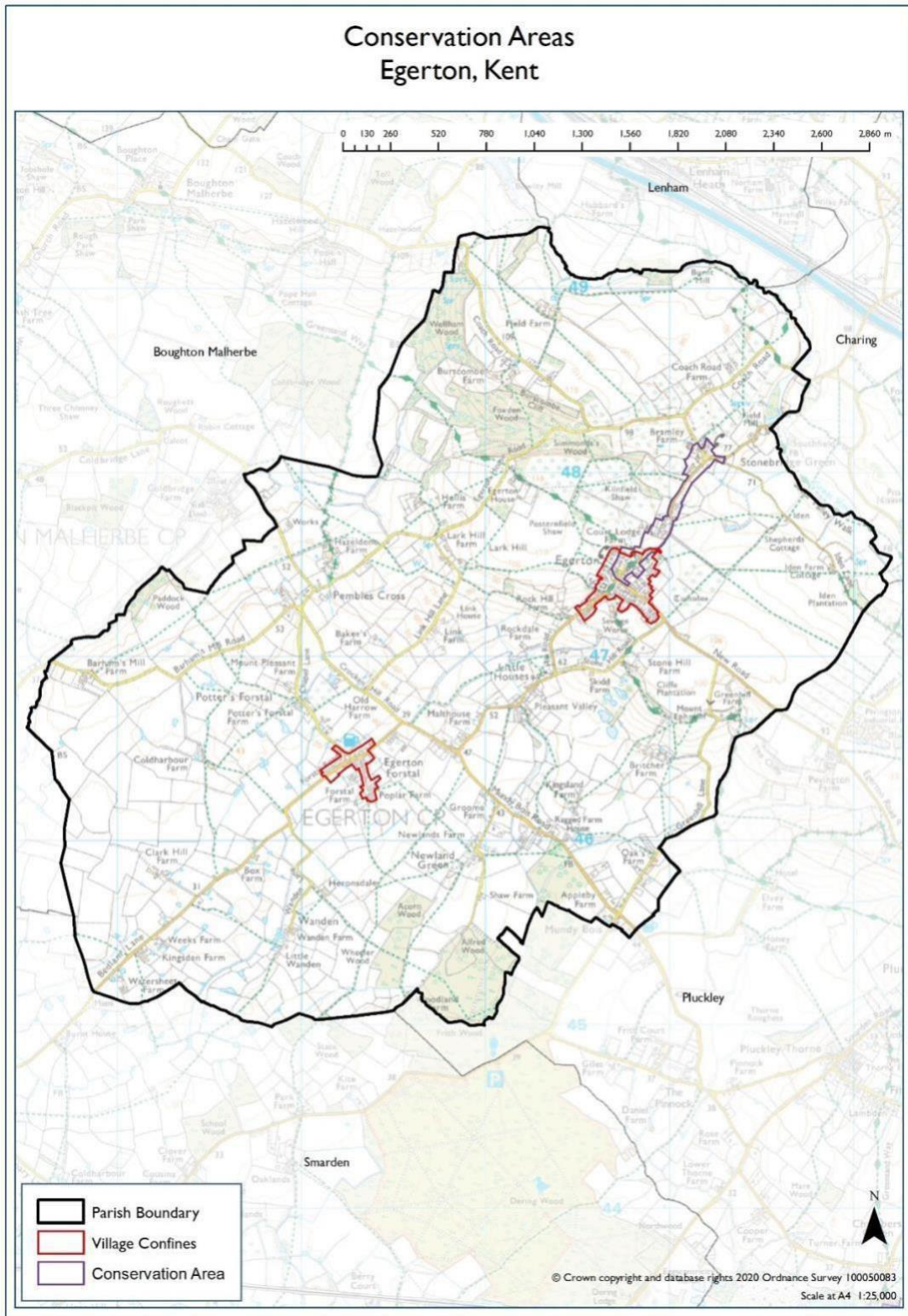


2. Sites Offered for Development

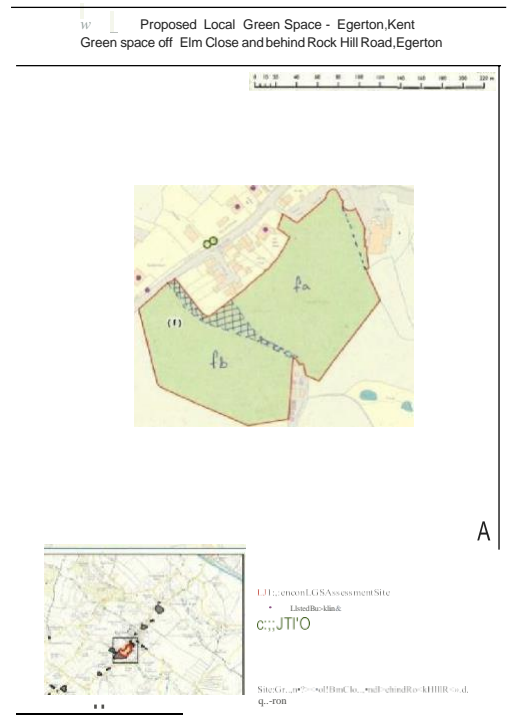


1. Harden's Field
2. Field behind Forge Lane
3. Crockenhill Road/ Forstal Road
4. Gale Field
5. Honess
6. Orchard Cottage Land
7. Single plot at Little Mundy Farm
8. Appleby Grange field
9. North Field
10. Bedlam Lane
11. Orchard Nurseries
12. New Road
13. Stone Hill

3. Conservation Area



4. Local Green Spaces



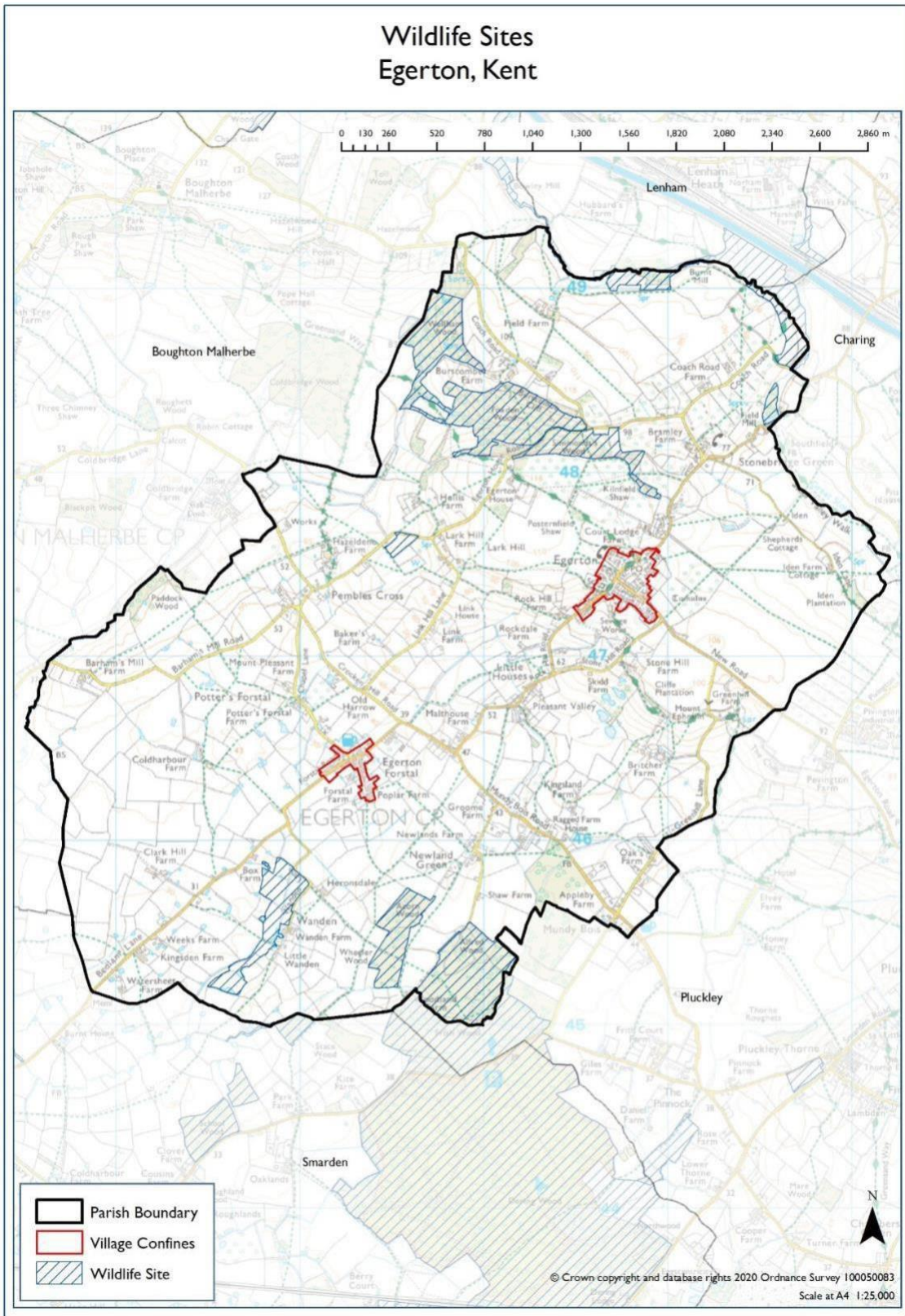


Pembles Cross, Egerton, Kent

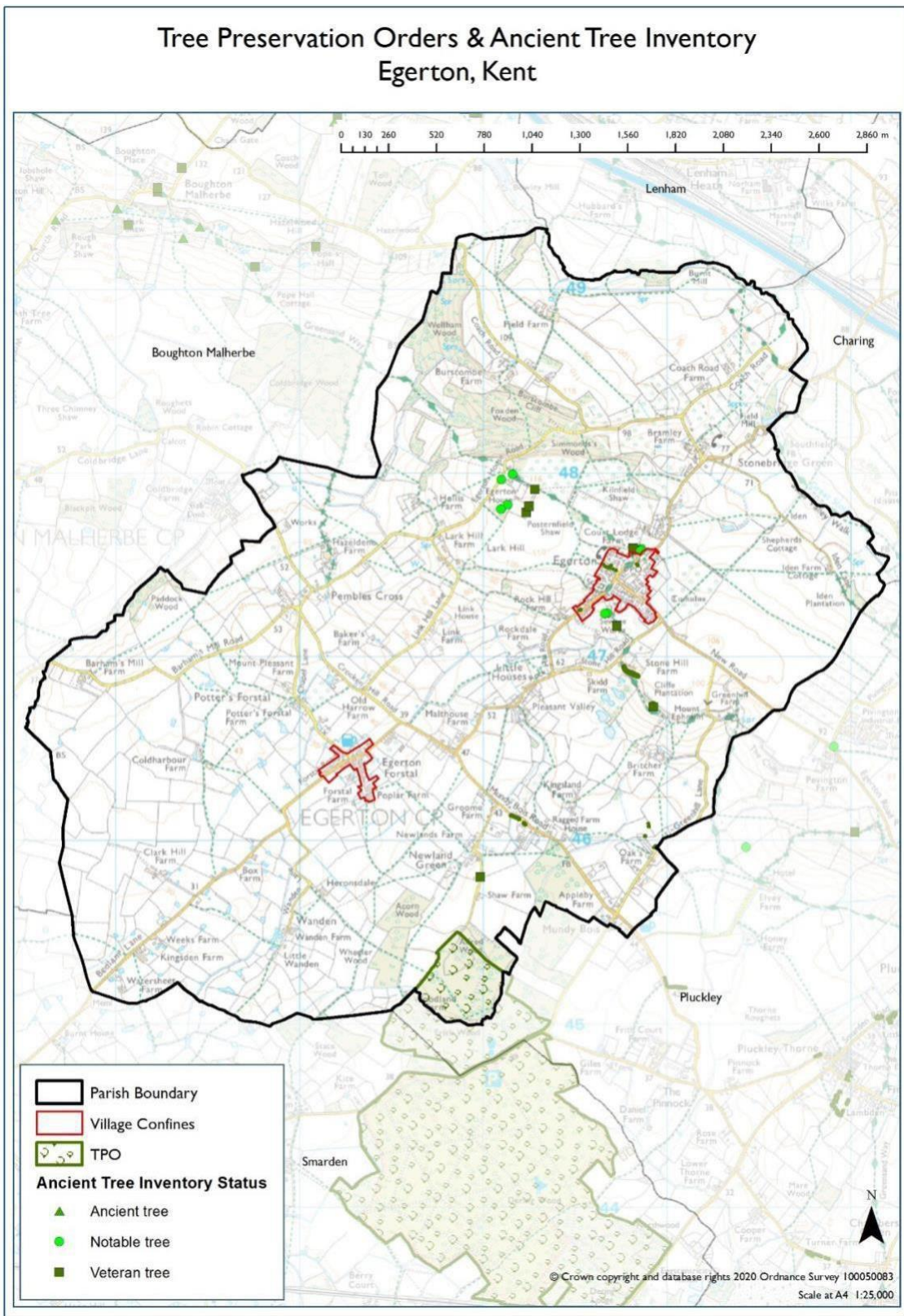


Stonebridge Green, Egerton, Ken

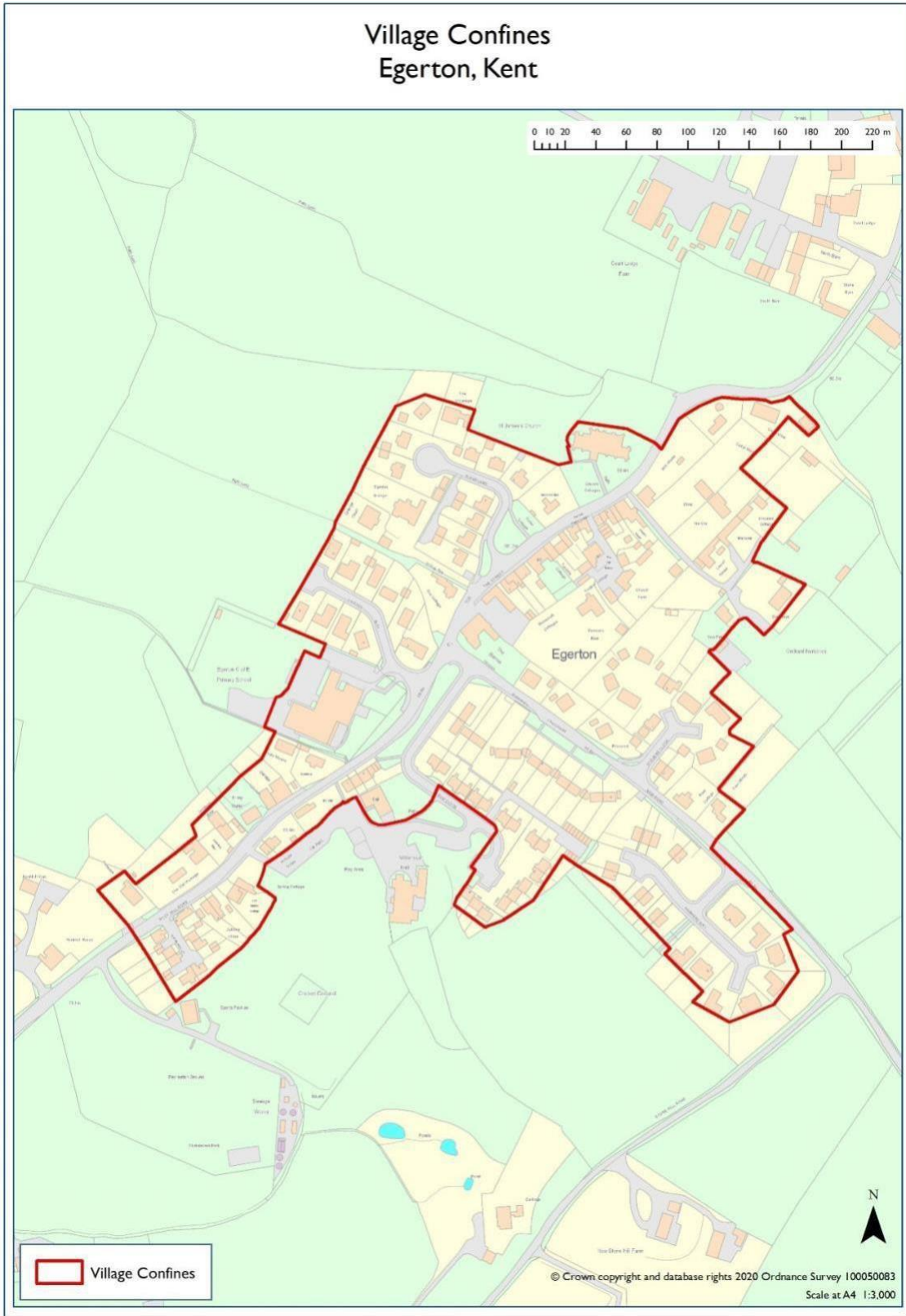
5. Local Wildlife Sites



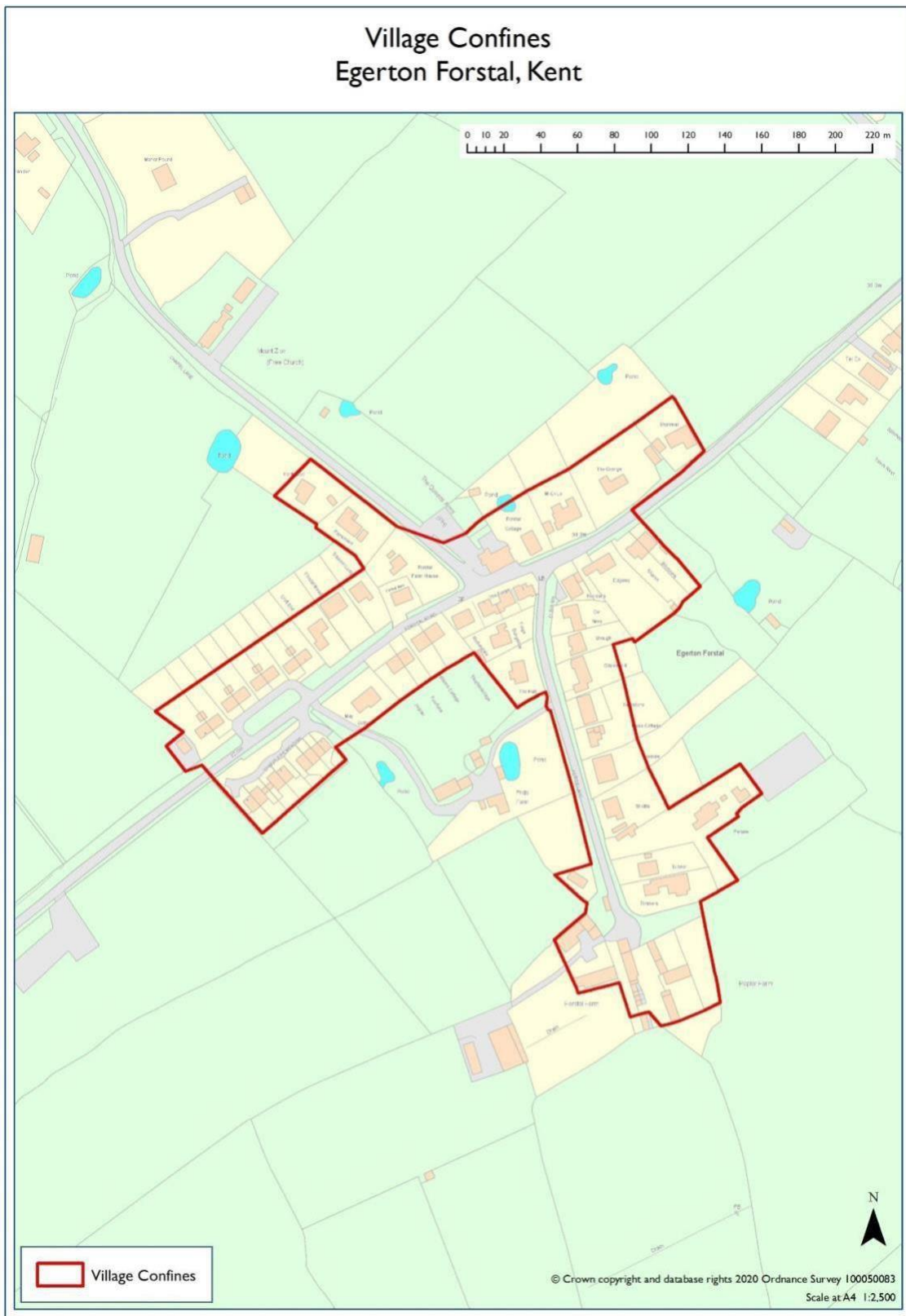
6. Tree Preservation Orders and Ancient Tree Inventory



