



AGENDA

CABINET MEETING

Date: Wednesday, 10 July 2019

Time: 7.00pm

Venue: Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT

Membership:

Councillors Mike Baldock (Vice-Chairman), Monique Bonney, Angela Harrison, Ben J Martin, Richard Palmer, Roger Truelove (Chairman) and Tim Valentine.

Quorum = 3

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Pages

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(a) in the event of the alarm sounding, everybody must leave the building via the nearest safe available exit and gather at the Assembly points at the far side of the Car Park. Nobody must leave the assembly point until everybody can be accounted for and nobody must return to the building until the Chairman has informed them that it is safe to do so; and

(b) the lifts must not be used in the event of an evacuation.

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It is important that the Chairman is informed of any person attending who is disabled or unable to use the stairs, so that suitable arrangements may be made in the event of an emergency.

2. Apologies for Absence

3. Minutes

To approve the [Minutes](#) of the Meeting held on 12 June 2019 (Minute Nos. 45 - 51) as a correct record.

4. Declarations of Interest

Councillors should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves or their spouse, civil partner or person with whom they are living with as a spouse or civil partner. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

The Chairman will ask Members if they have any interests to declare in respect of items on this agenda, under the following headings:

(a) Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) under the Localism Act 2011. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. After declaring a DPI, the Member must leave the meeting and not take part in the discussion or vote. This applies even if there is provision for public speaking.

(b) Disclosable Non Pecuniary (DNPI) under the Code of Conduct adopted by the Council in May 2012. The nature as well as the existence of any such interest must be declared. After declaring a DNPI interest, the Member may stay, speak and vote on the matter.

(c) Where it is possible that a fair-minded and informed observer, having considered the facts would conclude that there was a real possibility that the Member might be predetermined or biased the Member should declare their predetermination or bias and then leave the room while that item is considered.

Advice to Members: If any Councillor has any doubt about the existence or nature of any DPI or DNPI which he/she may have in any item on this agenda, he/she should seek advice from the Monitoring Officer, the Head of Legal or from other Solicitors in Legal Services as

early as possible, and in advance of the Meeting.

Part B Report for Decision by Cabinet

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Issued on Monday, 1 July 2019

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**Chief Executive, Swale Borough Council,
Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT**

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Agenda Item 5

Cabinet	Agenda Item:
Meeting Date	10 July 2019
Report Title	Financial Management Report – Outturn 2018/19
Cabinet Member	Cllr Roger Truelove, Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance
SMT Lead	Nick Vickers, Chief Financial Officer
Head of Service	Nick Vickers, Chief Financial Officer
Lead Officer	Phil Wilson, Financial Services Manager
Key Decision	Yes
Classification	Open
Forward Plan	Reference number:
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To note the gross revenue underspend of £930,800. 2. To consider the revenue service rollovers of £722,500 and the setting up of new reserves as set out in in Appendix I Table 11 for approval. 3. To set up a new fund called ‘Special Projects’ to replace the Regeneration Fund and to agree to topping up this Fund by £1m per annum from reserves. 4. To consider reinstating the car park concession at the Swallows and Sheerness Leisure Centres from July 2019 at an estimated cost of £90,000 in 2019/20 funded from the underspend in 2018/19. 5. To implement the Real Living Wage for SBC staff at a cost of £68,000 per annum funded from the underspend in 2018/19. 6. To delegate to the Chief Financial Officer the allocation of uncommitted underspends to reserve funds. 7. To note the capital expenditure of £18,870,571, as detailed in paragraph 8 and Appendix I Table 14. 8. To consider the capital rollovers of £2,862,822, as detailed in Appendix I Table 15 for approval.

1. Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out the revenue and capital outturn position for 2018/19.
- 1.2 Whilst the report refers to “underspends”, this actually consists of two quite separate issues; underspends against expenditure budgets, and additional income compared to budget. The net effect is an underspend against the agreed Council budget.

- 1.3 This report shows that the Council has been able to achieve a significant underspend in the year. With a well-known flightpath of reduced funding into the medium term, the Council has pre-empted future funding reductions by restricting expenditure in year.
- 1.4 The outturn position needs to be seen in the context of the Council's medium-term financial position, with Government funding continuing to decline and the Council being more dependent on its own resources. The scope of management efficiency savings and for savings on major contracts is also much reduced given the successful work to date. The rollover approach seeks to combine and continue to fund service initiatives and create funding sources to help us achieve a balanced budget position in the next two years. Balancing the budget therefore becomes much more about generating income, via business rates in particular.
- 1.5 The headline figures are:
- total revenue underspend of £930,800 including £1,027,000 of additional income – Table 10 in Appendix I;
 - £722,500 revenue rollover requests from Heads of Service – Table 11 in Appendix I;
 - capital underspend of £1,476,009 – Table 14 in Appendix I; and
 - £2,862,822 rollover requests of capital underspends – Table 15 in Appendix I.
 - An increase of £4m in the Council's reserves – Table 13 in Appendix I.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Council operates a budget monitoring process at Head of Service level, with regular reports to the Cabinet Member for Finance and the Strategic Management Team.
- 2.2 Financial monitoring reports are presented to Cabinet on a quarterly basis, as well as to Scrutiny Committee.

3. Proposals

Revenue Outturn

- 3.1 The last reported variance to Cabinet covering April to December for net revenue service expenditure was an underspend of £270,950 and the equivalent outturn figure shown in Table 3 is an underspend of £615,648, which represents a movement of £344,698 on a budget of £18.578 million. Table 1 below details the significant movements and is based on Table 10 in Appendix I.

Table 1 – Net Revenue Service Expenditure - Movement from April to December Forecast to Outturn

Net Revenue Service Expenditure	£'000
Variance reported to Cabinet for April to December	(271)
Housing Benefit net movements (total gross payments and grant income £43m)	(141)
Leisure, Sports, Open Spaces, Parks, Countryside and Allotments, due to identified leisure contract savings and open spaces additional income	(77)
Additional income from net interest on management of surplus funds due to improved net interest returns (average total investment £28m)	(73)
Additional income due from Gravesham Borough Council for Stay Put services and additional Stay Put works reimbursed from grants	(60)
Net income from previous elections was confirmed for Council use but this can only be used to support future election related costs	(55)
Net other items	61
Variance reported to Cabinet for 2018/19 Outturn	(616)

3.2 Unusually the movement consists of a large number of changes, which overall were favourable since the previous quarter. It is essential that budget managers produce realistic forecasts of the year end outturn as early as possible in the financial year. Finance will be working with budget managers to ensure forecasts which are closer to outturn are prepared.

3.3 Table 2 below provides more details on the outturn position by service, grouped by reason for variance (e.g. additional income, additional costs, etc.) Table 3 summarises the outturn position by Head of Service. Appendix I provides more details on the Council's outturn for 2018/19 including revenue, capital, reserves and requested rollovers.

Table 2: Service Movements

Service/Contract	Reason for Variance	Working Budget £'000	Outturn Variance to Budget £'000
Additional Income (brackets in variance mean additional income)			
Parking Management	Additional income from pay & display fees	(1,941)	(52)
	Additional income from parking permits and Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) – on street parking	(390)	(66)
Beach Huts	Additional income	(22)	(2)
Seafront	Additional income – memorials	(25)	(17)
Planning	Fees – additional planning income	(952)	(287)
	Fees – pre-application planning advice	(90)	(10)
	Fees – S106 monitoring fees	(65)	(36)
Licensing	Licensing income	(100)	(22)
	Taxi Licensing – additional income	(64)	(48)
Highways	Street naming	(36)	(40)

Service/Contract	Reason for Variance	Working Budget £'000	Outturn Variance to Budget £'000
Housing – Stay Put Scheme	Disabled facilities grant fees	(143)	(57)
Homelessness	New Burdens Grant (Homelessness Case Level Information Collection)	-	(12)
Property Management	Rental income	(362)	(28)
Leisure	Central House utility costs recharge	-	(11)
Sports Development	Additional grant income	-	(19)
Tourism	Additional grant income	-	(15)
Democratic Services	Additional grant income from KCC	-	(55)
Revenue Services	Council Tax – recovery of Council Tax Benefit overpaid	(413)	(128)
Corporate	Net investment income	(30)	(156)
Loss of Income:			
Parking Management	Penalty Charge Notices	(239)	6
Land Charges	Loss of income (net)	(225)	69
Housing Benefit & Council Tax	Loss of admin grant	(757)	66
Refuse & Recycling	Sale of brown bins	(816)	13
External Legal Fees	S106 fee income	(99)	4
Licensing	Gambling licence fees	(41)	20
Other Net Income	Net additional income	(990)	(144)
Total Net Income			(1,027)
Procurement/Shared Service Savings/Costs: (brackets in variance mean underspend)			
Public conveniences/ street cleansing and refuse collection	Contract costs	3,720	(31)
Democratic Services	MKS corporate shared service costs	74	(34)
Sheerness Gateway	Savings on KCC contract for fees & services	54	(38)
Leisure Services	Leisure contract savings on operating fees and utilities subsidy	698	(30)
Leisure Services	Contract & concessionary charges	14	(14)
Council Tax	Fraud partnership shared service	(33)	(14)
Planning	Reduced costs building control	79	(5)
Parking	Additional costs shared service	134	88
Parking	Reduced contract costs	397	(15)
Planning	Additional costs shared service	172	24
CCTV	Reduced contract costs	261	(4)
HR Shared Service	Reduced costs shared service	257	(35)
Audit Shared Service	Additional costs shared service	176	4
Land Charges	Reduced costs of shared service	69	(4)
Legal Shared Service	Additional staff costs shared service	484	7
IT Shared Service	Reduced costs shared service	502	(26)
IT Shared Service	Telephony savings	44	(13)
Environmental Health Shared Service	Additional savings shared service	515	(50)