7. Village Confines: Egerton



8. Village Confines: Egerton Forstal



9. Key Views

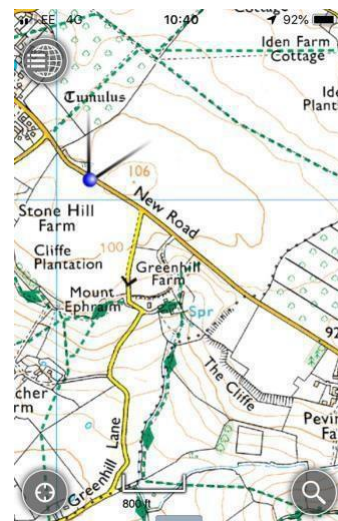
Court Lodge Farm to Charing/ North Downs



New Road to Greenhill/ The Weald



New Road to the North Downs



Mundy Bois Road to the village/Church



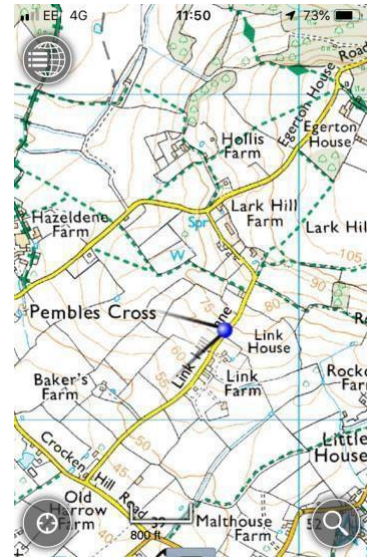
Bedlam Lane to the Greensand Ridge



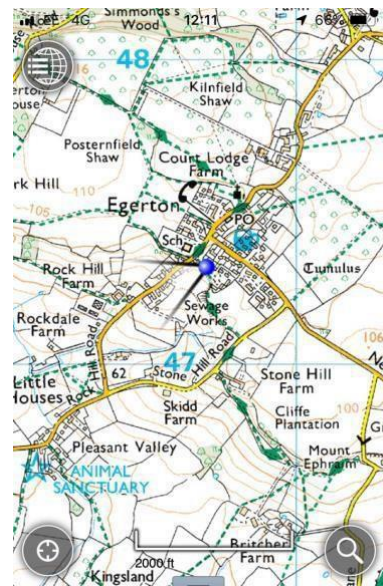
Egerton House over the Weald



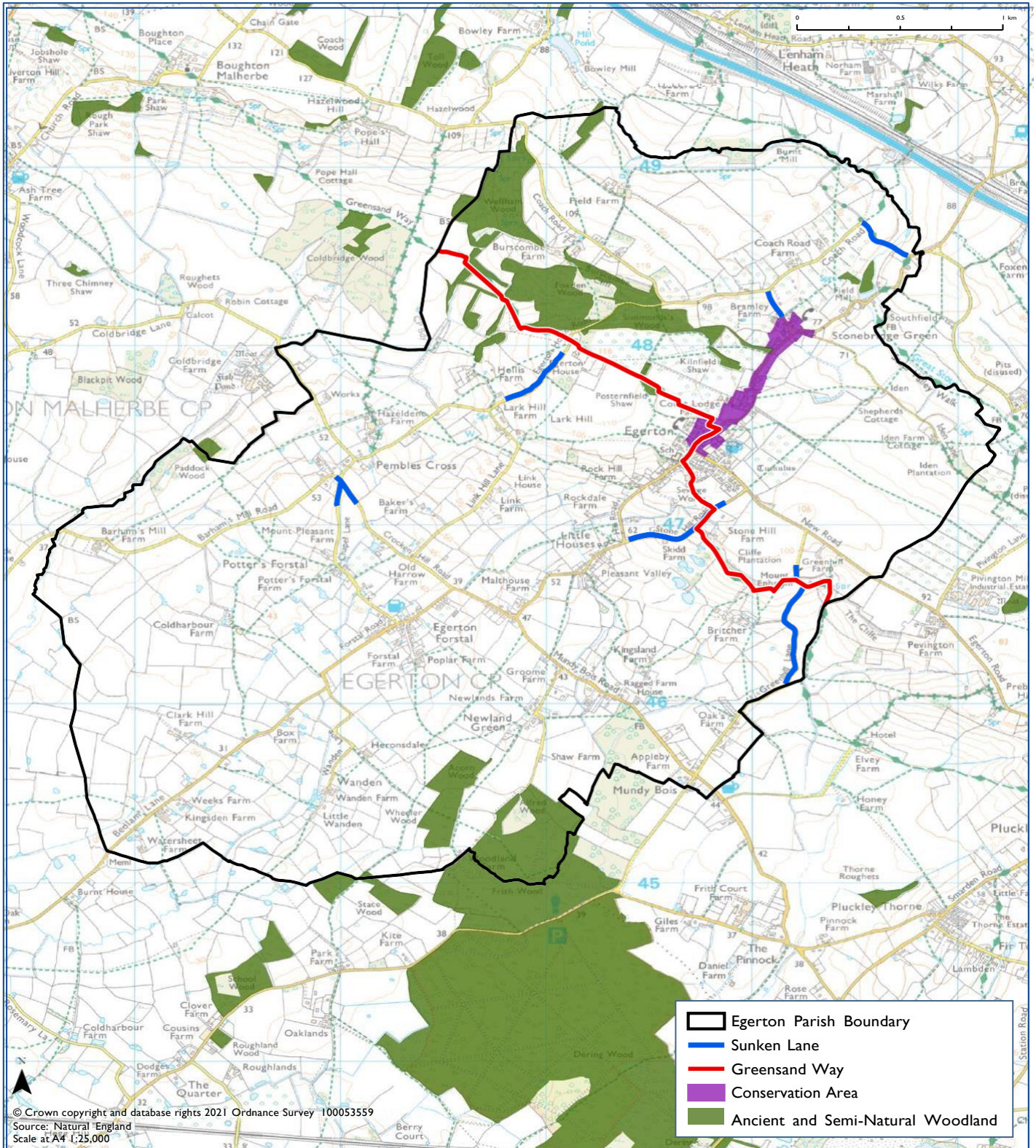
Link Hill to Pembles Cross/ the Weald



Recreation Ground to the Weald



10. Distinctive Landscape Features



Appendix 1

Wide grass verges

Pembles Cross/ Barhams Mill Road – wide verge outside Orchard House Pembles
Cross/Egerton House Road - verge with post box - outside Fairview Barhams Mill Road wide verges towards the track to Coldharbour Farm Egerton House Road – wide verge opposite Willowdene
Coach Road – wide verge either side of entrance to Burscombe Farm
Stonebridge Green Road - verge outside Willow Farm, verge outside the Old Dairy
Rock Hill Road: outside the School, with Kentish Ragstone wall; outside Rock Hill House and Rock Hill bungalow; around the track leading to Rockdale; either side of Rock Hill Road near junction with Mundy Bois Road
Mundy Bois Road/junction with Newland Green Lane, grass verge with old iron signpost, deep ditch Newland Green Lane- wide verge from Groom Farm onwards and opposite Tresmond
Mundy Bois Road – wide verges and ditches from The Homestead over the stream bridge to Greenhill Lane
Greenhill Lane – wide verges from the crossroads to Mundy Bois cottages
Stonehill – wide verge outside Barlings
Crockenhill along the hillside – a steep bank of grass and flowers, some cultivated
Crockenhill Road/ Forstal Road – wide verges opposite and around the road sign
Crockenhill Road/Link Hill Lane at the Old Harrow– wide grass verges and private pond at edge of road.
Chapel Lane wide grass verges (some mown) and ditches most of its length. Ponds in fields near the road.
Forstal Road - wide verges and ditches towards Brookgate at double-bend on Bedlam Lane – several stretches of wide verges and ditches – near Wanden Lane, Goodwin House.

Appendix 2

Non-designated Heritage Assets

HERITAGE SITES CRITERIA AND ASSESSMENT											
SITE NAME											MEETS CRITERIA
											GREEN - YES
			AGE/RARITY	AESTHETIC INTEREST	HISTORICAL INTEREST	LANDSCAP INTEREST	WILDLIFE	COMMUNITY VALUE		COMMENTS	
HS 01 CAST IRON SIGNPOSTS			YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES		TRADITIONAL RURAL. LOCATED AT THE BOUNDARIES OF THE PARISH AND IN THE VILLAGE	YES
HS 02 WOODEN SIGNPOST IN VILLAGE			YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES		TRADITIONAL RURAL. LOCATED IN HEART OF VILLAGE	YES
HS 03 RED POST BOX VR			YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES		TRADITIONAL RURAL. INCREASINGLY RARE	YES
HS 04 RED POST BOX GR			YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES		TRADITIONAL RURAL. INCREASINGLY RARE	YES
HS 05 BUCKLES SIGNAGE IN THE STREET			YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES		IMPORTANT RECORD OF PAST COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY AT VILLAGE CENTRE. FORMER LARGE BAKERY	YES
HS 06 OLIVER'S GARAGE SIGNAGE IN THE STREET			NO	NO	YES	YES	NO	YES		RECOGNISES FAMILY HISTORY OF SUPPORT FOR VILLAGE ECONOMY - THREE GENERATIONS	YES
HS 07 WAR MEMORIAL IN CHURCHYARD			NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES		IMPORTANT HISTORICAL AND SOCIAL RECORD	YES
HS 08 STONE PATHWAY FROM EGERTON HOUSE THROUGH THE ORCHARDS TO THE CHURCH			YES	YES	YES	YES	YES	YES		ANCIENT PATHWAY	YES
HS 09 SUNKEN BRIDLEWAY UP THE HILL FROM HAZELDENE FARM			YES	YES	YES	NO	NO	YES		ANCIENT PATHWAY	YES
HS 10 MILLENNIUM HALL, HEART OF VILLAGE			NO	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES		BUILT IN TRADITIONAL STYLE IN CELEBRATION OF 2000 WITH FUNDS RAISED BY THE VILLAGE AND MATCHED BY H.L.F.	YES
HS 11 EGERTON FREE CHURCH, CHAPEL LANE			YES	NO	YES	YES	YES	YES		BAPTIST CHURCH FROM 1750. REBUILT IN 1825 FOLLOWING A FIRE. RETAINED FLEMISH BONDING AND CLAY TILES	YES
HS 12 PARISH BOUNDARY STONES/MARKERS			YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES		INCREASINGLY RARE DEFINITION OF PARISH BOUNDARY	YES
HS 13 BROWNS KITCHEN, GREENHILL ROAD			YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	NO		STONE WINDOWS AND PART OF CURRENT STRUCTURE POSSIBLY DATING FROM 17TH CENTURY	YES
HS 14 EGERTON MAIN SIGN, THE STREET			NO	YES	NO	YES	NO	YES		INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT MARKER AT THE HEART OF THE VILLAGE	YES
HS 15 COBBLESTONE PAVEMENT			YES	YES	YES	YES	NO	YES		OUTSIDE THE OLD VICARAGE TO JONSTONE EAST, ROCK HILL	YES
HS 16 NEWLAND GREEN			YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES		IN CLOSE PROXIMITY TO 3 HALL HOUSES, CENTRE OF A TRADITIONAL FARMING COMMUNITY & ESSENTIAL GREEN SPACE	YES

Appendix 3

The NP Steering Group

Jane Carr, Chair
Lois Tilden, Secretary
Jerry Crossley
Elaine Graham
Graham Howland
Richard King
Ian Mella
Claire Stevens

The NP Terms of Reference

1. The main purpose of the Steering Group is to prepare the Neighbourhood Plan for Egerton in order that it can proceed to independent Examination and community referendum and ultimately be adopted by Ashford Borough Council as part of their overall plan for the borough. The plan will seek to:
 - identify the important aspects of life in Egerton which are to be considered in planning for the future
 - make proposals which will enhance the quality of life in the village in the years to come
 - provide a framework for future land usage within the plan's boundary
2. The **membership** of the steering group will include both members of Egerton Parish Council (EPC) and Egerton residents; and may be augmented by co-opted individuals with particular skills/ expertise. A Chairman and, if necessary, a Deputy Chairman will be elected by the members of the Steering Group and will be responsible for reporting progress monthly to EPC. All members of the steering group, and any co-opted members, must declare any personal interest that may be relevant to the recommendations made by the group, including membership of an organisation, ownership or interest in land or a business within the parish or any other matter likely to be relevant to the work undertaken by the Steering Group. All members of the steering group, and any co-opted members, must share in the obligation to ensure that there is no discrimination in the planning process and that it is a wholly inclusive, open and transparent process to all groups in the parish and to those wishing to undertake development or be involved in the planning process.
3. The main roles and responsibilities of the steering group are:
 - to be responsible for drawing up a Draft Neighbourhood Plan and any necessary revisions that is fully researched and evidenced and reflects as far as possible the views and aspirations of Egerton residents
 - to produce, monitor and update a project timetable

- to report regularly to EPC on progress to ensure that a) any recommendations are supported by the EPC as well as the steering group; and b) that the steering group's minutes are available via the EPC website
- to produce and implement a consultation and engagement strategy, to ensure as wide and open a consultation process with the community
- to undertake evidence gathering and analysis to support the production of the plan, maintaining comprehensive records of all evidence gathered
- to gather data from a range of sources to ensure that conclusions reached are fully evidenced, and that the aspirations and concerns of all residents are understood
- to identify sources of funding
- to liaise with relevant authorities and organisations to ensure the effectiveness of the plan

Specifically the Steering Group will:

- establish the future housing and business needs of Egerton parish, bearing in mind the broader social, economic and welfare needs of the community
 - develop a robust framework to inform future development and use of land in Egerton, including infrastructure requirements
 - identify both sites for development and any sites/ areas that should be considered for protection as identified through the Community Engagement strategy
 - ensure that the Draft Neighbourhood Plan has taken into consideration both national policy and the strategic policies of Ashford Borough Council and Kent County Council
 - provide support to EPC through the Examination and Referendum process
4. All **funds and grants** will be applied for and held by EPC and no expenditure may be committed without the prior approval of EPC.

Appendix 4

SWOT Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p>Beauty of landscape/location, peace & tranquillity Desirable place to live Historic nature of settlement Many buildings with character and appealing design Community spirit, volunteering, range of activities, societies and clubs Pre-school and primary school Millennium Village Hall, Games Barn, Sports Pavilion Church, Chapel Playing Fields Pubs and garage/s Public Rights of Way Trees, ancient woodland, hedgerows and green verges Dark skies Abundant wildlife Not on a through road to anywhere Egerton Housing Association</p>	<p>Above average house prices Above average commercial rents Some newer buildings and their layout unsympathetic to the village setting Poor mobile phone coverage Inconsistent and insufficient broadband provision/speeds Poor bus service and no connections to other public transport High proportion of older residents Lack of employment opportunities for young people Heavy vehicles on narrow roads No local medical facility Small farms employing fewer workers Focus on grazing land rather than crops, causing loss of wildlife species Not on a through road to anywhere</p>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>Scope for affordable local needs housing Community transport provision? Gift of land to the parish (Orchard Nurseries) Community based and run older people's housing Improving Public Footpath (AW68) and the wider PRow network Encourage more sustainable heating systems Measure to improve water efficiency More farm diversification: different & more employment Potential for well-situated and effective renewable energy sources Creation of a purpose-built pre-school facility Extensions to the Games Barn and Millennium Hall to improve facilities and increase/extend use The MUGA (multi-use games area)</p>	<p>Lenham Heath garden village and impact on roads and services Speeding vehicles Inappropriately sited and unsympathetic new development More barn conversions yet increased demand for new barn buildings Decline in volunteering for village activities Poorly sited and uncertain benefits of alternative energy generating systems Closure of the village shop and post office Damage to views and the natural environment Loss of young people/ young families of no scope for affordable housing Village sustainability in decline Light pollution from expanding towns, unsympathetic domestic lighting Wildlife displaced by human activity or lost altogether</p>

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SELECTION & CONSTITUTIONAL REVIEW COMMITTEE
17 FEBRUARY 2022
CABINET 24 FEBRUARY 2022
REPORT OF SOLICITOR TO THE COUNCIL AND MONITORING OFFICER

ASHFORD PORT HEALTH – DELEGATIONS

1. Ashford Borough Council will provide a Port Health Service at the Sevington Inland Border Facility starting in 2022. It is expected to be one of the biggest facilities in the UK. It is intended by DEFRA that the Sevington facility will be designated as a Border Control Point/Post (BCP) following physical and other checks currently being undertaken by the relevant authorities
2. As a result of EU Transition, the Council will become responsible for checks on imports of products of animal origin (POAO), high risk foods not of animal origin (HRFNAO) and animal by-products not for human consumption, imported from the EU via the Channel Tunnel. Checks may also be required under legislation relating to organic products, certain plastic kitchenware and certain fish products, including under the IUU regime (Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing Order 2009). It is also possible the Council will be required to carry out all or any of the above checks for a period on imports to Dover or on behalf of other agencies pursuant to specific arrangements.
3. The Council has not exercised the above functions before. It is therefore necessary to formally delegate the necessary powers to the Head of Port Health. The attached ANNEX sets out the relevant provisions.
4. Regulatory and enforcement functions are normally “non-executive” functions under the relevant Functions Regulations. However in order to ensure all possibilities are covered I recommend that
 - (i) Cabinet approves the delegated powers set out in the Annex in so far as they relate to “executive functions”
 - (ii) S&CR Committee recommends to Council approval of the delegated powers set out in the ANNEX in so far as the powers relate to non-executive functions

Terry Mortimer
Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer

ANNEX

Head of Port Health

Powers Relating to Functions, whether those are Executive, Non-Executive, Incidental to Either or Administrative

The power to exercise and perform on behalf of the Council any statutory or related power or duty vested in the Council as a competent authority or local authority (however so designated, including any power or duty arising from the designation of a port health authority or border control post, howsoever termed or done), or any power or duty vested in the Council by virtue of any arrangement with any other public body (whether done by delegation, by agreement under Section 78 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, or otherwise) as to the discharge by the Council of any of that body's powers or duties, as regards:

- any sanitary, phytosanitary or similar (e.g. fish catch certificate or organic origin) checks (to include not merely the checks themselves, but the taking of any enforcement action, including by way of the issue of notices or other formal documents) and related functions to be done on imported consignments of food or of goods subject to checks similar to those on food (e.g. plastic kitchenware from China).

Without prejudice to the generality of the preceding paragraph and bullet point, the subject matter of the powers and duties which the Head of Port Health shall have power to exercise and perform shall extend to (but not be limited to) all steps which the Council may be empowered (by whatever means) to take under any of the following legislation, or such legislation as may replace or amend it:

- The Trade in Animals and Related Products Regulations 2011
- The Official Feed and Food Controls (England) Regulations 2009
- All retained EU legislation, including in particular, but not limited to:
 - All the legislation identified (or, alternatively, as once identified, should there be amendment) in Schedule 1 of the aforesaid 2009 Regulations, especially 'Regulation 2017/625' and 'The Regulation 2017/625 package' as there defined
 - Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2016/6
 - Commission Implementing Decision 884/2011/EU
- The Food Safety Act 1990 and any regulations made thereunder
- The Sea Fishing (Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported Fishing) Order 2009

- The Plastic Kitchenware (Conditions on Imports from China) (England) Regulations 2011
- The Organic Products Regulations 2009

Without prejudice to the generality of all the preceding paragraphs as to the powers and duties vested in the Head of Port Health, those powers shall extend to:

- authorising, directing, organising and superintending other officers of the Council to perform on a delegated basis the Council's powers and duties as to the said checks;
- appointing any officer of suitable qualification and experience to any position (including, but not limited to, appointment as an Official Veterinary Surgeon) by virtue of which appointment that officer would be empowered to exercise any power, or obligated or entitled to perform any duty, as to the types of checks under the types of legislation addressed in any part of the preceding two paragraphs, and directing, organising and superintending the work of any such appointed officers; and
- authorising and instructing legal services and/or external legal representatives to initiate or defend legal proceedings on behalf of the Council arising out of the checks and legislation in question.