Service/Contract	Reason for Variance	Working Budget £'000	Outturn Variance to Budget £'000
Enforcement Service – Council Tax	Additional profit share shared service	(75)	(58)
	Other	-	2
Total Procurement/Shared Service Savings/Costs			(246)
Additional Costs:			
Revenues & Benefits	Lower recovery of benefits overpayments than budgeted	(652)	285
Homelessness	Net bed and breakfast costs	561	44
	Homelessness houses	-	44
Refuse Collection	Purchase of wheeled bins (net)	117	13
Corporate	Princes Street Retail Park – additional consultancy costs	-	16
	Sittingbourne Town Centre – additional consultancy costs	-	50
	Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) – confirmation of timing of MRP costs from treasury advisers	231	207
Planning	Local Plan – additional costs	181	29
	Development management & enforcement	42	81
Parking	Car Parks – rates/water rates	211	12
	Cash security & licences	57	51
Total Additional Costs			832
Underspends: (brackets in variance mean additional underspend)			
Salaries	Net employee costs (incl. agency)	11,304	(389)
Markets	Savings on rates	25	(16)
Corporate items	Pension enhancements	248	(18)
Property	Underspend on building maintenance	238	(24)
Finance	External audit fee	61	(14)
IT shared services	Savings on computer maintenance & software	687	(107)
Revenues & Benefits	Reduced expenditure on net housing benefits		(151)
Chief Executive	Reduction in number of special projects	53	(23)
Communications	Advertising & promotion savings	26	(22)
Corporate	Provision for bad debts	231	(39)
Legal	External legal fees	61	(14)
Democratic Services	Members allowances and travel	444	(37)
Total Underspends			(854)
Total Variance			(1,295)
Movement on reserves			692
Set aside to fund 2019/20 budget			74
Other Net Underspends			(86)
Net Revenue Service Expenditure Total Variance			(615)
Transfer to/ from General Fund Reserve			(316)
Net Expenditure Total Variance			(931)

Table 3: Projected Variance by Service

	Service Manager	Working Budget £	Outturn 2018/19 £	Outturn Variance £
Chief Executive	M. Radford	336,630	290,138	(46,492)
Democratic Services	K. Bescoby	993,140	847,676	(145,464)
Policy, Communications & Customer Services	D. Clifford	1,200,490	1,112,959	(87,531)
Director of Regeneration	E. Wiggins	255,000	266,567	11,567
Commissioning, Environment & Leisure	M. Cassell	5,530,960	5,151,688	(379,272)
Planning	J. Freeman	1,019,080	884,562	(134,518)
Housing, Economy & Community Services	C. Hudson	3,293,690	3,170,013	(123,677)
Property	A. Adams	564,460	476,476	(87,984)
Finance	N. Vickers	764,690	748,057	(16,633)
Revenues & Benefits	Z. Kent	37,890	(267,990)	(305,880)
Licensings & Resilience	D. Fackrell	41,390	(14,938)	(56,328)
Information Technology	C. Woodward	1,231,830	1,087,368	(144,462)
Audit	R. Clarke	200,260	203,878	3,618
Environmental Health	T. Beattie	561,110	505,918	(55,192)
Human Resources	B. Sandher	379,170	329,259	(49,911)
Legal	P. Narebor	437,390	426,038	(11,352)
Princes Street Retail Park	N. Vickers	(438,610)	(422,841)	15,769
Sittingbourne Regeneration	N. Vickers	0	50,609	50,609
Corporate Items	N. Vickers	2,169,430	3,116,915	947,485
NET REVENUE SERVICE EXPENDITURE		18,578,000	17,962,352	(615,648)
Transfer to/ from General Fund Reserve		316,000	0	(316,000)
Financed by:				
Revenue Support Grant		0	0	0
Business Rates		(8,441,000)	(8,441,000)	0
New Homes Bonus		(2,046,000)	(2,045,600)	400
Collection Fund Surplus		(178,000)	(178,000)	0
Council Tax Requirement		(7,913,000)	(7,912,514)	486
TOTAL FINANCING		(18,578,000)	(18,577,114)	886
NET EXPENDITURE		316,000	(614,762)	(930,762)

4. Proposed Revenue Rollovers and Outturn Variance

- 4.1 The use of rollovers is important for the overall financial management of the Council.
- 4.2 Service requests for rollovers at an operational level are detailed in Table 11 in Appendix I. These total £722,500;
- 4.3 The proposed rollovers would be funded from the 2018/19 underspend and the General Fund as required.

4.4 In addition, the following bids are made against the 2018/19 underspend: -

- To reinstate free car parking at the Swallow Leisure Centre (at a cost of £90,000) in 2019/20;
- To implement the Real Living Wage for Swale Borough Council staff (at a cost of £68,000).

5. Business Rates

5.2 In total the Council collected £50.9m of business rates in 2018/19. After the complicated system of levies and tariffs has been accounted for, the Council received £11.8m.

5.3 In 2018/19, the Government postponed the full localisation of business rates nationally but did agree for it to be trialled by a number of pilots. A bid to be a pilot by all the Kent authorities was successful so that they retained the levy previously paid to the Government and all growth above the baseline. The Kent authorities agreed a method of sharing this additional growth. The result was a growth in the business rates income for the Council in 2018/19 which has been allocated to reserves. Unfortunately, Kent was not selected to be one of the pilots for 2019/20.

5.4 The business rates reserves increased by £3 million in 2018/19:

- £890,000 increase in the Business Rates Volatility Reserve. This was a result of the allocation of additional business rates arising from the 2018/19 Kent Business Rates Pilot as part of the Financial Sustainability Fund.
- £846,000 increase in the North Kent Housing and Commercial Growth Fund. This Fund was set up as a result of the 2018/19 Kent Business Rates Pilot. The Council has not yet agreed how this fund will be used. However, there is a 'bidding process' set-up to enable authorities across North Kent, including Kent County Council (KCC), to present potential initiatives to the North Kent Leaders and the appropriate representative from the County Council for approval. The stated purpose of the fund is to support future delivery, where outcomes can be better achieved by local authorities working together across a wider area. This will include, for example, investment in measures to unlock housing development, measures to unlock commercial development, promoting investment and trade, speeding up the planning process.

- £754,000 increase in the Kent Pool Economic Development Reserve. This reserve was established as a result of the Council joining the Kent Business Rates Pool in 2015/16, and this continued into 2018/19 as part of the Kent Business Rates Pilot. It is to fund economic development as agreed by the Council and KCC. To date the following sums have been committed from this fund: £250,000 for the Visitor Economy Framework for 2018 - 2023 (min 475/02/2018); £250,000 for the Isle of Sheppey Lower Road; £800,000 for M2 junction 5.
- £738,000 increase in the Business Rates Volatility Reserve as a result of additional business rates arising from the opening of a major supermarket's distribution centre and the greater use of the site to store goods than originally forecast, material increases in rateable value for a handful of major sites (with some being backdated to 2017) agreed from January 2019, and a change in the method of calculating the money set aside as a provision for future business rate appeals, which was agreed across Kent.
- There was also a transfer from the Business Rates Volatility Reserve of £375,000 in 2018/19 to top up the regeneration reserve and the communities fund as agreed by Cabinet (min 112/02/2018).
- There were also minor movements with a net increase of £98,000 on the Business Rates Volatility Reserve.

5.5 At 31 March 2019 the balances on the business rates reserves were as follows:

- £4.935m Business Rates Volatility Reserve
- £2.065m Kent Business Rates Pool Economic Development Reserve
- £0.846m North Kent Housing and Commercial Growth Fund

5.6 The actual amount of business rates collected can be affected by a wide range of variables including: new businesses opening, existing businesses growing, closure of businesses, rating appeals and collection rates. The localisation of business rates introduced a new area of volatility in the Council's finances and therefore Council agreed to the establishment of a Business Rates Volatility Reserve.