Without prejudice to the generality of all the preceding paragraphs as to the powers and duties vested in the Head of Port Health, those powers and duties shall be exercisable in the event of that post holder's ill health or incapacity, or whilst that post is vacant, by the immediately deputy officer(s), or such other officers of the Council as the Chief Executive may nominate generally or in respect of specific elements of those powers and duties.

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Agenda Item 12



ASHFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Agenda Item No:	12
Report To:	Cabinet
Date of Meeting:	24 th February 2022
Report Title:	Rolvenden – land acquisition in the HRA
Report Author & Job Title:	Mark James – Development Partnership Manager Sharon Williams – Head of Housing
Portfolio Holder	Cllr. Paul Clokie – Portfolio Holder for Housing

Summary:

Housing services is excited to announce it has agreed in principle a deal to buy the land adjacent to its independent living scheme at Monypenny in Rolvenden. Subject to planning permission, this brings the potential benefit of the Borough Council bringing forward some affordable housing for those with either a local need or a local connection to the parish. It also extends the strong working relationship the Borough Council has enjoyed with the Parish Council and, at a time when the progression of planning applications is hampered by the Stodmarsh nutrient neutrality concerns, this site sits outside of that catchment area.

The Council's high ambitions to increase the affordable housing stock levels in its Housing Revenue Account (HRA) have been enhanced by the delegated authority afforded in 2019 by Cabinet to the Head of Housing (in consultation with the Head of Finance and IT and the portfolio holders for housing and finance and IT) so that the Council can act quickly in the marketplace if suitable pieces of land become available to buy.

This form of acquisition is particularly important when the Council has either built on, discounted or earmarked preliminary plans for, all of the suitable land currently in its ownership. Fresh pieces of land need to be added into its portfolio to provide fresh pipeline options.

Key Decision:	Yes
Significantly Affected Wards:	Rolvenden and Tenterden West, though neighbouring wards may be involved once allocation criteria are agreed.
Recommendations:	The Cabinet is recommended to:- I. Note and endorse the acquisition being made under the delegated authority afforded to housing services under recommendation VII in the cabinet report agreed in December 2020

II. Note exempt Appendix B and note the acquisition price of the land

Policy Overview:	<p>Building on solid foundations: delivering affordable homes in Ashford – our delivery plan for 2019-2023</p> <p>Housing Strategy Framework Priority 1 – Improve the supply of affordable housing to meet local housing needs in urban and rural areas, and Housing Statement 2018-2023</p> <p>Reform of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – Cabinet endorsed five key priorities for further spend, as a result of greater freedom within the HRA.</p> <p>National Housing Strategy 2011 – delivering new homes under the affordable rent model.</p> <p>A Charter For Social Housing Residents – Social Housing White Paper 2020.</p> <p>A Guide to Developing Affordable Homes in Rural Communities (Kent Housing Group [KHG]) – February 2021</p>
Financial Implications:	<p>The Council's HRA Business plan was agreed by Cabinet members in December 2021 and agreed to be a robust plan that enables the Council's housing service to increase its housing stock as well as move towards the Corporate Plan goal of achieving carbon neutrality. The viability of individual acquisitions is assessed by officers on a site by site basis and fed into the plan as a whole. In this instance there are no adverse impacts from the acquisition and proposed costs of building out a scheme on this piece of land, therefore the decision has been taken to proceed with the acquisition.</p>
Legal Implications:	<p>Section 167 of the Localism Act 2011 gave effect to Schedule 15 of that Act and, since the coming into force of Schedule 15, English local authorities have been required to be self-financing in relation to their housing stock, financing their housing stock from their own rents.</p>
Equalities Impact Assessment:	<p>See attached at Appendix C - The assessment does not identify any adverse impacts on any client group.</p>
Data Protection Impact Assessment:	<p>The impact on Data Protection will be undertaken for each individual project at the appropriate time.</p>
Risk Assessment (Risk Appetite Statement):	<p>Risk associated with HRA new-build projects is assessed fortnightly by officers within the appropriate teams involved in the projects. These meetings identify any implications for the sites being progressed. Further risk assessments are made on each individual project at the appropriate time.</p>

Sustainability Implications:	The HRA Business Plan includes assumptions regarding the Council’s ambition for carbon neutrality and the programme of ‘de-carbonisation’ of HRA stock. In addition to this each project and acquisition is individually assessed to include the potential costs and benefits of carbon neutrality. Any scheme delivered here would be no different.
Other Material Implications:	Design and construction standards will comply with Ashford spatial standards (complying with Residential Space and Layout SPD), Lifetime Homes (a standard the Council has set out for Registered Social Landlords) and Code for Sustainable Homes level 3 (which has been committed to for Page 17 Homes England purposes), and level 4 on energy. Emphasis on the building envelope will deliver the greatest benefits for landlord and tenant
Exempt from Publication:	Yes, <u>Exempt Appendix B</u> This is not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information
Contact:	<u>Mark James@ashford.gov.uk</u> – Tel: (01233) 330687 <u>Sharon.williams@ashford.gov.uk</u> – Tel: (01233) 330803

Report Title: Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2021-2052

Introduction and Background

1. As members heard in December 2021 in the HRA Business Plan update report, the Council has high ambitions to continue to grow its HRA stock. Presented to members here is a further site the Council has been able to agree to acquire – a site in Rolvenden adjacent to its independent living scheme at Monypenny.
2. This piece of land represents an excellent acquisition for the Council for several reasons. Essentially it will help the Council to increase the number of affordable homes in the HRA.
3. Officers in the housing service would very much like to thank the Ward member for Rolvenden and Tenterden West for notification of its imminent availability. This is the second time in the past couple of years where a ward member has kindly highlighted a piece of land to the housing service and that there has been encouragement from the ward member to investigate a possible purchase (the other being by the member for Goat Lees). Having these types of recommendation from local councillors is something that the housing service is immensely grateful for.

Authority to proceed

4. Delegated authority was agreed in 2019 by Cabinet to give the Head of Housing (in consultation with the Head of Finance and IT and the portfolio holders for housing and finance and IT) the ability to acquire land up to the value of £5m within the HRA.
5. The purpose of seeking this authority was three-fold:
 - To enable the council to buy land given that it has almost exhausted its own current in-house options
 - To streamline the process of approval, enabling the HRA to act quickly in the marketplace to buy this land
 - To acquire sufficiently-sized parcels (at the top end of that monetary value) in order to deliver both small-to-medium-sized schemes for itself and maybe work in partnership with RPs, or providers of homes built through modern construction methods, on larger parcels – sharing risk and reward

An exciting opportunity

Planning considerations

6. This specific piece of land in question represents an excellent acquisition and a really exciting opportunity for the Council to accelerate the delivery of its affordable homes programme. It is the former vicarage site in Rolvenden, owned by the Diocese of Canterbury, whom the Council would like to thank for their professionalism and patience throughout the negotiation process.

Situated adjacent to the Council's independent living scheme at Monypenny, the piece of land is in the centre of the village, in close proximity to the High Street, and has the potential to be a strong scheme in the heart of the community – obviously subject to planning permission.

7. It is important to state that the housing service is simply asking members to note the acquisition here. Any new homes are subject to planning permission being obtained. In no way does this report seek to influence the planning committee as that process is entirely independent of this process and must remain so. This report is purely provided for members to note. It is for housing services to make the case for the proposed development to all stakeholders, including planning officers and committee.
8. Rolvenden is also in an area of the borough unaffected by the Stodmarsh nutrient neutrality issues that have been holding up numerous applications across parts of the Ashford borough, and other boroughs in the county. Therefore, subject to planning permission being obtained, the site could potentially be progressed earlier than other sites that are currently held in the planning system until a formal and satisfactory resolution is found.

Proximity to existing scheme

9. The location of the land means the Council should, through the acquisition, have the ability to control the development that is proposed there in such a way to not impose on the quality of life enjoyed by the residents in the main scheme or bungalows next door.

Stakeholders

10. Additionally, the council has previously enjoyed a very good working relationship with the Parish Council in Rolvenden through the work it undertook with West Kent Housing Association in the allocation of the Halden Field scheme. Here, the willingness of the RP to hold a community roadshow event, supported by the Parish and Borough Councils, which advised all interested locals on how to apply and be considered for the shared ownership properties and how to apply to be on the housing register for the affordable rent homes, was well received.
11. The Borough Council will commit to working very closely here with the Parish Council, the ward member and all residents with any proposals that are subsequently put forward and help to establish if there could be a sensible and proportionate number of homes providing housing for those with a local connection or local need in the parish.
12. Rolvenden has undertaken a lot of work on its Neighbourhood Plan, which has been adopted by the Borough Council. Through the work of the Rural Housing Working Group, endorsed by Cabinet in May 2021, local needs surveys can currently be undertaken in greater volume by the Council and therefore the Borough Council has approached Rolvenden Parish Council to ask if it would like the Borough Council to fund a local needs survey in its parish, to complement the work done for the Neighbourhood Plan. Such a survey will also provide an additional evidence base when commenting on planning applications in Rolvenden.

Allocations

13. Should any proposed homes be approved by planning in due course, allocating residents to the homes will depend on whether the site is deemed in planning terms to be an exception site or not. The planning process will

determine if the site is an exception site. Allocations would work on a local needs basis if the site was an exception site, and on a local connection basis if it was not. **Appendix A** details the difference between the two methods.

14. It is worth pointing out that if the site was deemed to be an exception site then the homes would remain as affordable housing in perpetuity. This would see residents in any social or affordable rent properties unable to have the right to buy those homes and any shared ownership home owners would only be able to staircase up to 80% of the property, they could not own it outright.

Due diligence

15. The Council has carefully looked at the financial implications to ensure that the acquisition of this piece of land does not have a detrimental impact on the HRA Business Plan. All factors are taken into account, including the expected number of homes and build costs, anticipated rental income, expected maintenance and repair charges and likely grant subsidy. Safe in the knowledge that the site is viable for us at the acquisition price (which is revealed in **Exempt Appendix B**) delegated authority has been agreed as per the constitution.
16. The Council commissioned an independent valuation of the land through a local company it always uses for such acquisitions and the Diocese also commissioned a section 119 valuation to ensure best value for the land is being obtained. Both valuations have returned and contain no red flags that would halt the progression of the acquisition for either party and there is a reasonable tolerance between valuation findings. In-house legal support will be provided through the expertise of the Senior Legal Assistant, who oversees acquisitions in the HRA from street purchases to land. This will ensure that the transaction proceeds smoothly. Heads of terms have already been exchanged between our legal officer and the solicitors working for the Diocese of Canterbury.
17. The tenure and size of the homes the Council would look to build will be decided in due course. A local needs survey, when undertaken, will guide those thoughts. Points relating to access and design etc will be worked out with the community as matters progress. For the guidance of members and the community, a plot of this size in a rural area would ordinarily command a density of 10 homes but this will need to be explored and consulted upon.
18. Any new homes would of course be as low carbon as possible. The Council takes its role in delivering quality homes incredibly seriously and aligning its own priorities to the Corporate Plan is really important, so these measures will be considered during the design phase.

Risks to the HRA Business Plan

19. The acquisition and proposed construction of this site in isolation does not pose any risk to the HRA Business Plan. Therefore, the view has been taken that the acquisition should proceed on the agreed terms and that the process of engaging stakeholders and moving the project forward will begin in earnest once the site is in the Council's ownership. Paragraph 16 indicates the work undertaken to establish the financial viability of the site in the context of the Council's overall affordable homes programme.

Equalities Impact Assessment

20. Members are referred to the attached assessment at **Appendix C**. The assessment is undertaken considering the specific area the site sits in and the outcomes are listed in the report, which broadly cites no negative impacts on those currently living in the village.

Consultation Planned or Undertaken

21. A range of internal and external stakeholders will be consulted as plans develop and then a formal community consultation will be held in an agreed format in due course ahead of any application being submitted to planning. This will take time but care will be taken to include all relevant stakeholders at all part of the process.

Next Steps

22. While the acquisition of the site moves to completion, consultation will begin immediately. The Borough Council will work with the Parish Council to agree the commissioning of a formal local needs survey, before the steps mentioned above are progressed. Design and formal consultation will follow and ultimately if planning permission is granted (for consent to carefully demolish the vicarage and then build new homes), then there will be further consultation over allocation too. These processes will be carefully advanced in the coming months and updates will be included as part of the annual HRA update report to members in the autumn.

Conclusion

23. There are a number of strong reasons for the HRA to acquire this piece of land in Rolvenden, given its location adjacent to Monypenny and sitting outside of the Stodmarsh catchment area, and its availability. This has the opportunity to be an exciting project and once again the housing service's delegated authority has enabled it to act with considerable agility in a competitive marketplace. The HRA Business Plan can accommodate a proportionate scheme on this piece of land and a scheme will therefore be developed in consultation with stakeholders in the parish that will benefit the village as a whole.

Portfolio Holder's Views

24. This represents another very good piece of business for the Council and its housing revenue account. The Council is now establishing a reputation for being serious about land acquisition and proving that it can deliver quality affordable homes for those who need them most.
25. With a proven track record of delivery, I have no doubt that the new homes proposed here will be an asset to the community and I urge all stakeholders to engage with the work of housing officers when the time comes to comment and ensure that the best scheme possible is delivered.

Contact and Email

26. Mark.James@ashford.gov.uk – Tel: (01233) 330687

Local connection and local need – rural sites

Local Connection

This is a criterion included in [our Lettings Policy](#), where over a period of two years, 50% of rural properties within our stock will be offered to applicants who meet the local connection criteria set out in the policy. The applicant will have a need for the size and type of property available, we will not under occupy. Where there are no applicants with a local connection, the property will be let to an applicant without the connection. These are not properties on exception sites.

On new build sites in rural locations, again not exception sites, we will offer 100% of the properties to those applicants with a local connection on first let. Subsequent lets will be as per the usual lettings policy criteria as detailed above.

Page 60 of [the lettings Policy](#) talks about this in greater detail and gives full detail of the qualifying parishes and the criteria applicants need to meet.

Local Need property

These are properties built on exception sites, for the purpose of providing housing for local people. The section 106 planning agreement will specify the criteria applicants must meet, and the cascade of parishes that will be considered if there are insufficient applicants from the principal parish.

Local Needs sites are usually owned and managed by housing associations – in Ashford Borough we have a large number of these sites, mainly with English Rural Housing Association – though in the case of Rolvenden, we would be looking to manage the site ourselves.

These properties are let outside of our Lettings Policy, although the properties are advertised through our Choice Based Lettings system, and applicants need to be registered on the housing register. We would pass a shortlist of applicants with a connection to the appropriate parishes once an advert had closed, and they then make a decision on who best fulfils the local connection criteria for that property.

They will prioritise those with a housing need, and those who have the need for the type and size of property, but are able to let the property to someone without a housing need, or who would under occupy the property, if there is no one more suitable with the local connection.

There's a small piece on this at Section 39.1 (page 76) of [the Lettings Policy](#).

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

Document is Restricted

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1. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a document that summarises how the council has had due regard to the public sector equality duty (Equality Act 2010) in its decision-making. Although there is no legal duty to produce an EIA, the Council must have **due regard** to the equality duty and an EIA is recognised as the best method of fulfilling that duty. It can assist the Council in making a judgment as to whether a policy or other decision will have unintended negative consequences for certain people and help maximise the positive impacts of policy change. An EIA can lead to one of four consequences:

- (a) No major change – the policy or other decision is robust with no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. Opportunities to promote equality have been taken;
- (b) Adjust the policy or decision to remove barriers or better promote equality as identified in the EIA;
- (c) Continue the policy – if the EIA identifies potential for adverse impact, set out compelling justification for continuing;
- (d) Stop and remove the policy where actual or potential unlawful discrimination is identified.

Public sector equality duty

2. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on the council, when exercising public functions, to have due regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - (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 (ie tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups).

3. These are known as the three aims of the general equality duty.

Protected characteristics

4. The Equality Act 2010 sets out nine protected characteristics for the purpose of the equality duty:
- Age
 - Disability
 - Gender reassignment
 - Marriage and civil partnership*
 - Pregnancy and maternity
 - Race
 - Religion or belief
 - Sex
 - Sexual orientation

*For marriage and civil partnership, only the first aim of the duty applies in relation to employment.

Due regard

5. Having 'due regard' is about using good equality information and analysis at the right time as part of decision-making procedures.
6. To 'have due regard' means that in making decisions and in its other day-to-day activities the council must consciously consider the need to do the things set out in the general equality duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. This can involve:
- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
 - taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics when these are different from the needs of other people.
 - encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate

in public life or in other activities where it is disproportionately low.

7. How much regard is 'due' will depend on the circumstances. The greater the potential impact, the higher the regard required by the duty. Examples of functions and decisions likely to engage the duty include: policy decisions, budget decisions, public appointments, service provision, statutory discretion, decisions on individuals, employing staff and procurement of goods and services.
8. In terms of timing:
 - Having 'due regard' should be considered at the inception of any decision or proposed policy or service development or change.
 - Due regard should be considered throughout development of a decision. Notes shall be taken and kept on file as to how due regard has been had to the equality duty in research, meetings, project teams, consultations etc.
 - The completion of the EIA is a way of effectively summarising this and it should inform final decision-making.

Case law principles

9. A number of principles have been established by the courts in relation to the equality duty and due regard:
 - Decision-makers in public authorities must be aware of their duty to have 'due regard' to the equality duty and so EIA's must be attached to any relevant committee reports.
 - Due regard is fulfilled before and at the time a particular policy is under consideration as well as at the time a decision is taken. Due regard involves a conscious approach and state of mind.
- A public authority cannot satisfy the duty by justifying a decision after it has been taken.
- The duty must be exercised in substance, with rigour and with an open mind in such a way that it influences the final decision.

- The duty is a non-delegable one. The duty will always remain the responsibility of the public authority.
- The duty is a continuing one so that it needs to be considered not only when a policy, for example, is being developed and agreed but also when it is implemented.
- It is good practice for those exercising public functions to keep an accurate record showing that they have actually considered the general duty and pondered relevant questions. Proper record keeping encourages transparency and will discipline those carrying out the relevant function to undertake the duty conscientiously.
- A public authority will need to consider whether it has sufficient information to assess the effects of the policy, or the way a function is being carried out, on the aims set out in the general equality duty.
- A public authority cannot avoid complying with the duty by claiming that it does not have enough resources to do so.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has produced helpful guidance on "Meeting the Equality Duty in Policy and Decision-Making" (October 2014). It is available on the following link and report authors should read and follow this when developing or reporting on proposals for policy or service development or change and other decisions likely to engage the equality duty. [Equality Duty in decision-making](#)

Lead officer:	Mark James
Decision maker:	Cabinet
Decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy, project, service, contract • Review, change, new, stop 	Housing Development Note and endorse the acquisition being made under the delegated authority afforded to housing services under recommendation VII in the cabinet report agreed in December 2020 Note exempt Appendix B and note the acquisition price of the land
Date of decision: The date when the final decision is made. The EIA must be complete before this point and inform the final decision.	24 th February 2022
Summary of the proposed decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims and objectives • Key actions • Expected outcomes • Who will be affected and how? • How many people will be affected? 	Note and endorse the acquisition being made under the delegated authority afforded to housing services under recommendation VII in the cabinet report agreed in December 2020 Note exempt Appendix B and note the acquisition price of the land
Information and research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the information and research that has informed the decision. • Include sources and key findings. 	Building on solid foundations: delivering affordable homes in Ashford – our delivery plan for 2019-2023 Housing Strategy Framework Priority 1 – Improve the supply of affordable housing to meet local housing needs in urban and rural areas, and Housing Statement 2018-2023 Reform of Housing Revenue Account (HRA) – Cabinet endorsed five key priorities for further spend, as a result of greater freedom within the HRA. National Housing Strategy 2011 – delivering new homes under the affordable rent model. A Charter For Social Housing Residents – Social Housing White Paper 2020. A Guide to Developing Affordable Homes in Rural Communities (Kent Housing Group [KHG]) – February 2021
Consultation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What specific consultation has occurred on this decision? • What were the results of the consultation? • Did the consultation analysis reveal any difference in views across the protected characteristics? 	A range of internal and external stakeholders will be consulted as plans develop and then a formal community consultation will be held in an agreed format in due course ahead of any application being submitted to planning. This will take time but care will be taken to include all relevant stakeholders at all part of the process.

- What conclusions can be drawn from the analysis on how the decision will affect people with different protected characteristics?

Assess the relevance of the decision to people with different protected characteristics and assess the impact of the decision on people with different protected characteristics.

When assessing relevance and impact, make it clear who the assessment applies to within the protected characteristic category. For example, a decision may have high relevance for young people but low relevance for older people; it may have a positive impact on women but a neutral impact on men.

Protected characteristic	Relevance to Decision High/Medium/Low/None	Impact of Decision Positive (Major/Minor) Negative (Major/Minor) Neutral
<u>AGE</u> Elderly	High	Positive (major)
Middle age	High	Positive (major)
Young adult	High	Positive (major)
Children	High	Positive (major)
<u>DISABILITY</u> Physical	High	Positive (major)
Mental	High	Neutral
Sensory	None	Neutral
<u>GENDER RE-ASSIGNMENT</u>	None	Neutral
<u>MARRIAGE/CIVIL PARTNERSHIP</u>	None	Neutral
<u>PREGNANCY/MATERNITY</u>	None	Neutral
<u>RACE</u>	None	Neutral
<u>RELIGION OR BELIEF</u>	None	Neutral
<u>SEX</u> Men	None	Neutral
Women	None	Neutral
<u>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</u>	None	Neutral

<p>Mitigating negative impact:</p> <p>Where any negative impact has been identified, outline the measures taken to mitigate against it.</p>	<p>Where the assessment has been carried out above it is on the basis of the new development planned as a result of this acquisition in Rolvenden.</p>
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<p>Is the decision relevant to the aims of the equality duty?</p> <p>Guidance on the aims can be found in the EHRC's Essential Guide, alongside fuller PSED Technical Guidance.</p>	
Aim	Yes / No / N/A
1) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	N/A
2) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	Yes
3) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	N/A

<p>Conclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider how due regard has been had to the equality duty, from start to finish. • There should be no unlawful discrimination arising from the decision (see guidance above). • Advise on whether the proposal meets the aims of the equality duty or whether adjustments have been made or need to be made or whether any residual impacts are justified. • How will monitoring of the policy, procedure or decision and its implementation be undertaken and reported? 	<p>Due regard has been considered throughout this proposal to each protected group.</p> <p>No unlawful discrimination has arisen from the decision.</p> <p>The effect on the community will be positive due to the aims of the programme delivery. No adjustments required.</p> <p>The programme will be monitored by a Housing Project group with regular updates to our Portfolio Holder and Cabinet.</p>
<p>EIA completion date:</p>	<p>08th February 2022</p>

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Agenda Item No:	13
Report To:	Cabinet / Council
Date of Meeting:	24 February 2022 / 03 March 2022
Report Title:	New Senior Structure
Report Author & Job Title:	Tracey Kerly – Chief Executive
Portfolio Holder	Cllr G Clarkson
Portfolio Holder for:	Executive Leader of the Council
Summary:	The Executive Leader and Chief Executive propose a revised senior management structure with sufficient strategic capacity to deliver the Council's ambitious Corporate Plan successfully.
Key Decision:	NO
Significantly Affected Wards:	None specifically
Recommendations:	The Cabinet is recommended to:- <ul style="list-style-type: none">i. Review the proposed new senior structure and recommend to Council that it be adopted.ii. Note the costs associated with the early release of pension (set out in the exempt appendix), in the event a redundancy results, and to seek approval by Council.iii. Note the potential redundancy costs set out in the exempt appendix.iv. Approve the recommendation to cap the cost of living increases to pay scales MG1, MG2, MG3 and MG4 at 1.5% for 2022/23.
Policy Overview:	Managing Restructure, Redundancy and Organisational Change policy
Financial Implications:	The report details the costs of the revised structures and includes details of the potential redundancy costs that will be funded from the Fund Future Expenditure Reserve.
Legal Implications	See Report

**Equalities Impact See Attached
Assessment**

**Other Material None
Implications:**

Background Papers: N/A

**Exempt from YES (Exempt Appendix)
Publication:**

Not For Publication by virtue of Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.] as the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**Contact: Tracey Kerly – Chief Executive Officer –
tracey.kerly@ashford.gov.uk**

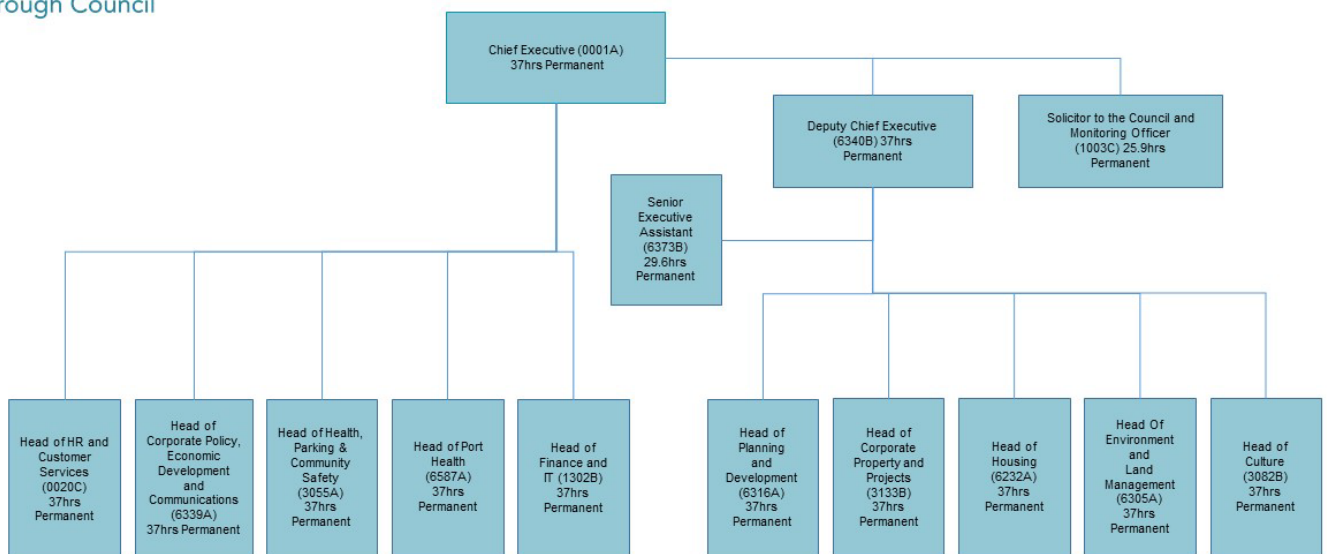
Report Title: Senior Structure

Introduction and Background

- 1 The Executive Leader and the Chief Executive are proposing to make some changes to the Senior Leadership team of the Council. This will impact across the current Heads of Services, Deputy Chief Executive, Directors and some Senior Managers.

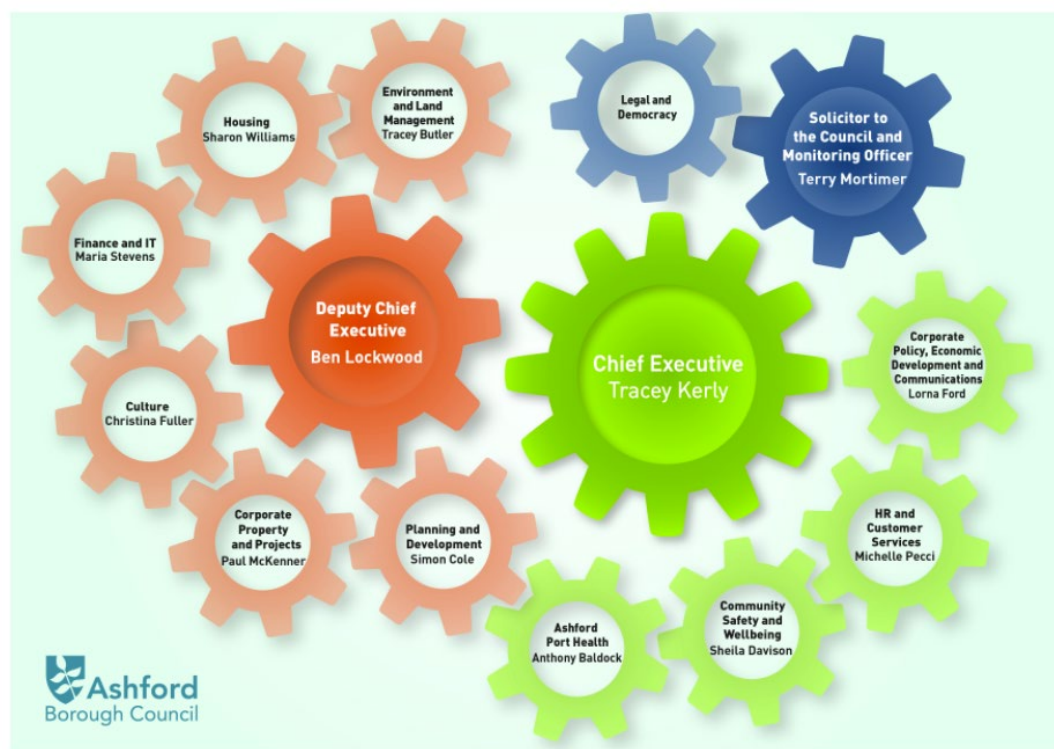


Management Team



- 2 The Council has been through several changes over the past few years at a Senior level, responding to particular needs stimulated by financial pressures, savings requirements, changes to Senior Directors and specialist roles which has led to the current structure.
- 3 Over the past 18 months covid has led to some significant transformational change in the organisation and some real focus across the Council services to manage the response to the pandemic, deliver front line services and moving into support for the early recovery from covid. The unknown financial implications of covid meant the organisation has been driven by the changing agendas and the pressures on staff to deliver the covid response and retaining stability in Council delivery. The current structure leans itself to that responsive and integrated approach.
- 4 Alongside the covid response the Council has also ensured that the business continuity planning of the Council could cope with the additional pressures of Brexit and also responding to the significant Government requirements for Sevington to become an inland Border Control Post run by Ashford Borough Council.

The Cog Structure



- 5 While the organisation has changed its Leadership Structure over recent years, the stability of the management structure relies on the importance of the Cog diagram that demonstrates that the importance of any structure is the integration of the whole and how it relates with each other. Therefore, while change has happened, working with each service demonstrates the interdependence on each other and that no service can work in a silo. The organisation has continued to efficiently deliver services, increase digital transformation, change to a commercially lead culture, and work on projects that are within the current resources of the structure within its current capacity.

Integration

- 6 During the height of the pandemic the whole Leadership Team met daily due to the sensitivities and changing nature of the response. As recovery kicked-in there were weekly recovery meetings that have moved to corporate plan formulation and action planning. Generally, there are management meetings weekly of all the team, there are Statutory Officers meetings bi-weekly, and team meetings across the Leadership Teams at least monthly. There is also a focus on 1 to 1 meetings monthly to ensure individual services are performing and direct issues can be resolved quickly.

- 7 More recently there are quarterly performance meetings, and the monthly Programme Management Group ensures that project delivery is monitored and has sufficient resources and budget for delivery
- 8 The Corporate Business Meeting allows the Leadership team including all the portfolio holders to bring forward new projects, new ways of delivery and share joint thinking and challenge to everything we do as a Council. That joint working allows the political direction against the corporate plan, government directives, changes in legislation, new funding opportunities, creative thinking and ambitious projects to be shared at an early stage and a way forward where there is sufficient support to bring to fruition.
- 9 Any structure will need to be flexible to change and to be able to deliver the inevitable changing agendas of a post covid world especially where society has changed, communities have evolved, and Councils have been in the front line. The cogs and interrelationships of services remain but the structure needs change to reflect the priorities and the changing agendas.

The structure

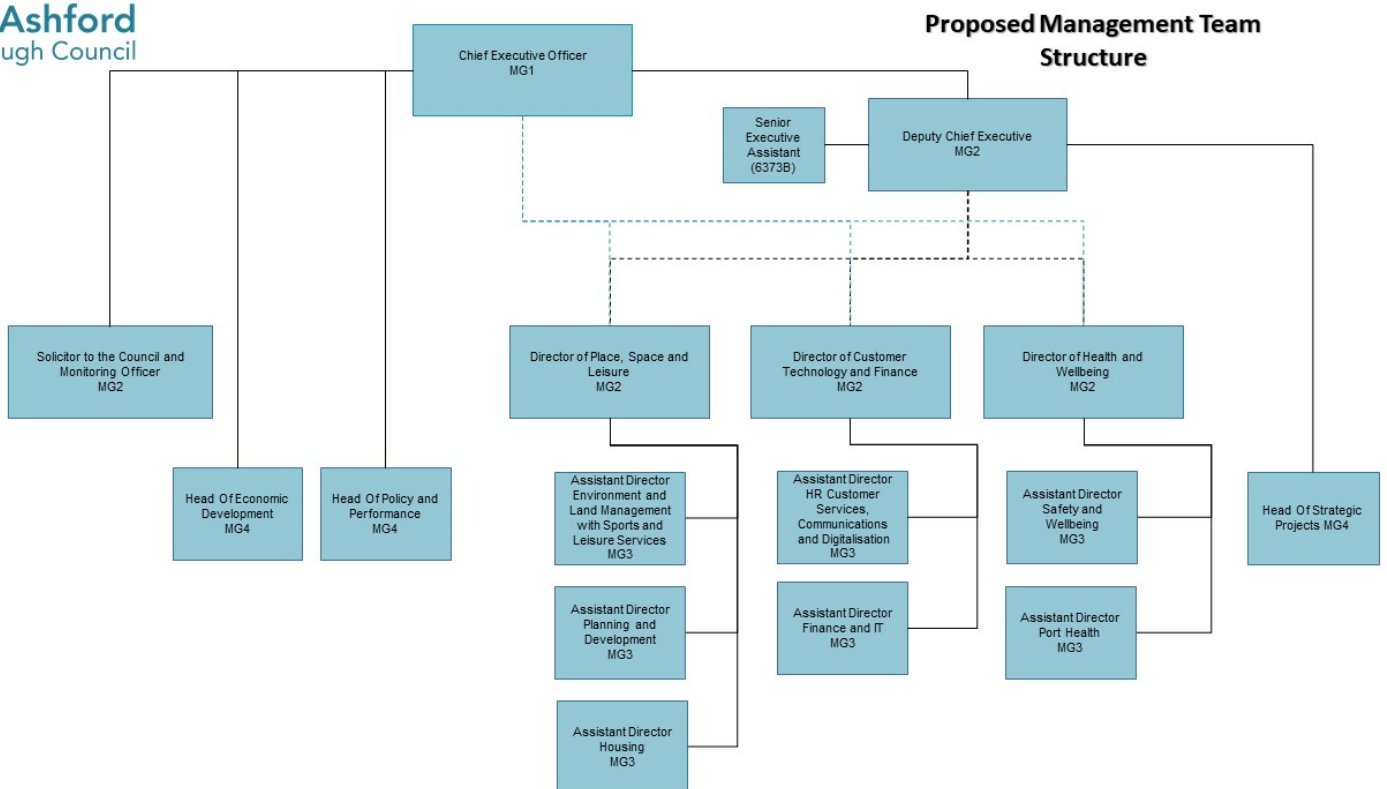
- 10 The current structure removed the Directors and specialists over the last few years and as indicated earlier that was influenced by circumstance. What is clear is that the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Executive are pulled into areas of operational leadership issues and detailed areas that due to the reduction in the Director level are impacting on their capacity.
- 11 It is expected that the most senior levels of the organisation should be outward focused, dealing at a strategic level, working with some complex partnerships, ensuring that the Corporate Plan is deliverable within its budget, moving the authority through the changing expectations of its customers to be an exemplar organisation. It is important the Chief Executive has the capacity to work closely with the Executive Leader and will drive the transformation of the Council, meeting the economic growth, efficiency of the Council and meeting community expectations.
- 12 The new structure proposes to introduce three Directors which is in recognition that the period without Directors has not given the capacity within the organisation that it now requires. It is possible that the pandemic has clouded the changing need because the organisation has worked in a very different collaborative way over the last 18 months.
- 13 It is important that the structure remains competitive in the market for public sector employment, specifically across Kent and Sussex, but also with the changes to hybrid working even further afield.

14 Our senior structure is no longer in keeping with that of our competitors and hence there is a risk of losing qualified senior staff. This report addresses the necessary changes which need to be made to reflect the dynamics of the ambitious position of the Borough. The report includes a structure that reflects the needs of the Borough, recognises the complexities of the roles required and acknowledges that, the remit of this tier of officer at Ashford is wider than elsewhere. Ashford has driven forward a range of commercial projects that have resulted in senior staff needing the skills to operate as a director on company boards. The proposed changes also help to reflect this additional aspect that is not currently recognised at Ashford.

15 However, the challenging corporate plan priorities, digital transformation, climate change pledge, commercialisation and significant new projects highlight a revised way of working and the introduction of the Directors, maintaining a Deputy Chief Executive with section 151 responsibilities will give the specific strategic leadership needed for services and will enhance delivery.

Proposals

16 A revised management structure is proposed.



17 Directors will manage either two or three Assistant Directors formerly Heads of Service. The JD for these new posts are attached in the appendices. There will be a reduction to seven Assistant Director areas. Three service areas are proposed

to be removed: Policy, Performance, Economic Development & Communications, Culture, and Corporate Property & Projects.

- 18 Directors will have senior management responsibility for key overarching areas such as safeguarding (Health and Wellbeing), health and safety (Health and Wellbeing), carbon neutrality (Place and Space) and commercialisation (Customer and Finance).
- 19 Due to the complex and cross-cutting nature of the projects and work streams that the Directors will be undertaking it is inevitable that they will be directly accountable to both the CX to some extent and the DCX, the structure chart therefore illustrates this by showing a reporting line to both posts. Members are referred to the cog structure diagram that demonstrates how the structure of the organisation is reliant on collaborative working across service/directorate silos, and this is how the senior team will work together to deliver the council's ambitious agenda.
- 20 Policy, Performance, Economic Development & Communications will be split in to three different areas. Two areas, Policy & Performance and Economic Development, will report directly into the Chief Executive and be part of the Council's Leadership team. The current Head of Policy, Performance, Economic Development & Communications left Ashford Borough Council in January and so there will be no impact on this post-holder. It is proposed that the Communications team will report to the new Assistant Director of HR, Customer Service, Communications & Digitalisation.
- 21 The role of Assistant Director has been evaluated through our evaluation process. The role is notably different to that of Head of Service in both the breath and focus of the role. Assistant Directors will be required to take on a much broader span of responsibilities as two services are redistributed amongst the organisation. Responsibilities will be assumed for a larger workforce, an increased number of direct reports, requiring a wider range of technical understanding and leadership responsibility. The focus of the role will shift from the operational to the strategic; driving the delivery of the corporate plan. Assistant Directors will be required to horizon scan, anticipate problems in the road, resolve significant challenges, proactively develop new services and drive forward commercialism.