5.7 The Council has benefitted very significantly from the localisation of business rates. However, we should bear in mind the if there is a resetting of business rates in April 2020, this could take away the benefits moving forward.

5.8 The Council has set aside £10m for business rate appeals, of which the Council's share is £4m. This indicates how business rate income can vary greatly as a result of a decision made on business rate appeals.

6. Improvement and Regeneration Funds

6.1 Table 4 below details the outturn position on a number of reserve funds.

Table 4: Improvement and Regeneration Funds

	Balance as at 1 April 2018	Transfers from reserve (Expenditure) in year	Transfers to reserve (Income) in year	Balance as at 31 March 2019	Balance unallocated as at 31 March 2019
Funds:	£	£	£	£	£
Performance	316,134	(122,293)	300,000	493,841	230,999
Regeneration	349,724	(212,710)	300,000	437,014	169,818
Communities	111,367	(65,023)	75,000	121,344	68,916
Pension & Redundancy	205,142	(369,123)	250,000	86,019	86,019
Local Loan Fund	200,000	(24,999)	0	175,001	175,001
TOTAL	1,182,367	(794,148)	925,000	1,313,219	730,753

6.2 Table 12 in appendix I details the allocations from the above funds during 2018/19.

6.3 Previously the Council has had a Regeneration Fund and the current unallocated balance is £170k. It is proposed to replace this fund with a new Special Projects Fund and that £1m per annum from reserves (to be determined by the Chief Financial Officer) will be transferred to this fund starting in 2019/20, as well as moving over the unallocated balance of the Regeneration Fund. This fund will focus on projects which are of direct benefit to the residents of the Borough. Items would include real improvements on a meaningful scale to play areas, improving the public realm, funding new initiatives to promote social inclusion (particularly on the Isle of Sheppey and rural areas). Use of the Council's very significantly increased reserves in this way will have no impact on the underlying financial position of the Council.

7. Usable Reserves

7.1 Table 5 below summarises the usable reserves balance as at 31 March 2019.

Table 5: Usable Reserves

Reserve:	Balance as at 1 April 2018 £'000	Transfers from reserve in year £'000	Transfers to reserve in year £'000	Balance as at 31 March 2019 £'000
Total Earmarked Revenue Reserves	(13,774)	2,663	(6,720)	(17,831)
General Fund	(4,695)	952	(615)	(4,358)
Capital Grants Unapplied	(326)	78	(81)	(329)
Usable Capital Receipts	(1,081)	438	(722)	(1,365)
TOTAL	(19,876)	4,131	(8,138)	(23,883)

7.2 Table 13 in appendix I details the earmarked revenue reserves as at 31 March 2019.

8. Capital Expenditure

8.1 This section of the report details actual capital expenditure and highlights any variations between the revised 2018/19 capital budget and the outturn.

8.2 Actual expenditure to end of March 2019 was £18,870,571. This represents 93% of the revised budget. There remains an underspend of £1,476,009. Further details are set out in Table 14 of Appendix I.

8.3 Table 6 below summarises the capital underspend of £1,476,009.

Table 6: Capital Programme Expenditure

	2018/19 Revised Budget	2018/19 Outturn	2018/19 Outturn Variance
	£'000	£'000	£'000
Housing, Economy & Community Services	17,631	17,321	(310)
Commissioning, Environment & Leisure	2,526	1,403	(1,123)
Property Services	81	81	0
Environmental Health	57	8	(49)
Finance	25	20	(5)
Information Technology	27	38	11
Total SBC funded	16,681	16,942	261
Total Partnership funded	3,666	1,929	(1,737)
Total Capital Programme	20,347	18,871	(1,476)
% Spent to date compared to Revised Budget		93%	

8.4 Heads of Service have submitted a number of capital rollover requests totalling £2,862,822 to be spent in 2019/20 to be released from the underspend of 2018/19. The requests are listed in Table 15 Appendix I, with an explanation provided by the service manager. Of these requests, £1,624,272 is linked with partnership funding, as explained in the notes, leaving £1,238,550 to be met from internal resources. The largest items of rollover are:

- Disabled Facilities Grant (external funding) - £1,613,927
- Leisure Centres - £1,079,000

9. Funding of the 2018/19 Capital Programme

9.1 The 2018/19 capital programme expenditure of £18,870,571 was funded as set out in Table 7 below.

Table 7: Capital Programme Funding

	2018/19 Outturn
	£'000
Capital grants and other contributions	2,382
Capital receipts	438
Earmarked reserves	359
Internal borrowing (i.e. reducing the Council's cash balances)	15,692
Total Capital Funding	18,871

9.2 The Sittingbourne Town Centre Project and Leisure Centres are being funded from internal borrowing. Officers are working with Arlingclose the Council's treasury adviser, to develop an optimised long-term financing strategy.

9.3 Capital receipts from sale of assets in 2018/19 were £607,000. Capital receipts from repayment of grants and loans were £115,000.

10. Payment of Creditors

10.1 The outturn for payment of creditors for 2018/19 was 99% paid within 30 days of receipt of invoice, against the target of 97%.

11. Sundry Debtors

11.1 Tables 8 and 9 below analyse the sundry debt outstanding. The total shown against 2-6 months of £284k includes £218k relating a Housing Association and £57k relating to one company. The £218k has been paid.

Table 8: Sundry Debt Outstanding by Due Date

	March 2019 £'000	December 2018 £'000
Not Due	590	221
1-2 Months	9	368
2-6 months	284	48
6-12 months	60	78
1-2 years	40	28
2-3 years	14	17
3-4 years	14	31
4-5 years	25	6
5-6 years	5	3
6 years +	33	34
Total	1,074	834
Total over two months	475	245
% Total over two months	44%	29%

Table 9: Sundry Debt Outstanding by Head of Service

	March 2019 £'000	December 2018 £'000
Property	200	191
Commissioning, Environment & Leisure	77	366
Housing, Economy & Communities	116	115
Environmental Health	4	1
Planning	7	7
Finance	8	3
Legal	362	37
Other	300	114
Total	1,074	834

11.2 It should be noted that these tables include debts raised for all our grants receivable from Kent County Council, the NHS, etc.

11.3 The debt over six years old relates to charges on property, i.e. where the debt cannot be collected until the property concerned is sold.

12. Alternative Options

12.1 None identified – this report is largely for information.

13. Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

13.1 Heads of Service and Strategic Management Team have been consulted in preparing this report.

14. Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Good financial management is key to supporting the Corporate Plan objectives.
Financial, Resource and Property	As detailed in the report
Legal and Statutory	The implications for this category will be dependent upon the decisions of Cabinet on the approval of rollovers and will be provided by the relevant Head of Service.
Crime and Disorder	The implications for this category will be dependent upon the decisions of Cabinet on the approval of rollovers and will be provided by the relevant Head of Service.
Environmental Sustainability	The implications for this category will be dependent upon the decisions of Cabinet on the approval of rollovers and will be provided by the relevant Head of Service.

Issue	Implications
Health & Wellbeing	The implications for this category will be dependent upon the decisions of Cabinet on the approval of rollovers and will be provided by the relevant Head of Service.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	The implications for this category will be dependent upon the decisions of Cabinet on the approval of rollovers and will be provided by the relevant Head of Service.
Equality and Diversity	The implications for this category will be dependent upon the decisions of Cabinet on the approval of rollovers and will be provided by the relevant Head of Service.
Privacy and Data Protection	The implications for this category will be dependent upon the decisions of Cabinet on the approval of rollovers and will be provided by the relevant Head of Service.

15. Appendices

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

- Appendix I: Financial Outturn Report 2018/19

16. Background Papers

16.1 [The Budget 2018/19 and Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018/19 to 2020/21.](#)

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Financial Outturn Report 2018/19

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Table 10 – Main Variations by Service

Net (under)/overspend / income shortfall for 2018/19 by service		
Service – Cabinet Member (Head of Service)	£'000	Explanation
CHIEF EXECUTIVE – Cllr R Truelove (Mark Radford)		
Chief Executive & Corporate Costs	(46)	(£36k) Underspend – net staff costs; (£14k) Underspend – special projects; £4k Net additional costs.
TOTAL	(46)	
POLICY, COMMUNICATIONS AND CUSTOMER SERVICES – Cllr R Truelove (David Clifford)		
Policy	(30)	(£28k) Underspend – net staff costs; (£2k) Net underspend.
Communications	(43)	(£21k) Underspend – net staff costs; (£22k) Underspend - advertising & promotion.
Customer Services	(99)	(£54k) Underspend – net staff costs; (£38k) Underspend – KCC Sheerness Gateway contract; (£7k) Net underspend.
Information Governance	22	£22k Overspend – net staff costs.
Transformation Project	62	£62k Net additional staff costs. These costs are offset by staff savings in Revenues & Benefits and Customer Services.
TOTAL	(88)	(£30k is requested to roll forward into 2019/20 – refer to Table 11).
HOUSING, ECONOMY AND COMMUNITY SERVICES – Cllr B Martin, Cllr T Valentine, Cllr R Palmer, Cllr M Bonney, Cllr A Harrison (Charlotte Hudson)		
Economy & Community Services:-		
CCTV	(4)	£11k Additional contract costs; (£15k) Line rental savings.
Community Halls and Centres	6	£6k Net additional costs.
Community Safety	(27)	(£24k) Net staff cost savings; (£3k) Net savings.
Economy & Community Services, Cultural & Economic Development	(26)	(£19k) Net staff cost savings; (£7k) Net savings.
Learning, Business & Skills	19	£29k Additional cost of apprentices; (£10k) Savings licence cost.