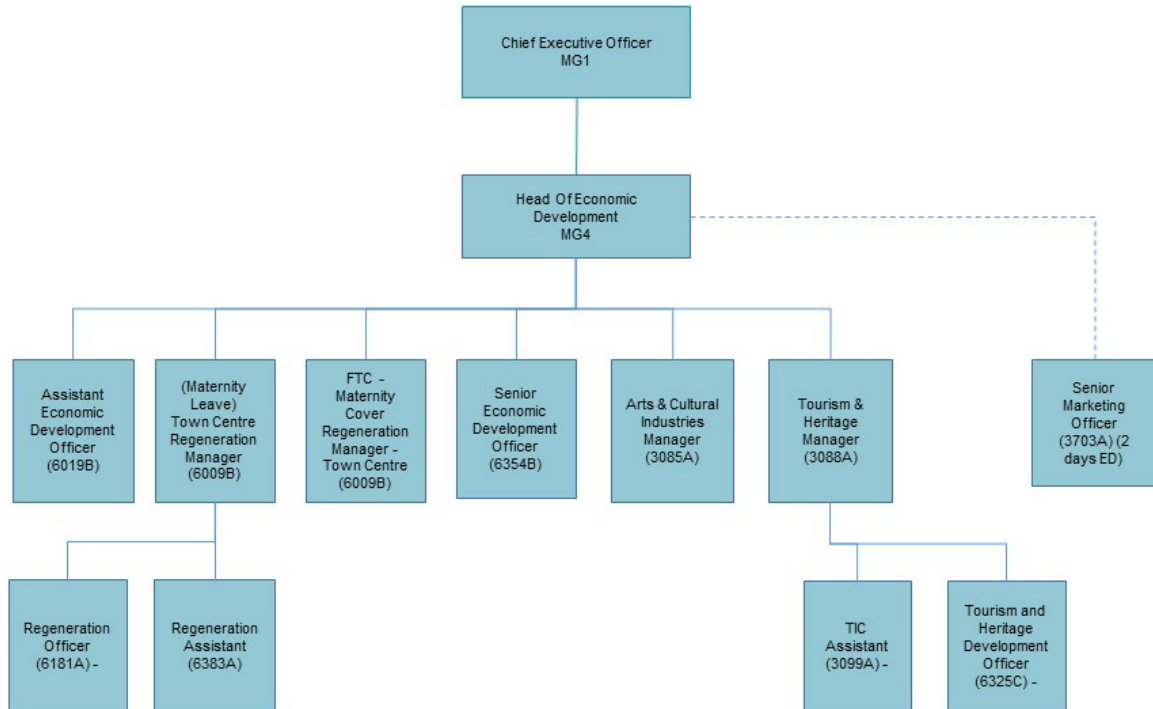
Economic Development

- 22 The current incumbent manager will head-up this team and their grade will reflect the change in managerial responsibility.
- 23 As well as becoming a standalone service area, it is proposed that there is some realignment of other teams across the council, notably Cultural Services. The Economic Development team will take responsibility for Tourism and Heritage as Tourism is seen a key factor in economic growth and vibrancy, and similarly the events we hold are intended to support the economic development of the Borough, so it is proposed that the Economic Development team take overall responsibility

for events. Many of the town centre events are promoted and supported by the 'Love Ashford' brand managed by the Town Centre Regeneration Manager, supported by the Senior Marketing Officer, and the town centre will be a key focus for us in the coming years.

What this means in practice:

- 24 Economic Development Manager will report to the Chief Executive, be part of the Council's Leadership Team and be responsible for Economic Development, Tourism, Cultural Industries and Events that promote the economic and cultural growth of the Council. The Job Title for this officer is proposed to change to Head Of Economic Development to best portray the seniority of the role to external contacts. The JD for this officer has been revised to reflect this proposal and has been amended as part of the consultation process.
- 25 The Tourism and Heritage Manager and her team will move from Cultural Services and report to the Economic Development Manager. There will be no change to grade or role for any of this small team.
- 26 Similarly, the Arts and Cultural Industries Manager will also move from Cultural Services and report to the Economic Development Manager. There will be no change to grade for this officer.



Policy & Performance

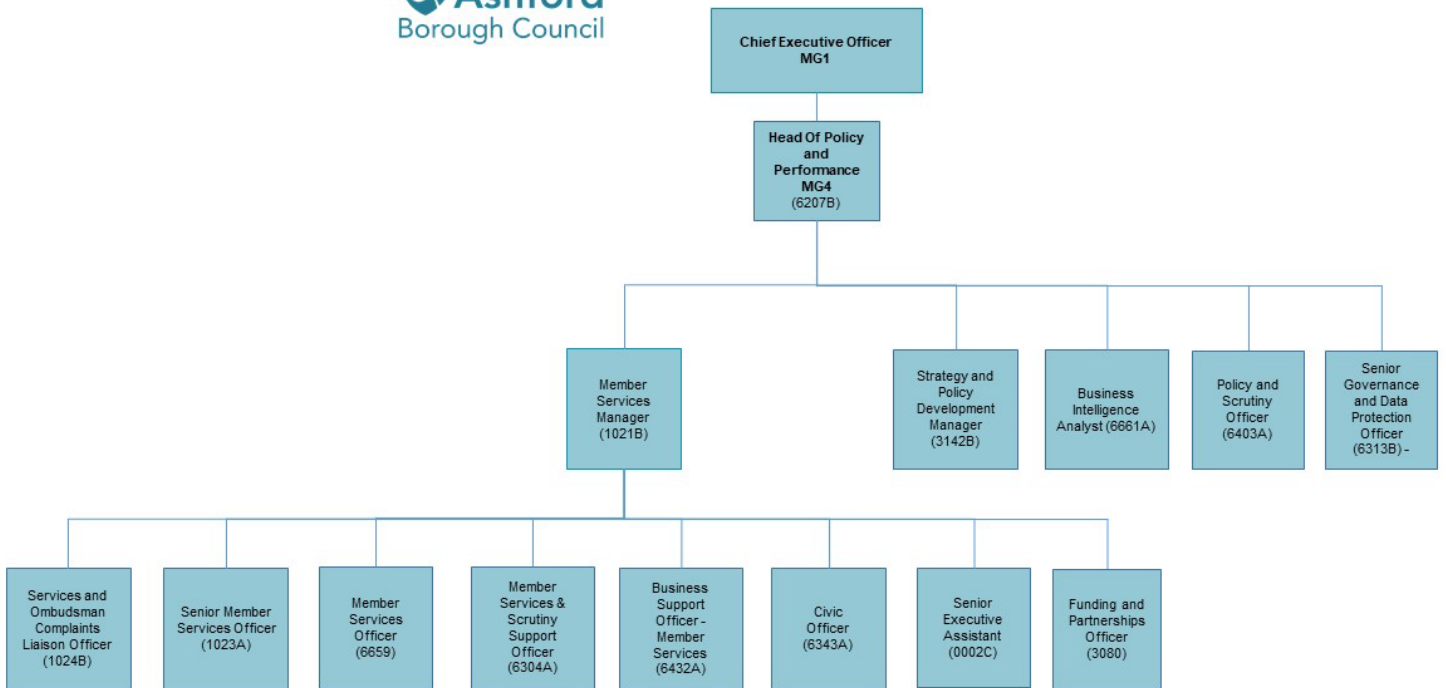
- 27 The current incumbent manager will head-up this team and their grade will reflect the change in managerial responsibility.
- 28 This team will continue to drive forward the corporate policy and performance agenda for the council and ensure that elected members are well supported in developing corporate policy, understanding the performance and the risk profile of the council.
- 29 Like the Economic Development team, as well as becoming a standalone service area, it is proposed that there is some realignment of other teams across the council, Cultural Services and Member Services.
- 30 Currently the Policy & Performance team have a close link to the Leader of the Council and the Office of the Executive Leader, it also supports the Overview & Scrutiny function. There is significant overlap between this team and the Member Services Team. It is proposed that the Policy and Performance Manager takes

responsibility for Member Services. This change will also free up capacity for the Solicitor to the Council & Monitoring Officer to focus on managing Legal Services as his remit is proven to be too wide to easily manage in part-time hours following his flexible retirement in April of last year. The Solicitor to the Council & Monitoring Officer will remain responsible for Legal Services and Elections reporting directly to the Chief Executive.

- 31 The Funding & Partnerships Officer works closely with parish councils and with elected members supporting the grant schemes in the council. There appears to be synergy between this role and the role of member services, so it is proposed that this role moves out of Cultural Service and into Member Services.

What this would mean in practice:

- 32 The Policy & Performance Manager will report to the Chief Executive, be part of the Council's Leadership team and be responsible for the delivery of the monitoring of the corporate plan, performance of the Council oversees risk, data protection, and Overview and Scrutiny as well as Member Services. The Job Title for this officer is proposed to change to Head Of Policy and Performance to best portray the seniority of the role to external contacts. The JD for this officer has been revised to reflect this proposal . The post holder has increased their hours to full time since the beginning of January 2022.
- 33 The Member Services Manager will now report to the Head of Policy & Performance. The Funding & Partnerships Officer will now report to the Member Services Manager. It is not proposed to make any changes to the JD or grade of the Funding & Partnerships Officer. The JD for the Member Services Manager will be revised to reflect the additional report.
- 34 The Solicitor to the Council & Monitoring Officer will no longer have responsibility for Member Services, the grade and JD for the role will not change.
- 35 The Strategy and Policy Development Manager will report into the Head of Policy and Performance.



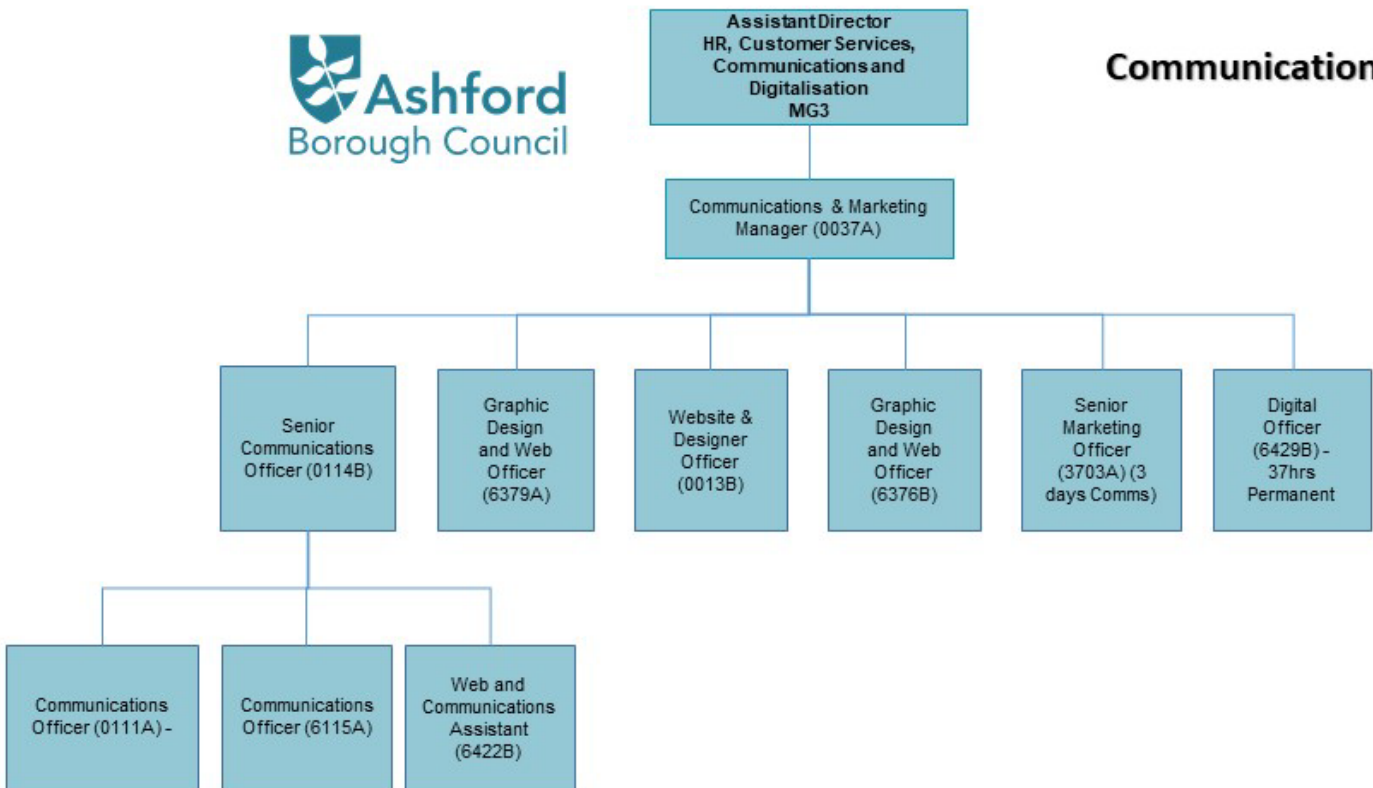
Communications

36 The primary aim of the communications function is to ensure that the residents and businesses in the borough (our customers), and our staff, are well informed about what the council is doing. To help better align the work the communications team and customer services team do it is proposed that communications now sit in the HR & Customer Services service under a new post of Assistant Director of HR, Customer Services, Communications & Digitalisation.

What this means in practice:

37 Communications & Marketing Manager: will now report to the new post of Assistant Director of HR, Customer Services, Communications & Digitalisation. This post will be responsible for the day-to-day communications for the Council, PR, web site, social media. There will be no change to the grade or JD for the Communications & Marketing Manager.

38 The importance here is while we have specific reporting lines the interaction across services and the interaction between officers demonstrates the values of the COG structure and the success of truly integrated teams.



Corporate Property & Projects

39 The need to have dedicated resource on key corporate projects such as the Newtown Works, Stodmarsh mitigation and 'Project Green' has been a consideration for some time as it will be important to keep the delivery of these strategically important projects on track. The current Head of Corporate Property & Projects has requested flexible retirement. This request has allowed us to consider approaching the project support differently and it is therefore proposed that we create a specialist project officer, funded by the projects, reporting directly to the Deputy Chief Executive that will be part of the Council's management team.

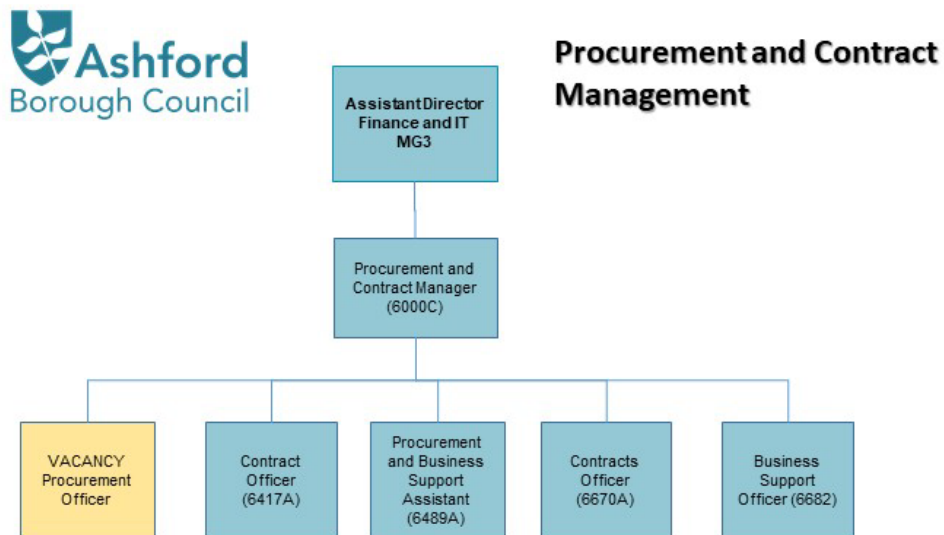
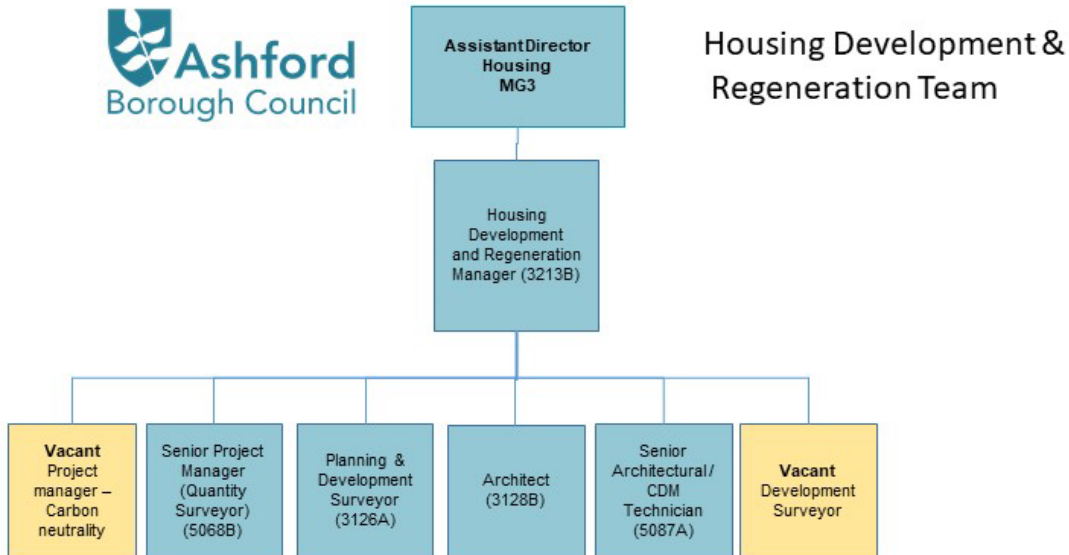
40 It is not proposed that we replace the Head of Corporate Property and Projects but use this as an opportunity to review how the diverse Corporate Property & Projects service could be aligned with other teams to provide greater synergy. There has been sufficient informal consultation with the current Head of Corporate Property and Projects about how we might accommodate his flexible retirement request in light of emerging corporate plan priorities that we are not proposing to put this postholder at risk of redundancy.

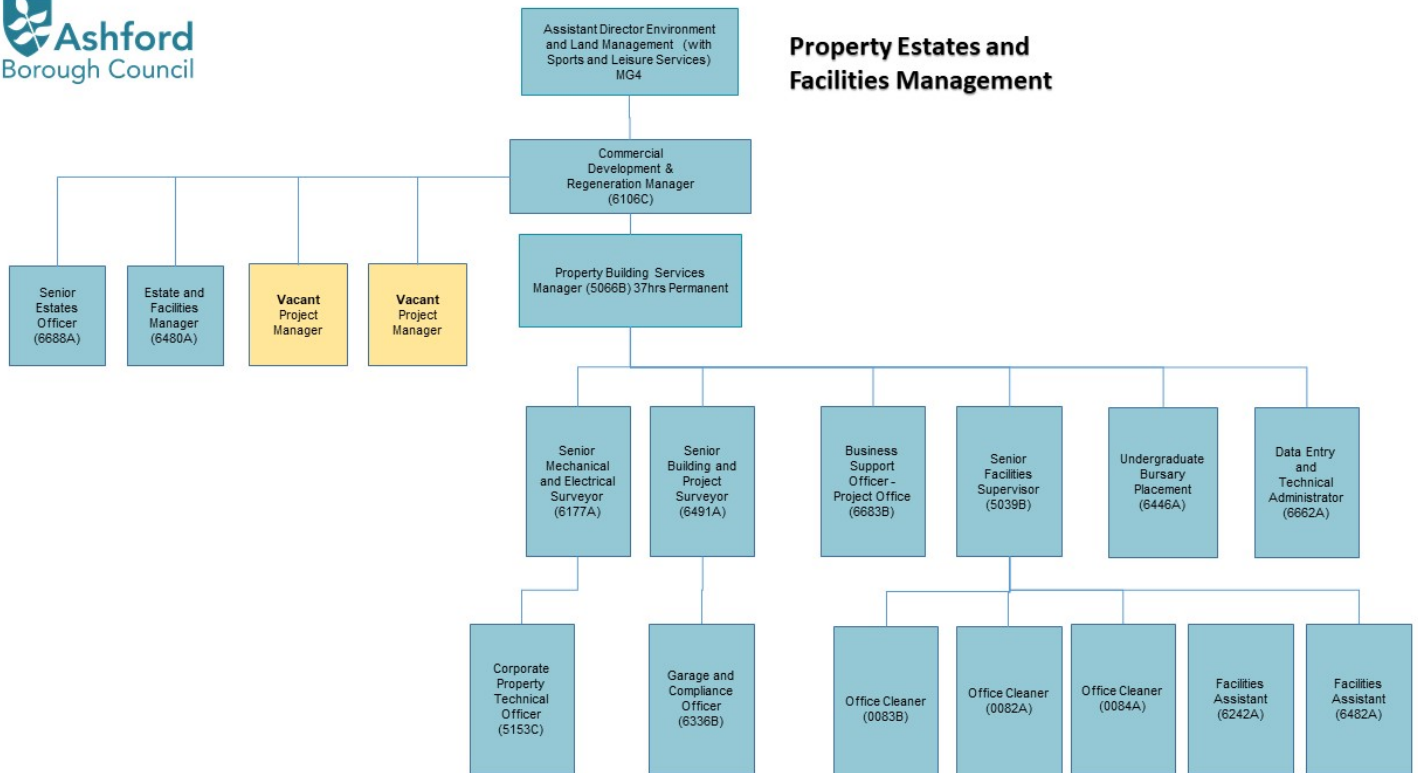
- 41 It is proposed that the Housing Development & Regeneration team will move to the Housing service, this team had been part of housing previously and this changed to maximise the skills base for build projects together with project management skills. However, the council has evolved, and these skills have been developed across the council so reverting back to being part of housing better supports the affordable housing delivery programme.
- 42 Procurement and contract management had been seen as integral to delivery of corporate projects, however as we develop our commercial approach to procurement and contract management it has better alignment with finance so it is proposed that Procurement and Contract Management will move to Finance.
- 43 The current Environment & Land Management service has considerable overlap with managing our land assets and this change provides us with an opportunity to align our property, facilities management and estate management, with the Environment & Land Management service.
- 44 We were proposing that the facilities management of the Civic Centre would be part of Community Safety and Wellbeing, our experience during Covid showed that there is good synergy between the two teams. Following the consultation we have agreed to move the facilities management of the Civic Centre to the Environment & Land Management service.

What this means in practice:

- 45 The creation of a specific role which will report directly to the Deputy Chief Executive and will be responsible for the coordination and delivery of specific projects relating to the economic strategic growth of the Borough. The Job Title for this officer is proposed to be Head Of Strategic Projects to best portray the seniority of the role to external contacts There is a new JD for this post.
- 46 Housing Development & Regeneration Team will move back to the Housing Service and report direct to the new role of Assistant Director for Housing. It is not proposed that there are any changes to the role or grade of this post, or any of their direct reports.
- 47 Procurement and Contract Management Team will report to the new role of Assistant Director of Finance and IT. It is not proposed that there are any changes to this role or grade of any post in this team.
- 48 The property management, all estate management and FM management along with acquisitions, disposals, corporate project delivery and facilities (lead by the Commercial Development & Regeneration Manager) will report to the new role of Assistant Director of Environment & Land Management. It is not proposed that there are any changes to the roles or grades of any post in this team.

49 The role of the Business Support Officers is not expected to change, regardless of which service they sit in, it is anticipated they will continue to operate in a similar way.





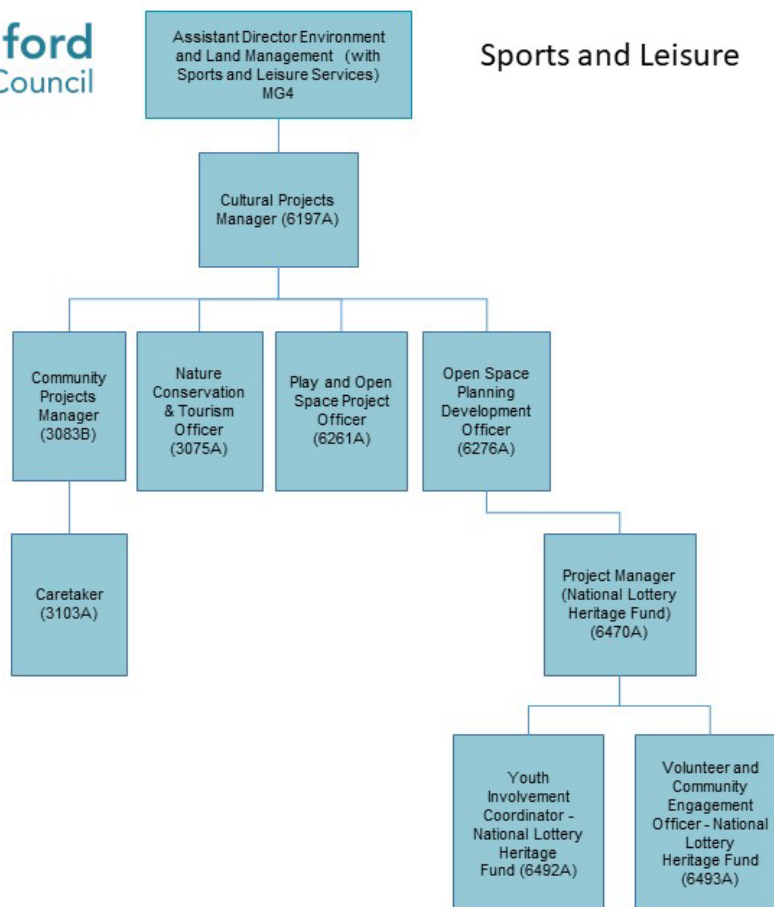
Cultural Services

- 50 As described above, the current Environment & Land Management service has considerable overlap with managing our land assets and this change provides us with an opportunity to align our property, facilities management and estate management.
- 51 This review also provides us with an opportunity to ensure that the planning and delivery of our other assets such as leisure centres, parks and open spaces are coordinated from a centralised team. On occasions one service makes decisions on the development of the facilities/assets that another team needs to support in the longer-term impacting budget and resources. It is proposed to centralise this function to help join up the long-term strategic aims with the short-term management issues.
- 52 Earlier in this paper we proposed to disaggregate parts of the Cultural Services team into other services, we are also proposing that the final aspect of the Cultural Services team be reassigned into Environment & Land Management so that the assets and projects that the Cultural Services team deliver are aligned to the teams that will have to maintain them.

What this means in practice:

53 Cultural Services will not exist as a service and therefore the Post of Head of Cultural Services has been put at risk of redundancy as part of the formal consultation process. If the proposal goes ahead in its current form, the postholder will be able to apply for the Director posts and any resulting Assistant Director post in line with our Managing Redundancy Restructures and Organisational Change Policy.

54 The Sports and Leisure functions will report to the new role of Assistant Director of Environment and Land Management. The Cultural Projects Manager will have some adjustment to his role due to the changes to the reporting line of the Arts & Cultural Industries Manager and Funding & Partnerships Officer highlighted earlier in the paper. However, these changes are not considered to be sufficient to put this post holder at risk of redundancy, and the revisions to the JD are minor reflecting the aspects of his role that will be managed elsewhere under this proposal.



Legal & Democratic Services

What this means in practice:

- 55 The Solicitor to the Council & Monitoring Officer will be responsible for the Legal and Elections teams and no longer responsible for Member Services as it is proposed that this team will move into Policy & Performance Service. There will be no revisions to the JD for this role. The post will report to the Chief Executive.
- 56 The Member Services Manager will report to the Head of Policy and Performance, the JD will be amended to reflect this change. The Funding & Partnerships Officer will form part of the member services team.

Environment & Land Management

What this means in practice:

- 57 The Head of Service will be redesignated Assistant Director Environment & Land Management. The post will report to the new role of Director Place, Space & Leisure.
- 58 Additional Services will be added: Cultural Projects and Commercial, Development and Regeneration. These teams will report directly to the Assistant Director of Environment and Land Management.

Housing Services

What this means in practice:

- 59 The Head of Service will be redesignated Assistant Director Housing. The post will report to the new role of Director Place, Space & Leisure.
- 60 Additional Services will be added: Housing Delivery & Regeneration Team.

HR & Customer Services

What this means in practice:

- 61 The Head of Service will be redesignated Assistant Director HR, Customer Services, Communications & Digitalisation. This post will report to the new role of Director of Customer, Technology and Finance.
- 62 Additional Services will be added: Communications Service.

Community Safety & Wellbeing

What this means in practice:

63 The Head of Service will be redesignated Assistant Director Community Safety & Wellbeing. . This role will report to the new role of Director of Safety, Health and Wellbeing.

Finance & IT

What this means in practice:

64 The Head of Service will be redesignated Assistant Director Finance & IT. This post will report to the new role of Director of Customer, Technology and Finance.

65 Additional Services will be added: Procurement Team.

Planning & Development Service and Port Health Service

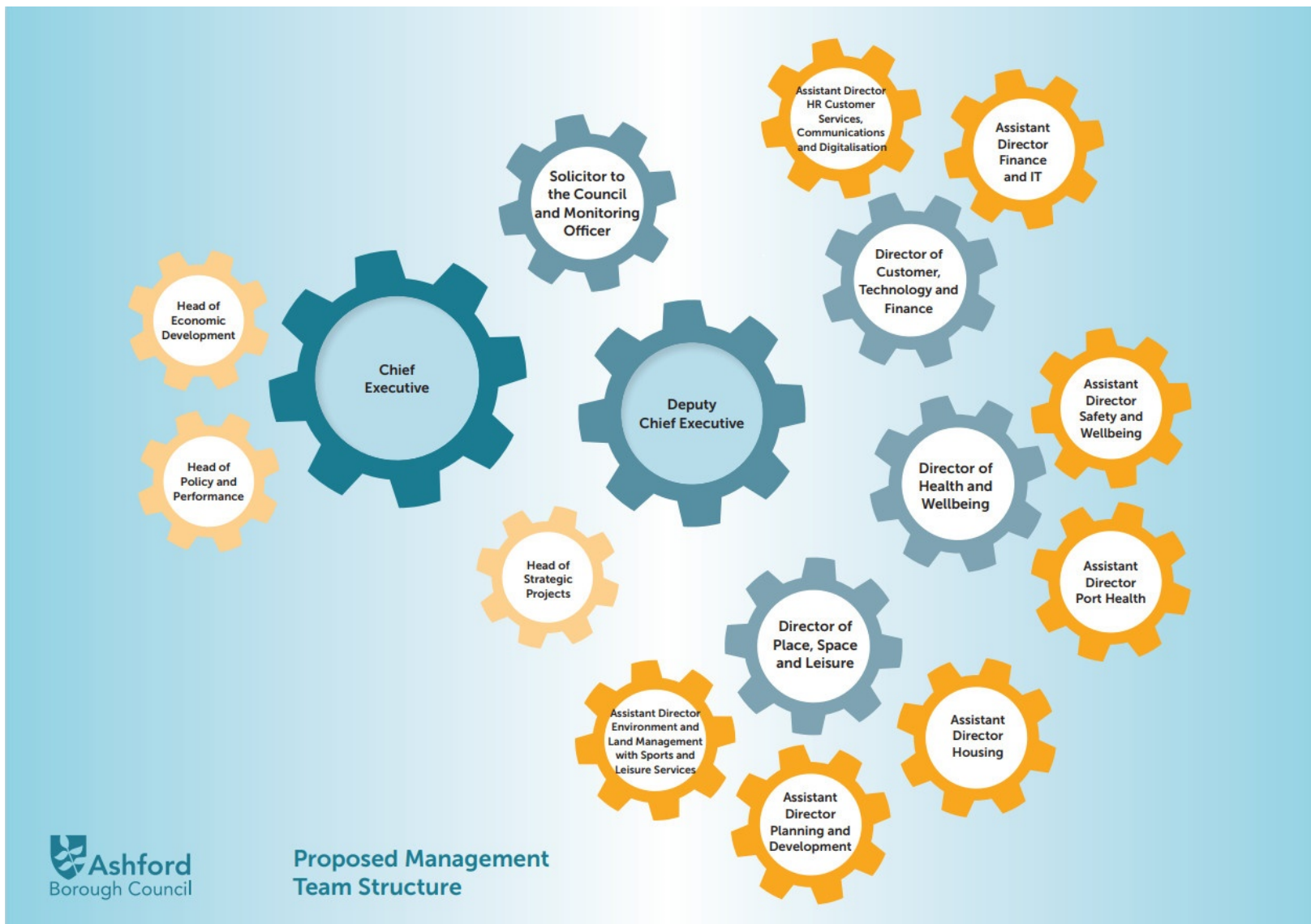
66 There are no proposed additions to the Planning & Development Service or the Port Health Service although the roles will be redesignated and graded as Assistant Directors to reflect the strategic nature of the roles and to ensure consistency with other posts.

67 The Assistant Director of Planning & Development will report to the new role of Director Place, Space & Leisure.

68 The Assistant Director of Port Health will report to the new role of Director of Safety, Health and Wellbeing

69 Revised Cog Structure

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Handling

- 70 External expertise was not engaged prior to the submission of the proposals as the Executive Leader and the Chief Executive understood the issues at hand and did not need to unnecessarily engage external consultants.
- 71 The Director vacancies will be ring fenced to Heads of Services. These will be a member appointment. Directors will be paid at MG2.
- 72 Assistant Directors will be slotted into their positions from the existing Heads of services and will be paid at MG3. The Head of Corporate Policy, Economic Development and Communications is vacant and will be deleted. The Head of Culture will be at risk of redundancy and the Head of Property and Projects will be slotted to a new role as Head of Strategic Projects.
- 73 Assistant Director roles have been evaluated
- 74 The MG2 grade has two discretionary points of 5% and 10% of the top of the grade that are typically awarded at the recruitment stage. It is not proposed that the discretionary points are applied to the director roles, but it is proposed that the grade for the Deputy Chief Executive will include the discretionary points to reflect the deputisation for the Chief Executive.
- 75 The specialist roles reporting to the Chief Executive or Deputy will be at an MG4 grade. We are satisfied that MG4 is an appropriate grade for the specialist roles given the breadth of professional areas that will be managed by the post holder.
- 76 Vacancies that arise will be advertised internally in the first instance, allowing the opportunity for internal applicants to demonstrate their ability to fulfil the vacant roles. Improving general opportunities for succession within the capable teams that exist within the Authority and reducing the risk of flight of our many capable members of staff, particularly in a difficult recruitment market across the professions in Local Government. Ultimately, there will be vacancies that will need to be advertised externally as structures settle down.
- 77 Any redundancies that arise will be minimal and paid in accordance with the Council's Policy.
- 78 It is anticipated that the revised structure will create the leadership, opportunities, capacity, and capability required to deliver the corporate priorities and the extremely ambitious corporate plan.
- 79 The new structure has been costed alongside the existing structure and in year one it is comparable in costs but will create budget pressures in subsequent years but there is likely to be adjustments in the resulting structure below the three new Director positions that will make these changes cost neutral.

80 All structures are flexible and need to reflect the demands on services, corporate direction and budget capacity. This new structure seeks to manage the current position and the corporate demands. However, it is accepted as time goes on a creative and ambitious organisation such as ABC may need to tweak the structure as digital transformation occurs and commercial opportunities arise and structures within teams are reviewed and reflect such change.

Staffing Implications

81 The total headcount for the management structure is increasing by one (0.6 FTE) but this will be mitigated by further adjustments once internal appointments have been made. The proposal currently has the Head of Culture post being deleted from the establishment requiring one post holder to be put at risk of redundancy. Consultation with affected individuals will discuss suitable roles in the proposed structure.

82 The proposed model highlights post holders who are affected in one of three different ways.

- GROUP ONE – At risk group. One post holder (Head of Service Culture) is significantly affected as it is proposed that their role is deleted from the establishment under the proposals highlighted. Affected post-holders will be placed at risk of redundancy as part of the consultation process and suitable alternative roles discussed.
- GROUP TWO – Significant contractual change is proposed for this group. This group of post-holders are being consulted with regarding a proposed change to terms and conditions. This level of change is around job title, grade, salary and role focus as reflected in the proposed job descriptions. Change is not considered to be so material that the post is fundamentally removed. Post holders in this group will be invited to individual consultation meetings.
- GROUP THREE - Some contractual change is proposed for this group. This group of post-holders are being consulted with regarding a proposed change in service which is a contractual term. Additional informal changes are proposed such as reporting line, scope of role, number of reportees etc as reflected in the proposed job descriptions. Post holders in this group have the option to attend a consultation meeting if they wish to.
- GROUP FOUR – Non-contractual changes are suggested for this group such as change in report line. Post holders in this group will be consulted with via email.

Consultation Planned or Undertaken

83 Consultation has taken place on an individual basis with the affected employees and with all staff via the JCC. Consultation feedback received during the consultation process is summarised in the minutes of the JCC Minutes (10 February 2022).

84 A high proportion of the consultation feedback was around the disproportionate pay increase that existing senior managers would receive, and it was highlighted at the JCC that this would be in addition to the cost of living rise currently being

negotiated with Unison. The strength of feeling was such that we have reviewed the impact of this and have decided to recommend that the MG4 and above pay scales have a smaller cost of living increase applied than other pay scales. This will control the overall pay increases whilst also protecting against pay compression at the top of the pay scales. It is proposed that the increase is 1.5% whereas the current pay offer is 2.25%.

85 During the consultation process concern was raised by officers about inflation levels and the rising cost of living. This concern is recognised and the HR team will be providing additional guidance on financial wellbeing together with ad hoc welfare support where required. Pay negotiations with Unison for the 2022/2023 Pay Award are ongoing.

86 If the proposals are accepted, the affected employee in Group One who is at risk of redundancy will be consulted with regarding suitable alternative internal vacancies. Should no suitable alternative roles be available, affected employees selected for redundancy, will subsequently be served with their notice of termination by reason of redundancy and provided with information regarding their right of appeal against this decision.

87 Any potential terminations of employment, by reason of redundancy, following consultation as set out as above are proposed to be communicated on 04 March 2022. Appropriate redeployment processes will be followed prior to discussions on termination date, if applicable, ensuring statutory notice periods are followed.

88 If the proposals are accepted affected employees in Group Two and Group Three will be advised of any changes to their contractual terms and conditions with the proposed implementation after 04 March 2022.

89 If the proposals are accepted affected employees in Group Four will be advised of any changes to their contractual terms and conditions with the proposed implementation after 04 March 2022.

90 Recruitment activities for the proposed new Director roles will commence via Appointments Committee no later than April 2022.

Other Options Considered

91 A range of options were considered, taking into account the resource demands of the new corporate plan. These included: retaining the current structure, a number of different alignments of services, fewer directors.

Reasons for Supporting Option Recommended

92 The proposed structure was chosen as it provides resilience at senior level and supports the alignment of teams that have overlap or close working relationships. It provides a structure that opens up development opportunities for staff in the future helping to retain experienced and skilled staff.

Financial Implications

93 The new structure has been costed alongside the previous director structure and the existing structure and, (in year one for comparison purposes with the existing structure) it is comparable in costs. That is not to say that savings will be made and it is noted that there may be budget pressures in subsequent years. However, the rationale behind the proposals are not cost based but instead to secure the most suitable and appropriate senior structure for our organisation.

94 For information purposes only, the table below shows a comparison of the previous, current and proposed structures (at the top of the proposed grade for each post).

95 It should be noted at this point that consultation is ongoing with the employee and all reasonable attempts will be made to redeploy them and provide them with a suitable alternative role

96 In the event that a suitable alternative role cannot be found there will be costs associated a potential redundancy and, due to the post holder being over 55 they would be entitled to the early release of their local government pension. The confidential appendix outlines the associated costs of redundancy and pension fund strain.

97 Costs associated with the early release of pension, owing to the employee's age, are to be approved by full Council.

Next Steps in Process

98 Subject to the approval of council consultation will continue with the affected individual and if no suitable alternatives can be found for the costs associated with the redundancy and early release of his pension will be paid.

Comments from the Executive Leader

99 This is an important restructure for our authority and for the Borough of Ashford. A reflection on our achievements has highlighted for me, the importance of continuing to have the correct structure with a strong officer leadership team in place. The proposed structure is imperative to ensure that we deliver our new corporate plan and continue to provide outstanding services to the residents of our borough.

Not only does the proposed structure provide the necessary resources to support our strategic ambition but it also creates a clear career path for senior talent. In a challenging recruitment market we must focus on succession planning, retention and fair remuneration. I commend this report

Conclusion

100 This is an important review designed to provide the optimum level of service to the public, while meeting requirements to make financial savings in order to meet the challenges the general fund faces over the next 5 years.

101 The proposals set out a realistic and achievable set of measures that will improve service delivery and bring spending levels under control.