Table 10 – Main Variations by Service

Net (under)/overspend / income shortfall for 2018/19 by service		
Service – Cabinet Member (Head of Service)	£'000	Explanation
Tourism & Heritage	(8)	(£15k) additional grant; £8k Additional net salary costs; (£1k) Net additional savings.
Arts Events & Activities	3	£3k Net additional costs.
Markets	(18)	(£16k) net business rates savings; (£2k) Net additional savings/income.
Sports Development	(43)	(£19k) additional grant; (£7k) Net salary savings; (£17k) Net additional savings/income.
Sub-total	(98)	(£26k is requested to roll forward into 2019/20 – refer to Table 11).
Housing:-		
Homelessness Temporary Accommodation	44	£44k Net additional homelessness costs.
Homelessness Temporary Houses	44	£30k Additional repairs and maintenance costs; £11k Loss of rental income; £3k Net additional costs.
Housing Advice / Options	12	(£4k) Net salary savings; £16k Net additional costs.
Housing Development and Strategy	(11)	(£5k) Net salary savings; (£6k) Net additional savings/income.
Private Sector Housing	(35)	(£9k) Net salary savings; (£20k) Net additional income; (£6k) Net additional savings/income.
Stay Put Scheme	(80)	(£16k) Net salary savings; (£57k) Disabled Facility Grants (DFG) additional income; (£7k) Net additional savings/income.
Sub-total	(26)	(£103k is requested to roll forward into 2019/20 – refer to Table 11).
TOTAL HOUSING, ECONOMY & COMMUNITY SERVICES	(124)	

Table 10 – Main Variations by Service

Net (under)/overspend / income shortfall for 2018/19 by service		
Service – Cabinet Member (Head of Service)	£'000	Explanation
PLANNING – Cllr M Baldock (James Freeman)		
Building Control/Dangerous Structures	(6)	(£9k) Partnership – underspend; £3k Additional costs – dangerous structures.
Development Control	(209)	(£287k) Additional income – planning fees – increase in applications; (£36k) Additional income - S106 monitoring fees; (£10k) Additional income – Pre-application advice; £66k Additional costs – legal fees / planning consultancy advice; £51k Additional net salary costs; £7k Net savings/underspend.
Development Services	9	(£14k) Reduced net salary costs; £23k Net additional expenditure.
Local Land Charges	65	£69k reduced income from land charges; (£4k) reduced costs – Mid Kent Planning Service.
Local Planning & Conservation	(18)	£27k Additional costs – Local Plan; (£5k) Staff cost savings; (£19k) Reduced costs – planning consultancy/advice; (£21k) Reduced costs net. N.B. The overspend on the local plan has been transferred to the ring-fenced reserve to be used solely to fund Local Plan associated work.
Mid Kent Planning Service (MKPS)	24	£24k Additional costs – Mid Kent Planning Service.
TOTAL PLANNING	(135)	(£109k is requested to roll forward into 2019/20 – refer to Table 11).
COMMISSIONING, ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE – Cllr A Harrison, Cllr T Valentine (Martyn Cassell)		
Commissioning, Contracts and Procurement	(55)	(£41k) Savings salary costs; (£14k) Net miscellaneous savings.
Client & Amenity Services and Technical Services	(60)	(£47k) Savings salary costs; (£13k) Net miscellaneous savings.

Table 10 – Main Variations by Service

Net (under)/overspend / income shortfall for 2018/19 by service		
Service – Cabinet Member (Head of Service)	£'000	Explanation
Refuse Collection / Street Cleansing / Public Conveniences / Recycling & Waste Minimisation	(22)	(£31k) Contract costs savings; (£64k) Additional income wheeled bins; £77k Wheeled bins costs additional expenditure; (£10k) Net additional income Special Collections, including A249 litter picking; £13k Reduced income – garden waste collection; (£7k) Net additional savings/income.
Environmental Response Team	(79)	(£28k) Net additional anti-littering penalty savings; (£13k) Staff cost savings; (£11k) Savings re dog kennelling and returned dogs additional income; (£6k) Net Animal Welfare costs; (£3k) Additional income – pest control commission; (£16k) Savings – staff travel etc; (£2k) Savings – use of skips;
Parking Management	(27)	(£7k) Staff cost savings; (£47k) Net additional income – pay and display fees and season tickets; (£40k) Additional Income – Penalty Charge Notice (PCN) on-street parking; (£25k) Additional Income – Residents Parking; £44k Additional costs – Parking Partnership (Maidstone Borough Council); £52k Additional costs – cash security costs and increased use of cashless parking option RingGo. Offset by additional income; (£15k) Reduced expenditure – Parking Management Company; £12k Additional costs – business rates and water rates; (£1k) Other net savings/income N.B. The surplus relating to on-street parking has been transferred to the ring fenced on-street parking account under Section 55 of the Road Traffic Act 1984.
Seafront and Harbour & Quays	(12)	(£15k) Additional income memorial benches; (£3k) Additional income beach huts; £2k Additional cost RNLI contract; £4k Other net costs.

Table 10 – Main Variations by Service

Net (under)/overspend / income shortfall for 2018/19 by service		
Service – Cabinet Member (Head of Service)	£'000	Explanation
Cemeteries and Closed Churchyards	(20)	(£9k) Additional income internments; (£11k) Other net costs.
Highways	(30)	(£40k) Street naming & numbering fees additional income; £10k Additional expenditure street furniture and lighting.
Leisure, Sports, Open Spaces, Parks, Countryside and Allotments	(74)	(£72k) Leisure centres net operating and management contracts costs savings; (£17k) Open Spaces additional income; £15k Other net costs.
TOTAL	(379)	(£128k is requested to roll forward into 2019/20 – refer to Table 11).
REGENERATION – Cllr M Bonney (Emma Wiggins)		
Regeneration	11	£11k Additional net salary costs.
TOTAL	11	
IT SERVICES – Cllr R Truelove (Chris Woodward)		
Telecommunications	(11)	(£11k) Savings on equipment maintenance and line rental.
IT Maintenance and Software	(107)	(£107k) Underspend on IT maintenance and software. This variance has been transferred to the ring-fenced reserve to be used solely to fund IT related expenditure in future years.
Mid Kent ICT	(26)	(£26k) Savings on Mid Kent ICT service with Maidstone Borough Council.
TOTAL	(144)	
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH – Cllr T Valentine (Tracey Beattie)		
Environmental Health Mid Kent Service	(50)	(£50k) Underspend on shared service as a result of vacant posts.
Environmental Services	(5)	(£5k) Net underspend/additional income on client side.
TOTAL	(55)	(£55k is requested to roll forward into 2019/20 – refer to Table 11).
INTERNAL AUDIT – Cllr R Truelove (Rich Clarke)		
Mid Kent Audit Services	4	£4k Additional costs on shared service with Maidstone Borough Council.
TOTAL	4	

Table 10 – Main Variations by Service

Net (under)/overspend / income shortfall for 2018/19 by service		
Service – Cabinet Member (Head of Service)	£'000	Explanation
FINANCE – Cllr R Truelove (Nick Vickers)		
Financial Services	(17)	(£17k) Reduced net expenditure.
TOTAL	(17)	(£13k is requested to roll forward into 2019/20 – refer to Table 11).
REVENUES & BENEFITS – Cllr R Truelove (Nick Vickers)		
		<p>£305k Reduction in Benefit Admin Subsidy; (£230k) Additional Department for Works and Pensions (DWP) Housing Benefit Grant; (£225k) Staff cost savings; (£55k) Additional grant from KCC; (£9k) Additional DWP grant income; N.B. The net saving of (£214k) detailed above has been transferred to reserves.</p> <p>£285k Additional expenditure – from under recovery of over payments of Housing Benefits (please note that this is offset by £190k which is included under corporate costs); (£151k) Reduced expenditure on net Housing Benefits; (£128k) Additional income – recovery of Council Tax benefit overpaid (please note that this is offset by £110k set aside for bad debts which is included under corporate costs); (£14k) Reduced costs Fraud Partnership with Maidstone Borough Council; (£58k) Additional income MKS Debt Enforcement Partnership share of surplus; (£32k) Additional staff cost savings offsetting overspend in Transformation Team; £6k Net additional costs.</p>
TOTAL	(306)	
HUMAN RESOURCES – Cllr R Truelove (Bal Sandher)		
Mid Kent Human Resources	(35)	(£35k) Reduced costs on shared service with Maidstone Borough Council.
Organisational Development	(15)	(£8k) Reduced expenditure – corporate training; (£7k) Reduced expenditure net.
TOTAL	(50)	(£50k is requested to roll forward into 2019/20 – refer to Table 11).

Table 10 – Main Variations by Service

Net (under)/overspend / income shortfall for 2018/19 by service		
Service – Cabinet Member (Head of Service)	£'000	Explanation
LICENSING & RESILIENCE PLANNING – Cllr R Palmer (Della Fackrell)		
Licensing & Resilience	(56)	(£48k) Additional income – Hackney Carriage licences; £20k Reduced income – Gambling licence fees; (£20k) Additional income – legal fees; (£8k) Net savings. N.B. £6k net underspend on Hackney Carriage has been transferred to the ring-fenced reserve to be used to fund Hackney Carriage related expenditure in future years.
TOTAL	(56)	(£45k is requested to roll forward into 2019/20 – refer to Table 11).
LEGAL – Cllr R Truelove (Patricia Narebor)		
Legal MKLS	7	£7k Additional costs on shared service.
External Legal Fees	(23)	(£23k) Underspend on external legal fees.
S106 Income	5	£5k Reduced income
TOTAL	(11)	
DEMOCRATIC SERVICES – Cllr R Truelove (Katherine Bescoby)		
Democratic Process	(56)	(£13k) Underspend net salary costs; (£37k) Underspend – members' allowances and travel; (£6k) Reduced expenditure net.
MKS Shared Service Corporate Costs	(34)	(£34k) Underspend on corporate costs of MKS shared service costs from Maidstone Borough Council as a result of an underspend in 2017/18;
Elections & Electoral Registration	(55)	£3k Additional net salary costs; (£55k) Additional income from KCC; (£3k) Additional fees and charges income.
TOTAL	(145)	(£100k is requested to roll forward into 2019/20 – refer to Table 11).
PROPERTY SERVICES – Cllr M Bonney (Anne Adams)		
Property Services	4	(£19k) Underspend net salary costs; offset by £27k Additional consultancy costs; (£4k) Reduced expenditure net.
Administrative Buildings	(34)	(£22k) Underspend net salary costs; (£12k) Reduced expenditure net.

Table 10 – Main Variations by Service

Net (under)/overspend / income shortfall for 2018/19 by service		
Service – Cabinet Member (Head of Service)	£'000	Explanation
Property Management	(34)	(£28k) Additional income – rental income; (£8k) Savings on utility costs at Sheerness District Office; £2k Additional net costs.
Building Maintenance	(24)	N.B. (£24k) Variance on building maintenance has been transferred to the ring-fenced reserve to be used solely to fund building maintenance expenditure in future years.
TOTAL	(88)	(£64k is requested to roll forward into 2019/20 – refer to Table 11).
NON-SERVICE BUDGETS		
Sittingbourne Town Centre	50	Consultants and specialist advice for regeneration works.
Princes Street Retail Park	16	Additional consultancy costs.
Corporate	948	(£158k) Increase in cash flow and an improved return on our investments; £207k Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) which is the cost to revenue of internally borrowing to fund capital expenditure. Outturn is after confirmation of timing of MRP costs from treasury advisers. £74k Transfer to reserves to support 2019/20 budget; £254k Council Tax Grant contribution to reserves; £104k Contributions from reserves not required; £455k Net contribution to reserves from ring fenced services as detailed in table above; £293k Net other movement on reserves (£254k) Council Tax Grant from major preceptors. This has been transferred to the ring-fenced reserve to be used to support the Council's budget); (£27k) Net additional underspends.
	(615)	NET REVENUE SERVICE EXPENDITURE (Underspend)
Transfer to/ from General Fund Reserve	(316)	Budget originally assumed a contribution from the General Fund
	(931)	NET EXPENDITURE (Underspend)

Table 11 – Revenue Rollover Requests

No.	Head of Service	Funded from	Rollover Request £	Purpose of Rollover
1	Anne Adams	Property Services	22,000	This underspend is due to the post of Building Surveyor being vacant for part of the year. The intention is to leave this post vacant for a few more months and the underspend will be needed to provide external support. It is therefore requested that this is rolled into the 2019/20 consultancy budget.
2	Anne Adams	Property Services	42,000	The underspend on the service (apart from building maintenance) is requested to be transferred to the Building Maintenance Reserve for the funding of building maintenance in future years.
		Total	64,000	
Page 29	Baljinder Sandher	HR Shared Service	35,000	The underspend relates mainly to the MKS HR service.
	Baljinder Sandher	HR Shared Service	15,000	Underspend on training budget to address the B-Heard survey feedback and are planning to use the budget for training at the manager/supervisor level as well as at the Leadership level. The type of training we are planning will be carried out by an external provider and this budget will help us to cover the costs of the training.
		Total	50,000	
5	Charlotte Hudson	Housing Strategy	4,000	An insurance rebate received through the Better Homes Active Lives (BHAL) programme partnership with Kent County Council and other councils (relates to the delivery of a Private Finance Initiative contract). Part of the BHAL contract includes reviewing and renegotiating the associated insurances every 2 years, with any savings, or additional costs being shared between the partners. There is a chance that we could repay this rebate if there is any downturn with the insurance market or any other associated costs increase unexpectedly.

Table 11 – Revenue Rollover Requests

No.	Head of Service	Funded from	Rollover Request £	Purpose of Rollover
6	Charlotte Hudson	Staying Put	29,200	Additional Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) income made during the year, less agency staffing costs that are covered directly from DFG Fee income made from the Council works.
7	Charlotte Hudson	Staying Put	21,500	Additional DFG works undertaken in Swale and in Gravesham Borough Council. This is now our main funding stream (direct funding from health ceased 31 March 2018) and both stay put rollovers are required to continue to manage the service and pay towards staff costs.
8	Charlotte Hudson	Private Sector Housing	11,300	Income derived from a pilot partnership with Gravesham Borough Council for technical advice and administrative services (that has now finished) and a government grant to investigate breaches of the letting agency redress scheme called - Licencing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's). These fees will be used towards administering the licencing scheme over the period of the licence which is generally five years.
9	Charlotte Hudson	Private Sector Housing	6,800	Staff within the Private Sector Housing Team are on long-term sickness. This had an impact on work and workload of others and the absence of both officers will continue into 2019/20. In order to ensure adequate cover a rollover is requested to fund the extension of a temporary contract to assist with the workload.
10	Charlotte Hudson	Private Sector Housing	1,200	To fund the extension of a temporary contract and help to deal with the backlog of work and to allow investigations into letting agents redress scheme compliance and to find new licensable HMO's which will provide an income to the Council.

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Table 11 – Revenue Rollover Requests

No.	Head of Service	Funded from	Rollover Request £	Purpose of Rollover
11	Charlotte Hudson	Sports Development	18,100	This rollover is requested as the balance remaining from the Sports England grant (£7k) and Satellite funding (£11,100). Sport England funding is the underspend from the Community Sports Activation Fund (CSAF) project and we only had confirmation in October 2018 that it wouldn't be recalled. A developing programme of work with health partners is planned to motivate inactive residents in 2019 and will utilise this money. Satellite funding secured to assist school and club links and developing work with primary and secondary school calendar of activities will be supported.
12	Charlotte Hudson	Tourism	7,500	This rollover is requested as it is the balance of the grant we received from KCC for the Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Faversham and Isle of Sheppey. A first stage payment for the initial work has been paid and the balance will fund the remaining work to be undertaken.
13	Charlotte Hudson	Homelessness Temporary Accommodation	29,600	The Homeless Reduction Act that came into force on 3 April 2018 has made significant changes to Housing legislation and introduced new duties for Local Authorities. The changes include statistical reporting required by Government and this has necessitated a change in software. Local authorities across the County all use the same IT provider (Locata Housing). More work will be required and therefore we are requesting the remaining balance from the Homelessness New Burdens grant and Homelessness Case Level Information Collection (H-CLIC) Stats Processing grant to be rolled over.
		Total	129,200	
14	David Clifford	Customer Services	10,000	This underspend has occurred through the Gateway costs during 2018/19 which are determined within the partnership contract with KCC in accordance with budget thresholds agreed. It is proposed that the underspend be rolled over and utilised in expanding our channel shift agenda.