Contact and Email

102 Tracey Kerly – Chief Executive

Tracey.Kerly@ashford.gov.uk Tel: (01233) 330 601

Proposed Restructure Budget Summary

		PROPOSED STRUCTURE				CURRENT STRUCTURE				CURRENT STRUCTURE				Comments
Position	Grade	Salary (based on highest point) £	Oncosts £	Cash alternative £	Total £	Salary (based on highest point) £	Oncosts £	Cash alternative £	Total £	Salary (based on highest point) £	Oncosts £	Cash alternative £	Total £	
Chief Executive MG1	MG1	120,684	39,055	4,280	164,019	120,684	39,055	4,280	164,019	120,684	39,055	4,280	164,019	
Deputy CE MG2+	MG2+	103,762	33,403	4,280	141,445	93,762	30,184	4,280	128,226					£10k added for DCEX duties
Soli to cou MO MG2	MG2	63,633	20,271	2,996	86,900	93,762	30,184	4,280	128,226					
Director of Finance & Economy	MG2									93,762	30,184	4,280	128,226	
Director of Law & Governance	MG2									93,762	30,184	4,280	128,226	
Director of Place & Space	MG2									93,762	30,184	4,280	128,226	
Directors (Services) MG2	MG2	93,762	30,184	4,280	128,226	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Directors (Central) MG2	MG2	93,762	30,184	4,280	128,226	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Directors (health) MG2	MG2	46,881	15,092	2,140	64,113	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Partly funded by the Port (50%)
Ass Direc (LM & Env) MG3	MG3	81,006	25,796	3,050	109,852	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Ass Direc (Housing) MG3	MG3	81,006	25,796	3,050	109,852	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Ass Direc (HR & CS) MG3	MG3	81,006	25,796	3,050	109,852	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Ass Direc (CS&W) MG3	MG3	81,006	25,796	3,050	109,852	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Ass Direc (Planning) MG3	MG3	81,006	25,796	3,050	109,852	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Ass Direc (Finance & IT) MG3	MG3	81,006	25,796	3,050	109,852	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Ass Direc (APH) MG3	MG3	70,785	22,428	3,050	96,263	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Funded by the port (removed the increase)
Head of Service (LM & Env)	MG4				0	70,785	22,428	3,050	96,263	70,785	22,428	3,050	96,263	
Head of Service (Housing)	MG4				0	70,785	22,428	3,050	96,263	70,785	22,428	3,050	96,263	
Head of Service (Property & Projects)	MG4				0	70,785	22,428	3,050	96,263	70,785	22,428	3,050	96,263	
Head of Service (Culture)	MG4				0	70,785	22,428	3,050	96,263	70,785	22,428	3,050	96,263	
Head of Service (HR & CS)	MG4				0	70,785	22,428	3,050	96,263	70,785	22,428	3,050	96,263	
Head of Service (Policy)	MG4				0	70,785	22,428	3,050	96,263	70,785	22,428	3,050	96,263	
Head of Service (CS&W)	MG4				0	70,785	22,428	3,050	96,263	70,785	22,428	3,050	96,263	
Head of Service (Planning)	MG4				0	70,785	22,428	3,050	96,263	70,785	22,428	3,050	96,263	
Head of Service (Finance & IT)	MG4				0	70,785	22,428	3,050	96,263	70,785	22,428	3,050	96,263	
Head of Service (APH)	MG4				0	70,785	22,428	3,050	96,263	70,785	22,428	3,050	96,263	Not in original structure but for

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ED Manager	MG5				0
Head of Economic Development	MG4	70,785	22,428	3,050	96,263
Compliance & Data Protection Manager	MG5				0
Head of Policy & Performance	MG4	56,628	17,942	2,440	77,010
Totals		1,206,718	385,764	49,096	1,641,578

60,795	19,137	3,050	82,982	
			0	
48,636	15,038	2,440	66,114	
			0	
1,125,489	357,878	48,830	1,532,197	

60,795	19,137	3,050	82,982	
			0	
48,636	15,038	2,440	66,114	
			0	
1,219,251	388,062	53,110	1,660,423	

comparison reasons added
Based on 0.8 FTE
Based on 0.8 FTE

Pressure from Year 3		109,381
Year 2 Pressure		52,716
Year 1 Saving		(3,660)

Equality Impact Assessment

1. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is a document that summarises how the council has had due regard to the public sector equality duty (Equality Act 2010) in its decision-making. Although there is no legal duty to produce an EIA, the Council must have **due regard** to the equality duty and an EIA is recognised as the best method of fulfilling that duty. It can assist the Council in making a judgment as to whether a policy or other decision will have unintended negative consequences for certain people and help maximise the positive impacts of policy change. An EIA can lead to one of four consequences:

- (a) No major change – the policy or other decision is robust with no potential for discrimination or adverse impact. Opportunities to promote equality have been taken;
- (b) Adjust the policy or decision to remove barriers or better promote equality as identified in the EIA;
- (c) Continue the policy – if the EIA identifies potential for adverse impact, set out compelling justification for continuing;
- (d) Stop and remove the policy where actual or potential unlawful discrimination is identified.

Public sector equality duty

2. The Equality Act 2010 places a duty on the council, when exercising public functions, to have due regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation;
 - (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 (ie tackling prejudice and promoting understanding between people from different groups).

3. These are known as the three aims of the general equality duty.

Protected characteristics

4. The Equality Act 2010 sets out nine protected characteristics for the purpose of the equality duty:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership*
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

*For marriage and civil partnership, only the first aim of the duty applies in relation to employment.

Due regard

5. Having 'due regard' is about using good equality information and analysis at the right time as part of decision-making procedures.
6. To 'have due regard' means that in making decisions and in its other day-to-day activities the council must consciously consider the need to do the things set out in the general equality duty: eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations. This can involve:
- removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
 - taking steps to meet the needs of people with certain protected characteristics when these are different from the needs of other people.
 - encouraging people with certain protected characteristics to participate in public life or in other activities where it is disproportionately low.

7. How much regard is 'due' will depend on the circumstances. The greater the

potential impact, the higher the regard required by the duty. Examples of functions and decisions likely to engage the duty include: policy decisions, budget decisions, public appointments, service provision, statutory discretion, decisions on individuals, employing staff and procurement of goods and services.

8. In terms of timing:

- Having 'due regard' should be considered at the inception of any decision or proposed policy or service development or change.
- Due regard should be considered throughout development of a decision. Notes shall be taken and kept on file as to how due regard has been had to the equality duty in research, meetings, project teams, consultations etc.
- The completion of the EIA is a way of effectively summarising this and it should inform final decision-making.

Case law principles

9. A number of principles have been established by the courts in relation to the equality duty and due regard:

- Decision-makers in public authorities must be aware of their duty to have 'due regard' to the equality duty and so EIA's must be attached to any relevant committee reports.
- Due regard is fulfilled before and at the time a particular policy is under consideration as well as at the time a decision is taken. Due regard involves a conscious approach and state of mind.
- A public authority cannot satisfy the duty by justifying a decision after it has been taken.
- The duty must be exercised in substance, with rigour and with an open mind in such a way that it influences the final decision.
- The duty is a non-delegable one. The duty will always remain the responsibility of the public authority.
- The duty is a continuing one so that it needs to be considered not only when a

policy, for example, is being developed and agreed but also when it is implemented.

- It is good practice for those exercising public functions to keep an accurate record showing that they have actually considered the general duty and pondered relevant questions. Proper record keeping encourages transparency and will discipline those carrying out the relevant function to undertake the duty conscientiously.
- A public authority will need to consider whether it has sufficient information to assess the effects of the policy, or the way a function is being carried out, on the aims set out in the general equality duty.
- A public authority cannot avoid complying with the duty by claiming that it does not have enough resources to do so.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has produced helpful guidance on "Meeting the Equality Duty in Policy and Decision-Making" (October 2014). It is available on the following link and report authors should read and follow this when developing or reporting on proposals for policy or service development or change and other decisions likely to engage the equality duty. [Equality Duty in decision-making](#)

Lead officer:	Tracey Kerly Chief Executive
Decision maker:	Cabinet / Council
Decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy, project, service, contract • Review, change, new, stop 	Restructure of senior management - proposed
Date of decision: The date when the final decision is made. The EIA must be complete before this point and inform the final decision.	
Summary of the proposed decision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aims and objectives • Key actions • Expected outcomes • Who will be affected and how? • How many people will be affected? 	
Information and research: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the information and research that has informed the decision. • Include sources and key findings. 	Examples may include notes from meetings, emailed conversations (synopsis) alternatives considered and rejected and why
Consultation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What specific consultation has occurred on this decision? • What were the results of the consultation? • Did the consultation analysis reveal any difference in views across the protected characteristics? • What conclusions can be drawn from the analysis on how the decision will affect people with different protected characteristics? 	Individual consultation meetings have taken place with affected employees

Assess the relevance of the decision to people with different protected characteristics and assess the impact of the decision on people with different protected characteristics.

When assessing relevance and impact, make it clear who the assessment applies to within the protected characteristic category. For example, a decision may have high relevance for young people but low relevance for older people; it may have a positive impact on women but a neutral impact on men.

Protected characteristic	Relevance to Decision High/Medium/Low/None	Impact of Decision Positive (Major/Minor) Negative (Major/Minor) Neutral
<u>AGE</u> Elderly	none	Neutral
Middle age	none	Neutral
Young adult	none	Neutral
Children	none	Neutral
<u>DISABILITY</u> Physical	none	Neutral
Mental	none	Neutral
Sensory	none	Neutral
<u>GENDER RE- ASSIGNMENT</u>	none	Neutral
<u>MARRIAGE/CIVIL PARTNERSHIP</u>	none	Neutral
<u>PREGNANCY/MATERNITY</u>	none	Neutral
<u>RACE</u>	none	Neutral
<u>RELIGION OR BELIEF</u>	none	Neutral
<u>SEX</u> Men	none	Neutral
Women	none	Neutral
<u>SEXUAL ORIENTATION</u>	none	Neutral

Mitigating negative impact:

Where any negative impact has been identified, outline the measures taken to mitigate against it.

Advice has been provided

Is the decision relevant to the aims of the equality duty?

Guidance on the aims can be found in the EHRC's [Essential Guide](#), alongside fuller [PSED Technical Guidance](#).

Aim	Yes / No / N/A
1) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation	n/a
2) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	n/a
3) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it	n/a

<p>Conclusion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider how due regard has been had to the equality duty, from start to finish.• There should be no unlawful discrimination arising from the decision (see guidance above).• Advise on whether the proposal meets the aims of the equality duty or whether adjustments have been made or need to be made or whether any residual impacts are justified.• How will monitoring of the policy, procedure or decision and its implementation be undertaken and reported?	<p>Consultation has been followed and advice provided by qualified HR professionals</p> <p><i>The council's revised policy register will assist services to meet this</i></p>
EIA completion date:	14.02.22

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1, 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Greater Ashford Borough – Environment & Land Mapping Commission

NOTES of the 4th Meeting held virtually on 18 January 2022 at 1030

Present

Commission Members

Neil Bell	Chair of Commission & ABC Portfolio Holder Planning & Development
Noel Ovenden	Vice Chair of Commission & Leader of Ashford Independent Party & ABC Chair of Overview & Scrutiny
Michael Bax	Weald of Kent Protection Society (WKPS)
Christine Drury	Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE)
Nick Fenton	Kent Housing & Development Group
Jo James	Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce (KICC)
Sandra Norval	Southern Water
Chris Reynolds	Kent Downs AONB
David Robey	KCC Elected Member & Deputy Portfolio Holder for Economic Development
Jeremy Smith	Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC)

Professional Advisers

Jeremy Baker	ABC Principal Solicitor & Deputy Monitoring Officer
Tracey Butler	ABC Head of Environment & Land Management
Daniel Carter	ABC Spatial Planning Manager (for Simon Cole)
Tom Marchant	KCC Head of Strategic Planning & Policy
Andrew Osborne	ABC Economic Development Manager
Charlotte Hammersley	ABC Compliance & Data Protection Manager (part of mtg)

Apologies

Shona Johnstone	Homes England
Sam Loades	NFU

Not present:

Peter Dowling	River Stour Internal Drainage Board
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Welcome

The Chair welcomed everyone and said that the two working groups had each met twice since the previous Commission meeting; progress had been made and the working groups were going to present their work to date.

Notes of the previous meeting

The notes of the meeting on 7 December, previously circulated, were approved.

Chairman's Update

The Chair confirmed that consultants had been approached for the mapping; they are due to attend the Commission meeting on 8 February to explain the process and what is possible in terms of information available and different 'layers' that might be requested by the Commission.

The Chair also asked the Commission whether they would prefer to meet in person at the Civic Centre for the next meeting, or whether they were happy to meet virtually, although he explained that a 'hybrid' version would not be possible. It was agreed that the meeting would take place in the Civic Centre (which can now be moved back to the Council Chamber, as it will be available).

Feedback from Working Group 1

Christine Drury presented on behalf of WG1, detailing the process of looking at the 'What, Who & How' of consultation, using the definitions and working assumptions agreed at the Commission meeting on 7 December.

Through the use of a power point presentation, she explained that WG1 had considered various consultation issues, including, for example, how consultation should be used to probe what constitutes rural 'character', the opportunities to extend green corridors, and the wish to consider a country park 'at scale'.

In terms of who to consult with, Christine confirmed that parish & community councils were included in the terms of reference, but there would be a need to work around long lead times and to talk to KALC about the proposed parish groupings.

Consultation would need to take place no later than March/April and decisions would need to be made on whether it should be by interview, (face-to-face or virtually) or through written submissions/responses.

Various responses were made by the Commission members, including the aim to provide assets that promoted health & wellbeing; the need to consult with a diverse community, including young people (possibly via youth forums and schools and colleges), and to get feedback from the medical community; to consider a social media campaign; and to involve KCC (for PROW); and also to involve representatives from the developers (via Nick Fenton) and Ashford businesses (via Jo James).

On the mechanism for consultation, Charlotte Hammersley was asked to join the meeting; she said that the Council website could be used to promote and make questionnaires available, but that questions to young people would probably need to be tailored to them. Schools could be targeted via the Council's portal, and the Council magazine (Ashford for You) which is distributed to every household in the borough could be used to publicise details of the consultation. This, however, might not result in a representative sample and some thought needed to be given to this.

It was agreed that WG1 would need to meet again before the next Commission meeting and that that meeting should finalise a lot of the arrangements on consultation – in terms of a list of people/groups to consult, agreed methods of consultation, and a time table for doing this.

Feedback from Working Group 2

Sandra Norval presented on behalf of WG2, outlining the progress made on definitions and working assumptions. This had included some discussion which recognised the need to include factors affected by advances in technology, by Covid and its effects, and by climate change. Not least in 'setting the tone' for the Commission was the need to think about diversity and to represent the 'many voices' within the borough. Such issues may well alter the types of buildings, and locations, that people want to live, work and enjoy their leisure time in, etc.

Discussions had also taken place on the provision of infrastructure and how, particularly in smaller developments (which tended to be in the rural areas) new infrastructure may not be triggered either very quickly or, in some cases, at all.

The working group had also looked at potential 'zones' and come to the view that there are two distinct zones: (i) Ashford; and (ii) everything outside Ashford. It may well, as work progresses, become obvious that there are 'zones within zones' but this is not apparent at the moment and no assumptions have been made on that basis.

In terms of mapping, the key features (SSSIs, heritage sites, AONB, etc.) will need to be mapped; another category could be access to broadband, although this may prove more difficult to demonstrate on a mapping 'layer'.

Comments from the Commission members echoed their agreement with responses about the need to understand how businesses and people's needs are changing; how the digital world (fixed or mobile) is changing the opportunities in both living and employment terms. Other infrastructure providers could also be involved.

The next WG2 meeting is on 31 January (2 p.m.) and other Commission members are welcome to join the discussion if they wish (either at the virtual meeting, or via email before the meeting).

Items for discussion will be to determine what the two zones look like, and to achieve a defined list of 'layers' for the mapping.

Next Stages for the Commission

The two Working Groups will meet between now and 8 February; after this they *may* decide to amalgamate some of their work. In any event the scope of each group, at this stage, needs to be kept tight in order to meet the timescale.

The next Commission meeting will take place, in person, in the Civic Centre (Council Chamber) at 10.30 a.m. on 8 February, where TMA will present their mapping procedures, outline the possibilities, and answer questions from Commission members.

Feedback will also be given to the Commission from each of the Working Groups, with agreement to be achieved on the process and the timetable.

Circulation: 1.2.22

All Commission Members + Executive Leader of the Council

All Professional Advisors + Chief Executive

Secretariat:	Linda Stringer	ABC Senior Executive Assistant
	Jeff Simms	ABC Senior Communications Officer
	Danny Sheppard	ABC Member Services Manager*
	Kirsty Hogarth	ABC Head of Secretariat

(* denotes not in attendance for meeting)

KH/ELMC/18/1/22

Compliance and Enforcement Board

Notes of a Virtual Meeting of the Compliance and Enforcement Board held on Microsoft Teams on the **25th January 2022**.

Present:

Cllr. Bell (Chairman);

Cllrs. Feacey, Forest, Spain.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2(c) Cllr. Forest attended as Substitute Member for Cllr. Buchanan.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Buchanan, Shorter.

Strategic Development and Delivery Manager.

Also in attendance:

Cllrs. Campkin, Harman, Ledger.

Environmental Contracts and Enforcement Manager, Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager, Team Leader Planning Enforcement, Member Services and Ombudsman Complaints Officer.

1. Notes of the Meeting of 26th October 2021

1.1 The Board agreed the notes as an accurate record.

2. Environmental Crime Enforcement in Ashford

2.1 The Environmental Contracts and Enforcement Manager introduced this item and drew Members' attention to the key points within the report.

2.2 The Chairman said it was pleasing to see the work undertaken by the team and the progress so far, and he particularly noted the improved communications.

2.3 The Chairman opened up the item for discussion and the following comments were made:

- A Member wished to highlight the contribution through litter-picking efforts. He asked about the KCC public refuse site, and whether the current running methods were having an adverse effect on fly-tipping numbers. The Environmental Contracts and Enforcement Manager said that there was no evidence that this was the case. There had been an increase in the fee for disposal of building waste but this had not lead to an increase in unlawful disposals. The public appeared to

have accepted the new booking system, although there was still capacity to arrive at the site without pre-booking, and there was no indication that the current rules had led to an increase in fly-tipping.

- A Member commented that the graph of fly-tipping numbers was useful.
- A question was asked about abandoned shopping trolleys and whether it would be useful to record the number of trolleys being fly-tipped, and their origins. One Member suggested that large companies could be 'named and shamed'. The Environmental Contracts and Enforcement Manager said that it could be hard to identify the origin of abandoned trolleys, but officers would liaise further with the larger companies to seek to improve the current situation. He explained about the arrangements with Trolleywise, and it was suggested that local companies should be encouraged to sign up with the company if they had not already done so.

Recommendations/Actions:

That the update report be received and noted.

3. Anti-Social Behaviour in Ashford - Update

- 3.1 The Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager introduced this item and highlighted the key points within the report.

Recommendations/Actions:

That the update report be received and noted.

4. Planning Enforcement Update

- 4.1 The Team Leader Planning Enforcement introduced this item and drew Members' attention to the main points in the report.
- 4.2 The Chairman opened up the item for discussion and the following comments were made:
- A Member asked about the number of live investigations and noted that, although the last three quarters were similar, they had been the worse so far with a 25% increase on previous figures. The Team Leader Planning Enforcement confirmed that this was the case, although the team were working hard to keep the numbers stable at the moment. A question was asked about sufficient resources and the Team Leader Planning Enforcement responded that regular discussions were taking place regarding the vacant post, as well as the post currently filled by a consultant.
 - A Member said that planning enforcement was a contentious issue within communities. The Team Leader Planning Enforcement replied

that it was important that there was an general understanding and acceptance of the length of time needed to deal with cases to conclusion. It was suggested that there could be a better system of information available on the internet but the Team Leader Planning Enforcement explained that details of enforcement cases were confidential and it was not possible to publicise any more than the most basic information. A Member emphasized the importance of face to face meetings between ward members and officers, and said that this should not be replaced by any self-serve system. She agreed that residents struggled to understand the process and she considered that Members and residents needed continued communication from officers to appreciate the complexities of the process.

Recommendations/Actions:

That the update report be received and noted.

5. Date of Next Meetings

- 5.1 26th April 2022 at 10am
26th July 2022 at 10am
25th October 2022 at 10am

Councillor Bell (Chairman)
Compliance and Enforcement Board

Queries concerning these minutes? Please contact Member Services:
Telephone: 01233 330349 Email: membersservices@ashford.gov.uk
Agendas, Reports and Minutes are available on: <http://ashford.moderngov.co.uk>

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Climate Change Advisory Committee

Notes of a Meeting of the Climate Change Advisory Committee held on the **13th January 2022.**

Present:

Cllr. Barrett (Chairman);
Cllr. Feacey (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Anckorn, Blanford, Campkin, Ledger, Mulholland.

Apology:

Grounds Maintenance Operations Manager

Also Present:

Cllrs. Clokie, Forest, Harman, Iliffe, Michael, Ovenden, Shorter, Walder, Wright.

Head of Corporate Policy, Economic Development & Communications, Head of Environment & Land Management, Head of Corporate Property and Projects, Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager, Development & Regeneration Manager, Parking, Highways & Transportation Team Leader, Senior Mechanical & Electrical Surveyor, Waste & Recycle Education Officer, Strategy and Policy Development Manager, Senior Marketing Officer, Member Services Officer.