Table 11 – Revenue Rollover Requests

No.	Head of Service	Funded from	Rollover Request £	Purpose of Rollover
15	David Clifford	Communications	8,600	This was funding earmarked for projects not completed in financial year 2018/19 due to staff shortage and changes. The rollover is requested to cover the potential costs of a peer review and implementing any recommendations.
16	David Clifford	Communications	6,000	Underspend as held back funds to support schemes that were ultimately funded elsewhere. The rollover is requested to support Visitor Economy Strategy marketing activity.
17	David Clifford	Communications	5,400	Underspend as we held back spending to ensure we could cover higher than budgeted contract for printing Inside Swale. Additional advertising revenue covered this, but final figure was unknown until March edition. The rollover is requested to cover the potential costs of a peer review and implementing any recommendations.
		Total	30,000	
18	Della Fackrell	Resilience	2,100	Kent Resilience Forum (KRF) charge reduced due to an underspend held but will be going up from 2019/20. This rollover could support the one-off charge for purchasing an Event App for the Safety Advisory Group process.
19	Della Fackrell	Licensing	42,700	Additional income on Hackney Carriages due to a change in the policy to three-year renewal rather than one year. Part of this will be used to fund a new taxi badge printer to find a suitable replacement as soon as possible.
		Total	44,800	

Table 11 – Revenue Rollover Requests

No.	Head of Service	Funded from	Rollover Request £	Purpose of Rollover
20	James Freeman	Enforcement	10,000	Ongoing / recurrence of unauthorised activity at Spade Lane site. £30K was rolled over last year to meet anticipated costs of planning enforcement-related work on this and one other challenging site. There is still an underspend in 2018-19 and we wish to roll-over £10K of the unspent allocated amount into 2019-20 to pay for external legal firms providing enforcement advice/action/training.
21	James Freeman	Development Management	50,000	This rollover would be used to meet the costs of handling delays to determining major applications submitted in 2018/19 and which are adding to the workload of the team in 2019/20.
22	James Freeman	Spatial Planning	18,000	Rollover to meet the additional costs of employing planning consultants following inability to recruit to Principal Planning officer post.
23	James Freeman	Appeals	12,000	Rollover to meet the additional cost of handling planning appeal work following failure to meet housing delivery test.
24	James Freeman	Conservation and Design	19,000	Rollover to meet the costs of handling the delay to bringing forward Heritage Strategy related work.
		Total	109,000	
25	Katherine Bescoby	Electoral Registration	53,900	Election funds transfer to reserve to fund future election costs with regards to the expected spend in 2019/20 for the Council rather than via a growth to the base budget during the budget setting process.
26	Katherine Bescoby	General Democratic Costs	37,200	Underspend on members' allowances and travel to fund new members costs.
27	Katherine Bescoby	Mayoral and Ceremonial	8,400	Salary underspend to cover costs for overtime for work on election and registration.
		Total	99,500	

Table 11 – Revenue Rollover Requests

No.	Head of Service	Funded from	Rollover Request £	Purpose of Rollover
28	Martyn Cassell	Environmental Initiatives	2,100	This has been awarded to successful Environmental Grant bids under the recently launched initiative by the Council. Most of the bids have been paid already, but three are still outstanding but will be paid in early 2019/20.
29	Martyn Cassell	Animal Welfare	6,000	More income has been generated this year due to new legislation coming into force regarding Animal Licensing. Licences are now issued on a three-year basis. We request this rollover to help with years two and three where less income may be forthcoming.
30	Martyn Cassell	Environmental Protection Dog Warden	6,000	This is to enable us to help cover the costs of our apprentice in the Environmental team for 2019/20.
31	Martyn Cassell	Close Churchyard	3,800	This is to fund continuing substantial works at St Marys closed churchyard. Awaited heritage advice and Dioceses' approval, quarter 2 works planned.
32	Martyn Cassell	Leisure Centres	16,900	Leisure Centres as approved by Cabinet 30/5/18, phase 2 future of Leisure consultancy work to be commissioned in second quarter 2, 2019. Delayed start due to focus on Leisure Centre improvements.
33	Martyn Cassell	Leisure Centres	7,000	Concessionary use to cover possible loss of income claims during leisure centre closures for works.
34	Martyn Cassell	Leisure Centres	5,000	Variations to Leisure Contract to cover possible loss of income claims during leisure centre closures for works.
35	Martyn Cassell	Leisure & Sports Centres	28,000	To cover possible loss of income claims during leisure centre closures for works.

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Table 11 – Revenue Rollover Requests

No.	Head of Service	Funded from	Rollover Request £	Purpose of Rollover
36	Martyn Cassell	Refuse and Collection	23,700	Savings made from the street cleansing budget, indexation was lower than expected in 2018/19. Street cleansing contract is currently going through a review and core costs are expected to rise for 2019/20, rollover request to assist with covering these costs.
37	Martyn Cassell	Contracts and Procurement	20,000	Savings from the vacant post of Senior Manager to fund consultant support for review of waste and street cleansing contract and also to undertake projects that have been delayed by vacancy.
38	Martyn Cassell	Open Spaces	3,100	Income requested to be rolled forward to utilise in new financial year for Faversham Recreation Ground project to improve parks and open spaces.
39	Martyn Cassell	Highways SBC	1,000	Fixed fees per lighting unit paid to KCC as part of re-negotiated service agreement. The remaining funding was planned for use to undertake required structural and electrical survey of all Council lighting assets, but as KCC cannot undertake this work we are working with an external contractor.
40	Martyn Cassell	Highways SBC	1,400	Costs are anticipated to be in excess of the budget, so request to roll over the remaining 2018/19 budget to put towards these costs and ensure compliance of highway health and safety policies.
41	Martyn Cassell	Highways SBC	4,000	Rollover requested to fund the Leysdown Rose Tinted Scheme (Leysdown Xmas Lights payment).
		Total	128,000	
42	Phil Wilson	Finance	13,000	An underspend on staffing costs and fees is requested to be rolled forward to fund the development of modules to support digitised tax returns, data security and other processes.
		Total	13,000	

Table 11 – Revenue Rollover Requests

No.	Head of Service	Funded from	Rollover Request £	Purpose of Rollover
43	Tracey Beattie	Contaminated land	4,300	It was not possible during 2018/19 to carry out the work which was planned re contaminated land which has resulted in the lack of spending for sampling and charging fees for our work.
44	Tracey Beattie	Air quality	2,600	It is a high-profile area of work and it is important to rollover the underspend from last year to assist us with future challenges.
45	Tracey Beattie	Food and Health and Safety	48,100	As a result of uncertainty revolving around the EU Exit date there has been an underspend in these services. In addition, we have been exceptionally busy with introducing the Request for Rescore scheme and the increasing number of poorly rated premises. This has meant that not all of the budgets in the other areas have been spent. We have also been holding 1 ½ vacancies for much of the year which has also impacted on some of these spend. These vacancies will be filled in the next few months and with the EU exit date it is essential this amount is rolled forward. It is also likely we will need to extend the contract with our contractor to ensure we meet Council Key Performance Indicators as well as our statutory duties.
		Total	55,000	
	TOTAL ROLLOVER REQUESTS		722,500	

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Table 12 – Allocations from the Improvement and Regeneration Funds 2018/19

	Amount £
Performance Fund	
Housing Register Apprentice	9,895
Best Companies B-Heard Survey 2018/19	12,000
Transformation Team	17,812
Independent Housing Consultant	20,000
Council High Priority Projects in The Leisure Section	46,500
Landlord Introduction Scheme – Temporary Housing Finance Officer	13,415
Total Approved as at March 2019	119,622

	Amount £
Regeneration Fund	
Member Grants	47,000
Delivering for You	
- Public realm improvements, Faversham	7,310
- Town & Borough sign replacement	18,000
- New litter bins	25,000
- Bus shelters refurbishment	11,886
- Flood lane space refurbishment	2,550
- Street name places	8,307
- Floral planters	3,800
- Public realm improvements, Sheerness	42,879
Regeneration Officers (Town Centre)	52,755
Economic Development Support Officer	44,166
Total Approved as at March 2019	263,653

Table 12 – Allocations from the Improvement and Regeneration Funds 2018/19

	Amount £
Communities Fund	
The Mount Garden	5,000
Dolphin Sailing Barge Museum	35,000
Feasibility Works for TS Hasarde	13,700
Sittingbourne Orpheus Choral Society	3,000
Sittingbourne and Milton Swimming Club	4,000
Volunteer Swale Awards 2019	4,900
Salt Giveaway 2018/19	3,807
Catenary Wires in Sheerness	1,842
Historic Swale CIO & Swale CVS Support	600
Community Heritage Event Ltd	5,216
Total Approved as at March 2019	77,065

	Amount £
Total All Fund Approved as at March 2019	460,340

Table 13 – Revenue Reserves (prior to 2018/19 rollovers)

	Balance 31 March 2018 £'000	Transfers out 2018/19 £'000	Transfers in 2018/19 £'000	Balance 31 March 2019 £'000	Note
Business Rates Volatility	(3,549)	426	(1,812)	(4,935)	(i)
General Reserve	(3,015)	906	(77)	(2,186)	(ii)
Business Rates Pool (Economic Development)	(1,346)	35	(754)	(2,065)	(iii)
Building Maintenance	(824)	81	(154)	(897)	(iv)
Preceptors Council Tax Support	(563)	0	(254)	(817)	(v)
Housing Benefits	(416)	0	(214)	(630)	(vi)
Regeneration	(350)	213	(300)	(437)	(vii)
Performance	(316)	122	(300)	(494)	(viii)
Civil Parking Enforcement	(153)	0	(82)	(235)	(ix)
Commuted Sums	(258)	14	(22)	(266)	(x)
Local Plan	(237)	29	0	(208)	(xi)
Pension & Redundancy	(205)	369	(250)	(86)	(xii)
Local Loan Fund	(200)	25	0	(175)	(xiii)
Repairs & Renewals	(186)	61	(149)	(274)	(xiv)
Financial Services	(184)	25	(25)	(184)	(xv)
Stay Put Grants	(183)	18	(67)	(232)	(xvi)
Housing	(167)	30	0	(137)	(xvii)
Wheeled Bins	(146)	0	(35)	(181)	(xviii)
Communities Fund	(112)	66	(76)	(122)	(xix)
Sittingbourne Town Centre (STC) Retail Park	0	0	(439)	(439)	(xx)
North Kent Housing and Commercial Growth Fund	0	0	(846)	(846)	(xxi)
Electoral Registration	(89)	0	0	(89)	(xxii)
Information and Communication Technology Reserve	(44)	0	(11)	(55)	(xxiii)
Refuse and Recycling	(105)	9	(36)	(132)	(xxiv)
Tree Survey and Works in Closed Churchyards	(38)	0	(25)	(63)	(xxv)

Table 13 – Revenue Reserves (prior to 2018/19 rollovers)

	Balance 31 March 2018 £'000	Transfers out 2018/19 £'000	Transfers in 2018/19 £'000	Balance 31 March 2019 £'000	Note
Cemeteries	(55)	10	(15)	(60)	(xxvi)
Faversham Recreation Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) Bid	0	0	(80)	(80)	(xxvii)
Milton Creek Access Road	(75)	0	0	(75)	(xxviii)
Environmental Initiatives	(49)	0	(28)	(77)	(xxix)
Disabled Facilities Grants (Revenue)	0	7	(92)	(85)	(xxx)
Faversham Creek Footpath	(60)	0	0	(60)	(xxxii)
Insurance Funds	(91)	3	0	(88)	(xxxiii)
Car Parking Equipment	(68)	0	(35)	(103)	(xxxiv)
Miscellaneous	(690)	214	(542)	(1,018)	(xxxv)
Sub Total Earmarked Reserves	(13,774)	2,663	(6,720)	(17,831)	
Capital Receipts Reserve	(1,081)	438	(722)	(1,365)	
Capital Grants Unapplied Account	(326)	78	(81)	(329)	
General Fund	(4,695)	952	(615)	(4,358)	
Total Reserves	(19,876)	4,131	(8,138)	(23,883)	

Table 13 – Revenue Reserves (prior to 2018/19 rollovers)**Notes**

Ref	Reserve	Description
(i)	Business Rates Volatility Reserve	To assist the Council in managing the volatility of business rate income as a result of business rate localisation.
(ii)	General Reserve	The use of this reserve is subject to the approval of Members.
(iii)	Business Rates Pool (Economic)	This fund has been established as a result of the Council joining the Kent Business Rates Pool. It is to fund economic development as agreed by the Council and KCC.
(iv)	Building Maintenance	To meet items of backlog building maintenance as identified in the Council's medium-term maintenance plan as well as urgent or unexpected items. Each year the reserve is topped up by any underspend on the building maintenance revenue budget.
(v)	Preceptors Council Tax Support	Paid by KCC, Police and Fire to reflect the costs of Council Tax support localisation.
(vi)	Housing Benefits	Savings made in the Benefits section, including unspent grants were transferred to this reserve. This is used to cover the shortfall in grant.
(vii)	Regeneration	To fund regeneration projects in the Borough. Officers can submit bids to this reserve.
(viii)	Performance	To improve overall performance. Officers can submit a bidding list of proposals.
(ix)	Civil Parking Enforcement Reserve	Any surplus from on street parking is transferred to the ring fenced on-street parking account under Section 55 of the Road Traffic Act 1984.
(x)	Commuted Sums	This reserve will be used to fund play area and open space maintenance in future years.
(xi)	Local Plan	Any underspend or overspend on this service on the General Fund will be transferred to this fund and used solely to fund Local Plan associated work.
(xii)	Pension & Redundancy	To meet the cost of releasing the Pension Fund benefits to staff who have taken early retirement and to fund all other redundancy costs.
(xiii)	Local Loan Fund	To support voluntary, community or not-for-profit organisations and town and parish councils in Swale to enable management and delivery of local services and facilities.

Table 13 – Revenue Reserves (prior to 2018/19 rollovers)**Notes**

Ref	Reserve	Description
(xiv)	Repairs & Renewals	Regular contributions are made to this fund from the General Fund for a number of services to fund the future cost of significant items of expenditure.
(xv)	Financial Services	To fund continuous system developments for the financial systems, and meeting the costs of the professional advice and staff development on accounting, taxation, payments, etc.
(xvi)	Stay Put Fund	To support the Council's Stay Put service which offers advice, support and help to the elderly and disabled, who are owner occupiers or private tenants and who need practical assistance to repair, adapt or improve their homes.
(xvii)	Housing	To fund the homelessness service in future years.
(xviii)	Wheeled Bins	To fund the new wheeled bins purchases and replacements.
(xix)	Communities Fund	This is to support the Council's Localism Agenda.
(xx)	STC Retail Park	This reserve is for the accounting adjustment between the value of income received and the value included in the accounts.
(xxi)	North Kent Housing & Commercial Growth Fund	Under the Kent Business Rates 2018/19 Pilot there was to be an allocation of funds called the Housing and Commercial Growth Fund which was allocated among "clusters" of authorities for each cluster to determine the final allocation. SBC is in the "North Kent" cluster.
(xxii)	Electoral Registration	To fund one-off costs of Local Authority elections in future years.
(xxiii)	Information and Communication Technology Reserve	This is the net ICT underspend and will be used to fund IT equipment in future years.
(xxiv)	Refuse and Recycling	To fund on-going review of additional roads from new developments to be added on to Biffa contract and services including clinical, bulky and weekly collections.
(xxv)	Tree Survey and Works in Closed Churchyards	Funding required to appoint consultants to undertake a tree condition survey across the Council's Green Spaces and to fund a rolling programme of tree works.

Table 13 – Revenue Reserves (prior to 2018/19 rollovers)

Notes

Ref	Reserve	Description
(xxvi)	Cemeteries	Used to cover the costs of purchasing a new electronic burial records system as part of the transformation review recommendations and further expected costs at the new Iwade burial site.
(xxvii)	Faversham Recreation HLF Bid	Following a second phase of the Heritage Lottery Fund parks for people programme, detailed plans for improvements and enhancements at Faversham Rec have been submitted and will be subject to a final decision in June 2018. If successful in achieving the £1.9m bid, SBC have committed to provide some match-funding to undertake complimentary improvements to items outside the scope of the HLF criteria. This bid is to provide the funds to meet this commitment.
(xxviii)	Milton Creek Access Road	Reserve will be used for new access road to Milton Country Park and increased security around the car park to stop unauthorised encampments.
(xxix)	Environmental Initiatives	Income from fixed Penalty notices used to support various environmental initiatives. It is a requirement of the legislation that any money generated is used to create a cleaner and greener environment.
(xxx)	Disabled Facilities Grants (Revenue)	This reserve is related to the Better Care Fund (BCF) incorporating Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG). Funding is from the Government and administered via KCC. The balance of the BCF to carry over as agreed by Strategic Management Team and used for new or committed work to support the DFG service.
(xxxi)	Faversham Creek Footpath	Footpath in Faversham - part of the regeneration of the Faversham Creek.
(xxxii)	Insurance Funds	The purpose of the reserve is to fund Insurance claims that fall below £1,000 which will reduce our number of claims.
(xxxiii)	Car Parking Equipment	This reserve is made up of approved rollovers from previous financial years and will be used to fund car parking equipment replacement and use of new technology.
(xxxix)	Miscellaneous	This is made up of the earmarked reserves that are less than £50,000. A full list of these reserves is available upon request.