1. Declaration of Interest

- 1.1 Cllr. Feacey made a Voluntary Announcement, as he was on the Management Committee of UK LPG.
- 1.2 Cllr. Mulholland made a Voluntary Announcement as a Member of Tenterden Town Council.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

- 2.1 The Minutes of the Meeting held on 2nd February 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

3. Draft Terms of Reference

- 3.1 The Chairman advised that the Terms of Reference had changed since the previous Committee had met. He asked Members whether they were happy with the draft Terms, which would then be signed off by the Leader, and the following points were raised:

- A Member asked if the full title of the Action Plan could be changed, since it currently read as Carbon Reduction Action Plan (CRAP). Members and Officers agreed and Carbon Neutral Action Plan was proposed in its place.
- Officers and Members were unsure who the ABC Climate Change Group were, mentioned at Point 7. The Leader would be asked for clarification on this and remove if this was duplication of this Committee.
- The Head of Corporate Policy, Economic Development & Communications suggested that the Communications Team be cited specifically at point 4 (viii). In addition, reference to the Green Communications Plan would be useful.
- The Chairman added that he had drafted a letter to be sent out to the major supermarkets and businesses as a pilot scheme in the Borough. It was requested by Members that Brake Brothers and Ashford College be included in the distribution, and the letter could be circulated throughout the Council.

Recommended:

That the Draft Terms of Reference be updated to reflect the amendments stated and then sent to the Leader for signing off.

4. Developing Ashford's Carbon Descent Plan (presentation from LASER)

4.1 Helen Cartledge and Lloyd Milner attended and represented Laser Energy. They gave a presentation to the Committee, outlining the work already completed and what was to follow in order to begin the modelling process. The next steps were to conduct additional studies to include a District Emissions Study, Science Based Targets Pathway and Supply Chain Assessment. The Project end date of March was aligned with a Members Engagement Workshop that would hopefully take place in February. The presentation was then opened up to the Committee and the following points and questions were raised:-

- The Chairman highlighted the issue of including Well to Tank within the carbon emissions figures. Most of the Committee Members would agree to include those figures but it was suggested that more time be given to consider this decision. The Chairman agreed that he would liaise with Committee Members offline and return to Laser with a decision within 7/10 days.

- The scope Laser were currently working with excluded ABC Housing. The Chairman advised that the Housing Dept. were planning to give a presentation on their plans at the next meeting in March. A number of queries were raised regarding the Council's housing stock. Members were interested to understand what the percentage of carbon effect was from social housing, compared to the scope of everything else outlined within the report and they agreed that it needed to be reviewed in context with everything else. The Chairman spoke about reducing EPC ratings within Council houses (to move from E/D rating to a C rating) and the huge cost of that undertaking, which was in the region of £80 million. This would need to come from the HRA fund, but it was an essential cost and task.
- A Member asked about the inclusion of targets and milestones. Helen explained that these could be included and contain assumptions and timeframes. She added that there was flexibility and targets could be revised and adjusted if it became apparent that they were not achievable, taking into consideration the limited Local Authority budget. Any milestones for the modelling would be included from 2022 to 2030 to keep them inclusive with the declaration made by ABC. The Member highlighted that it was important for the Committee to comprehend why some targets would need to be revised if that was the case.
- A question was asked concerning the suggested figure of 3270 tonnes of co2, and whether that was that in absolute terms. Helen explained that when looking at accounting for growth in terms of ABC, Laser would review the baseline.
Post Meeting additional comment: Growth & associated consumption occurring after the initial baseline year of 19/20 would be incorporated within the initial year of growth and then future years. The GHG protocol advises that base year emissions and any historic data are not recalculated for organic growth or decline – in this case acquisitions or closures by ABC.
- When considering use of green electricity – solar or hydro generated, Laser could provide a Green tariff, produced from renewable sources and certified. Other options included a Green Energy Basket or PEPPA (Public Energy Power Purchase Agreement) – these sources for the Green Energy Basket and PEPPA were traceable and a PEPPA contract revenue could be used to initiate construction of new build renewable energy assets. The Member Engagement Workshop would explore this topic in more detail.
- Concerning procurement, Central Government were looking at carbon reduction plans, which would need to be provided with procurement of contracts over £5 million, but that figure may decrease over time. A number of templates would be provided to assist companies to produce their carbon footprint.
- Discussion turned to the huge cost of decarbonisation and how to demonstrate to the public what action was currently underway. The Chairman asked if ABC were to decarbonise along the route set out by Laser, would they at some point begin to generate revenue. Helen advised that

installations of solar farms could generate excess energy that could be exported back to the grid, which would create revenue, and had a payback of on average 20 years and savings were associated with reduction in gas and electricity use. Solar PV panels and LED lighting could also potentially generate income/save costs, after the payback period. It was agreed that there would be a large initial front spend, and the focus was primarily on reducing carbon emissions as opposed to generating revenue. The Council also had to consider that the more carbon emissions they had remaining, the more they would then need to offset. This would increase the Councils risk exposure, since prices on the open market were likely to fluctuate.

- A Member asked about installation of solar PV on buildings including council houses instead of a solar farm, which would take up green space. Helen explained that there were three solar projects already in the pipeline, which would be included in the modelling. Other available areas such as car parks and roof spaces would also be taken into consideration for the modelling.

Resolved:

That the report be received and noted.

5. Feedback from the consultation on the Carbon Reduction Plan

5.1 The Strategy and Policy Development Manager gave a presentation to the Committee summarising the results from the consultation. The presentation outlined and gave details through the following headings:

- Overall Aim
- 8 Priorities
- Consultation
- Questionnaire
- Social Media
- Face to Face
- Key Messages
- Next Steps

5.2 The Chairman expressed disappointment in regards to the low response rate and considered the possibility of alternative methods of communicating with residents. A Member alluded that the pandemic was a key reason why the response rate was so low, with people struggling to direct their focus away from Covid and its effects. She went onto say that the public were still highly motivated on carbon reduction and that the information provided by ABC to its residents should be clear, concise and honest.

5.3 The Committee went onto consider the issue of communication. Sponsored Ads and algorithms was cited as another method to increase the communicative reach of the Council, and the Senior Marketing Officer agreed

but said the problem was budget restraints within the Council. Public Engagement days were also encouraged and the Chairman requested that the topic of public engagement be made a priority for the Committee to review and feedback.

6 Green Communications Plan

6.1 The Senior Marketing Officer and Waste & Recycle Education Officer spoke to the Committee and gave a brief presentation covering the following themes:

- Green Pioneer Objectives
- What we are doing already
- Green Communications Group aim
- Ashford Green Focus Group
- Where do we go from here (results from Consultation, Mayors events, and what residents want to see)
- Climate Action Communications Plan
- ABC Communications Resource Library
- Further Ideas

6.2 The item was then opened up to the Committee and the following questions/comments were raised:

- The Chairman reiterated the significance of public engagement being made a priority, in the future. The Waste & Recycle Education Officer confirmed that some engagement events had already been set up with 11 local Schools having been invited to an event in March.
- A Member spoke about engagement in rural areas and encouraged Officers to feed material into Parish newsletters and approach KALC with information.

7. Air Quality Strategy

7.1 The Strategy and Policy Development Manager explained to the Committee that there were many similarities and duplicate actions between the Air Quality Strategy and the Carbon Neutral Action Plan, and therefore the proposal was that the two be merged. They shared many synergies and objectives, and so it seemed logical that they sit together.

7.2 The item was the opened up to the Committee and the following questions/comments were raised:

- The Chairman spoke about roadside planting and considered how it could be expanded. The Head of Environment & Land Management explained that the Aspire Manager was working on this in terms of additional pollinators that could overlap with the plants that could absorb more pollutants.

- A Member spoke about the SPD for Planning and what could be done in terms of Carbon reduction. Planning Officers were reviewing this and so more info should be available soon.
- The issue around sustainable land management and retention of mature trees was raised, with particular reference to landowners. A Member reinforced the importance of retention alongside planting new trees, and suggested this be ramped up within the report. The Head of Environment & Land Management reassured the Committee that a Tree Officer vacancy was being advertised to take forward the Queens Green Canopy Project, and within the next two years, a wider tree-planting programme was being set up.

Resolved:

That the actions listed in the Air Quality Strategy be incorporated into the Carbon Neutral Action Plan.

8. Initiatives to Increase Electric Charging Points in ABC Car Parks Report

- 8.1 This item was deferred to an extra meeting scheduled for Monday 17th January.

9. Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme update

- 9.1 The Head of Corporate Property and Projects introduced this item and spoke about the opportunity to draw down monies for the Stour Centre decarbonisation works. £1.7 million of Government funding had been secured and enabled ABC to implement significant energy saving measures. A quirk around the VAT meant that some additional funds had been reallocated to support further initiatives, principally at Tenterden Leisure Centre. There were numerous grant opportunities available, which proactively needed to be explored. The point was made that if the utility contracts had not been competently managed, ABC would have incurred an extra £550,000 expenditure. Members needed to be mindful of Carbon savings, but in addition consider the revenue implications of utilities increasing.
- 9.2 The item was then opened up to the Committee and the following questions/comments were raised:
- The Chairman asked about photovoltaic panels/canopy schemes and the potential to utilise them in the Stour Centre car park. The Development & Regeneration Manager was exploring this option, and had to consider the requisite to provide a safe environment in regards to anti-social behaviour concerning a canopy scheme.

- In terms of a green supplier for the Civic Centre, Laser Energy were currently managing a blended basket approach on ABC's behalf, but this contract would end in 2023 and therefore the opportunity to review alternatives and consider the financial effects would be presented then.

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Climate Change Advisory Committee

Notes of an extra Meeting of the Climate Change Advisory Committee held on the 17th January 2022.

Present:

Cllr. Barrett (Chairman);
Cllr. Feacey (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Blanford, Campkin, Ledger, Mulholland.

Apology:

Cllr. Anckorn

Also Present:

Cllr. Clokie

Head of Environment & Land Management, Community Safety and Wellbeing Manager, Parking, Highways & Transportation Team Leader, Member Services Officer.

1. Declaration of Interest

- 1.1 Cllr. Feacey made a Voluntary Announcement, as he was on the Management Committee of UK LPG.
- 1.2 Cllr. Mulholland made a Voluntary Announcement, as he was a Member of Tenterden Town Council.

2. Well to Tank Data

- 2.1 The Head of Environment & Land Management spoke to the Committee about assessing carbon emission from its original source to final destination, and measuring each element separately. The Friends of the Earth had challenged a County Council on not measuring from well to tank, but the High Court had ruled it was not reasonable.
- 2.2 The Chairman identified that it was logistically and strategically difficult to undertake this, but also recognised that it was unfair for the Council to take the hit for other's carbon emissions. The Vice-Chairman went on to say that it reinforced the importance of decreasing the Council's own emissions.
- 2.3 It was agreed that the Committee should review this information in more detail. Information would be sent to the Member Services Officer and she would circulate to the Committee prior to the next meeting and publication of the agenda.

POST MEETING NOTE

Information was circulated to the Committee after the meeting and Members were asked for feedback, and from that, the Chairman has confirmed that ABC will not be including Well to Tank calculations as part of the baseline.

3. Initiatives to increase electric charging points

3.1 The Parking, Highways & Transportation Team Leader introduced this item and gave some background information about the scheme to replace existing EVCPs and install additional points across the borough.

3.2 The item was then opened up to the Committee and the following points were raised:

- It was confirmed that parking bays often had double charging points, and this was reflected in Table 2 of the report, which was based on the minimum number. It was noted that the table held information about non-ABC (private) charging points also, and it was not known whether they were single or double, so the assumption was single. The Portfolio Holder added that many of the current charging points were not fit for purpose and so would need replacing regardless.
- In response to a question asking how visitors/residents would pay to charge their cars, it was explained that residents and visitors would pay via BMM Energy Solutions and payment was expected to be via contactless methods. Loyalty options would also be available and integrated with the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) car park system. The time slots were expected to be in 4 hour periods, and there would be monitoring restrictions to ensure charging points were not needlessly monopolised by one car.
- The Committee discussed potential changes and implications to planning policy. The Head of Environment & Land Management cited the National Planning Policy Framework and advised that an update was expected soon. A Member spoke about water run-off and the impact on the environment, with concrete driveways expected to increase in line with more vehicles' electric and charging points. Permeable hard standing was encouraged when paving over front gardens, to allow surface run-off to infiltrate the soil below.
- The installation of on-street charging points had been dismissed as part of this project, but could later be revisited and reviewed again.
- A Member asked what the timeframe was for the installation of charging points at Tenterden Recreation Ground Road. It was confirmed that subject to funding and equipment availability, these could be installed within 8-10 weeks.

- The Chairman considered the 7kw charging points at the Civic Centre and whether they would be upgraded in line with other 22kw charging points. This was a consideration for future-proofing and subject to demand. The whole project was hoped to be completed by the end of summer 2022.

Recommended:

The Report was approved and recommended for submission to Cabinet

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Agenda Item No: 17

Report To: CABINET

Date: 24TH FEBRUARY 2022

Report Title: SCHEDULE OF KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN

Report Author and Job Title: Danny Sheppard, Member Services Manager

Portfolio Holder: Portfolio Holders are individually specified in the attached Schedule.



Summary:	To set out the latest Schedule of Key Decisions to be taken by the Cabinet of Ashford Borough Council.
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Key Decision: NO

Significantly Affected Wards: Where appropriate, individual Wards are indicated.

Recommendations **That the Cabinet receive and note the latest Schedule of Key Decisions.**

Policy Overview: Under The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, there is no longer a legal requirement to publish a Forward Plan of Key Decisions, however there is still a requirement to publish details of Key Decisions 28 clear days before the meeting they are to be considered at. The Council maintains a live, up to date rolling list of decision items on the Council's website, and that list will be presented to the Cabinet each month, in its current state, for Members' information.

Financial Implications: Nil

Legal Implications: n/a

Equalities Impact Assessment n/a

Other Material Implications: Nil

Exempt from publication: No

Background Papers: None

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**CABINET
SCHEDULE OF KEY DECISIONS TO BE TAKEN**

The following Key Decisions will be taken by Ashford Borough Council's Cabinet on the dates stated.

Ashford Borough Council's Cabinet is made up of: - Councillors Gerry Clarkson; Paul Bartlett; Neil Bell; Andrew Buchanan; Paul Clokie; Peter Feacey; Matthew Forest; Nathan Iliffe; Alan Pickering; and Neil Shorter.

Copies of the reports and any other relevant documents that are submitted to the Cabinet in connection with a proposed decision will be available for inspection, or on screen, five clear days before the decision date at the Civic Centre, Tannery Lane, Ashford and at The Town Hall, 24 High Street, Tenterden, during opening hours, or at <https://ashford.moderngov.co.uk>

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Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
24th February 2022					
Revenue Budget 2022/23	<i>To present the draft revenue budget for 2022/23 to the Cabinet for recommendation to Council.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Maria Stevens	Open	28/2/21
Financial Monitoring – Quarterly Report	<i>Quarterly budget monitoring report</i>	Cllr Shorter	Maria Stevens	Open	28/2/21
Corporate Performance Report	<i>The report seeks to give Members and the Borough's residents an overview of how the Council is performing. It seeks to do this in a transparent and easily-accessible manner, giving a key performance 'snapshot'.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Tom Swain	Open	28/2/21

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
Egerton Neighbourhood Plan	<i>To report the outcome of the referendum of the Egerton Parish Neighbourhood Plan and recommend formal adoption by Full Council, if the outcome of the referendum is in support of the Plan.</i>	Cllr Bell	Claire Marchant	Open	2/12/21
New Senior Structure	<i>To outline a proposed new structure, that seeks to introduce a new tier of Directors by realigning services under fewer Heads of Service (who will be re-designated Assistant Directors) and introducing three senior specialist roles.</i>	Cllr Clarkson	Tracey Kerly	Open (Exempt Appendix)	20/12/21
Rolvenden - Land Acquisition in the HRA	<i>To detail the latest proposed acquisition in the HRA and to advised of the Housing Service's plan to move quickly to buy a piece of viable land in the Rolvenden Parish.</i>	Cllr Clokie	Mark James	Open (Exempt Appendix)	7/1/22
Project Green	<i>Consideration of Confidential Report</i>	Cllr Clarkson	Ben Lockwood	Exempt	7/1/22
31st March 2022					
Draft Equality Policy		Cllr Clarkson/ Pickering	Charlotte Hammersley	Open	6/1/22
Stodmarsh Mitigation Framework		Cllr Bell	Daniel Carter	Open	8/2/22

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
Implementing Trusted Assessors to Improve Support for Independent Living	<i>To approves the use of Trusted Assessors to improve Disabled Facility Grants services and provide further information on the benefits and implications on introducing TAs as part of our DFG services.</i>	Cllr Clokie	Julian Watts	Open	20/1/22
28th April 2022					
Annual Pay Policy Statement (including Review for 2022/23)	<i>A review of the annual Pay Policy Statement and Ashford Living Wage Allowance.</i>	Cllr Pickering	Michelle Pecci/ Joy Cross	Open	19/3/21
Street Lighting Project – Phase 2		Cllr Iliffe	Paul McKenner	Open	20/8/21
26th May 2022					
Carbon Neutral Action Plan – Adoption	<i>To adopt the plan following a period of consultation.</i>	Cllr Clarkson	Jennifer Shaw	Open	20/5/21
Repton - Land Acquisition in the HRA		Cllr Clokie	Mark James	Open	3/2/22
30th June 2022					
Recovery Plan Annual Report 2021/22	<i>To present the Annual Report 2021/22 highlighting performance against the Recovery Plan priorities.</i>	Cllr Clarkson/ Shorter	Tom Swain	Open	28/6/21

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
Final Outturn 2021/22	<i>Final budget outturn for previous financial year.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Maria Stevens	Open	28/6/21
28th July 2022					
Revenues & Benefits Recommended Write-Offs Schedule	<i>Proposed formal write-off of debts</i>	Cllr Shorter	Nic Stevens	Open (Exempt Appendix)	30/7/21
25th August 2022					
KEEP CLEAR FOR HOLIDAYS					
29th September 2022					
Financial Monitoring – Quarterly Report	<i>Quarterly budget monitoring report</i>	Cllr Shorter	Maria Stevens	Open	1/10/21
Corporate Performance Report	<i>The report seeks to give Members and the Borough's residents an overview of how the Council is performing. It seeks to do this in a transparent and easily-accessible manner, giving a key performance 'snapshot'.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Tom Swain	Open	1/10/21
Corporate Commercial Property Strategy – Annual Report	<i>To advise of the revenue performance of the Council's corporate property portfolio during the last financial period and to advise of proposals to increase profitability in the coming financial period.</i>	Cllr Iliffe	Paul McKenner	Open	1/10/21

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
27th October 2022					
Medium Term Financial Plan	<i>To ask Cabinet to note the Medium Term Financial Plan ahead of this year's Budget process.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Maria Stevens	Open	29/10/21
24th November 2022					
Corporate Performance Report	<i>To give Members and residents an overview of how the council is performing with a key performance 'snapshot'.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Tom Swain	Open	29/11/21
Council Tax Base 2022/23	<i>To present for approval the estimated 2022/23 Council tax base calculation for the Borough and each parished area, on which the major preceptors and local Parish Councils will base their requirements.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Maria Stevens	Open	29/11/21
Draft Budget 2023/24	<i>To present the preliminary draft service budget and outline MTFP for the purposes of subsequent formal scrutiny by the O&S Task Group and public consultation.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Maria Stevens	Open	29/11/21
Financial Monitoring – Quarterly Report	<i>Quarterly budget monitoring report.</i>	Cllr Shorter	Maria Stevens	Open	29/11/21

Decision Item	Report Summary	Relevant Portfolio Holder	Report Author	Open or Exempt	Added to Schedule
15th December 2022					
Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2022-2052 (including Financing and Affordable Homes Programme)	<i>To detail the financial position in the HRA and ask Members to agree Housing's priorities for the next year.</i>	Cllr Clokie	Sharon Williams/Mark James	Open (Exempt Appendix)	20/12/21
Infrastructure Funding Statement		Cllr Bell	Daniel Carter	Open	20/12/21
Update on New Waste Contract		Cllr Buchanan	Tracey Butler	Open	5/1/22
26th January 2023					
Revenues & Benefits Recommended Write-Offs Schedule	<i>Proposed formal write-off of debts</i>	Cllr Shorter	Nic Stevens	Open (Exempt Appendix)	29/1/21

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16/2/22

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