Table 14 – Capital Programme 2018/19 Outturn

Capital Scheme	Funding SBC/ Partnership (P)	2018/19 Original Budget £	2018/19 Revised Budget £	2018/19 Outturn £	2018/19 Variance £	Rollover Request £	Note No (See Table 15)
CCTV - Reserves - Repairs & Renewals	SBC	15,000	15,000	0	(15,000)	15,000	1
The Mill Project, Sittingbourne Skate Park - S106	P	0	4,020	2,675	(1,345)	1,345	2
The Mill Project, Sittingbourne Skate Park - Capital Receipts	SBC	0	50,000	0	(50,000)	50,000	2
Sittingbourne Town Centre - Retail Properties	SBC	720,130	720,130	1,427,069	706,939	0	
Sittingbourne Town Centre - Other Assets	SBC	59,740	59,740	497,701	437,961	0	
Sittingbourne Town Centre - Multi Storey Car Park	SBC	3,532,210	3,532,210	3,955,140	422,930	0	
Sittingbourne Town Centre - Regeneration	SBC	26,521,830	8,671,780	8,099,662	(572,118)	0	
Land to front of Sittingbourne Train Station	SBC	0	0	430,000	430,000	0	
Borden Sport Ltd Loan	SBC	0	0	24,999	24,999	0	
Disabled Facilities Grants - External Grant	P	1,664,800	3,158,960	1,545,035	(1,613,925)	1,613,927	3
Dolphin Yard Sailing Barge Museum – S106	P	0	70,000	70,000	0	0	
Dolphin Yard Sailing Barge Museum - Reserves	SBC	0	35,000	35,000	0	0	
Easthall Farm Community Centre - S106	P	0	158,170	0	(158,170)	0	
Former Bus Depot, East Street - Internal / External Borrowing	SBC	0	1,155,690	1,155,694	4	0	
Housing Renovation Grants Over 60	SBC	0	0	3,500	3,500	0	
Winter Warmth Grants	SBC	0	0	20,185	20,185	0	
Decent Home Loans Owner Occupier	SBC	0	0	54,790	54,790	0	
Total Housing, Economy & Community Services		32,513,710	17,630,700	17,321,450	(309,250)	1,680,272	
Cemeteries	SBC	0	41,000	0	(41,000)	0	
Faversham Recreation Ground Improvement	P	0	161,390	179,642	18,252	0	
Gunpowder Works Oare Faversham	P	0	9,000	0	(9,000)	9,000	4
New Play Area - Iwade Scheme	P	0	5,000	5,000	0	0	
Leisure Centres	SBC	1,000,000	2,000,000	920,724	(1,079,276)	1,079,000	5
Thistle Hill New Play Area	P	0	26,380	26,382	2	0	
Nursery Close/Queenborough Lines Bridge Replacement	SBC	0	400	400	0	0	

Table 14 – Capital Programme 2018/19 Outturn

Capital Scheme	Funding SBC/ Partnership (P)	2018/19 Original Budget £	2018/19 Revised Budget £	2018/19 Outturn £	2018/19 Variance £	Rollover Request £	Note No (See Table 15)
Open Spaces Play Equipment	P	100,000	14,000	0	(14,000)	0	
Play Area, Windermere, Faversham	P	0	13,890	13,892	2	0	
Play Area Refurbishment – Milton Recreation Ground	P	0	45,190	45,185	(5)	0	
Play Improvements	SBC	0	40,307	0	(40,307)	40,300	6
Faversham Pool Play Area Improvement	SBC	0	54,836	54,836	0	0	
Rectory Playing Field Play Area Improvement	SBC	0	5,678	5,678	0	0	
Beachfields Park Play Area Improvement	SBC	0	49,179	49,179	0	0	
Queensborough Causeway Hard	SBC	0	60,000	60,000	0	0	
Resurfacing Promenade, The Leas	P	0	30	0	(30)	0	
Coastal Monitoring Programme (Coast Protection)	P	0	0	41,513	41,513	0	
Total Commissioning, Environment & Leisure		1,100,000	2,526,280	1,402,431	(1,123,849)	1,128,300	
Swale House – Lifts Refurbishment	SBC	0	80,960	80,955	(5)	0	
Total Property Services		0	80,960	80,955	(5)	0	
Replacement of Air Pollution Monitoring Station	SBC	0	56,640	7,595	(49,045)	49,045	7
Total Environmental Health		0	56,640	7,595	(49,045)	49,045	
Agresso Upgrade	SBC	0	25,000	19,795	(5,205)	5,205	8
Total Finance		0	25,000	19,795	(5,205)	5,205	
ICT infrastructure and equipment replacement	SBC	103,400	27,000	38,345	11,345	0	
Total Information Technology		103,400	27,000	38,345	11,345	0	
Total Capital Programme (SBC funded)	SBC	31,952,310	16,680,550	16,941,247	260,697	1,238,550	
Total Capital Programme (Partnership funded)	P	1,764,800	3,666,030	1,929,324	(1,736,706)	1,624,272	
Total Capital Programme	SBC & P	33,717,110	20,346,580	18,870,571	(1,476,009)	2,862,822	

Table 15 - Capital Rollovers & Explanation of Variations

Note No	Service / Portfolio	Service Manager	Description	Amount £	Notes
Rollover Requests:-					
1	Economy & Communities	Charlotte Hudson	CCTV - Reserves - Repairs & Renewals	15,000	CCTV Repair and Renewal Reserves funding requested to be rolled into 2019/20 as no overspend in 2018/19 due to fibre lines being cancelled.
2	Economy & Communities	Charlotte Hudson	The Mill Project, Sittingbourne Skate Park	51,345	Skatepark - the contractors have failed to start on the agreed date and hence the expected expenditure has not been spent.
3	Economy & Communities	Charlotte Hudson	DFG Mandatory Grants	1,613,927	Funding is from Central Government and administered via KCC the money is part of the Better Care Fund (BCF) which incorporates aspects of health and our Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) which are mandatory. The Government also provided additional funding of £150k in Jan 2019 to be spent by end March 2019 on DFG's and they recommend any BCF monies to be rolled so that the £150k could be spent within the year. All grant requests have been catered for and there are no waiting lists. The number of grants and spend is dependent on the need of the applicant and grants can vary from £1k to £30k. Once a grant is approved the applicant has 12 months to complete the work therefore the DFG is a rolling process that crosses financial periods. The rollover will be expended in the year on existing committed grant approvals and pre-existing applications in the system and new government funding will be utilised to provide Staying Put with the finance needed (an initial £100k) to undertake discretionary work under the housing assistance policy and to continue with an agreement with KCC to provide the dedicated professional services of an occupational therapist to allow progress of DFG's and to enable the best use of all funding when assessing DFG's to help people live independently for longer in their homes.
4	Commissioning & Customer Contact	Martyn Cassell	Gunpowder Works Oare Faversham	9,000	Replacement bridge, awaiting Historic England formal approval of plans. Works planned July to December 2019.

Table 15 - Capital Rollovers & Explanation of Variations

Note No	Service / Portfolio	Service Manager	Description	Amount £	Notes
5	Leisure Centre	Martyn Cassell	Leisure Centres	1,079,000	Sheppey and Swallow leisure centres refurbishment.
6	Play Areas	Martyn Cassell	Play Areas	40,300	Play area budget underspend and roll over is requested to continue improvements.
7	Environmental Services	Tracey Beattie	Air Pollution Monitoring Station	49,045	Budget was approved at Cabinet on February 2018 - additional £50k Minute 472/02.2018. Rollover requested for the balance to 2019/20. The out turn for 2018 /19 has been used to purchase new monitoring for St Paul's Air Quality Monitoring Station. The rollover capital is required to complete the feasibility study for the proposed Low Emissions Zone for the A2 as determined in the Strategic Air Quality Action Plan 2018 – 2022 and other projects identified by the Air Quality Steering Group.
8	Financial Services	Phil Wilson	Agresso Upgrade (Milestone 7)	5,205	The financial system was upgraded in 2018/19 but the upgrade includes modules which will enable complying with the HMRC "Making Tax Digital" request for digital monthly tax returns and for a module to improve compliance with information regulations. These will be implemented in 2019/20 and the rollforward of the budget will enable this implementation.
TOTAL				£2,862,822	

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Cabinet Meeting	
Meeting Date	10 July 2019
Report Title	Real Living Wage
Cabinet Member	Cllr Roger Truelove, Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance
SMT Lead	Nick Vickers, Chief Financial Officer
Head of Service	Nick Vickers, Chief Financial Officer Bal Sandher, Head of Human Resources Martyn Cassell, Head of Commissioning, Environment and Leisure
Lead Officer	Nick Vickers, Chief Financial Officer
Key Decision	No
Classification	Open
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To apply the Real Living Wage to the Council employees immediately, 2. To investigate applying the Real Living Wage to staff working in the Council's major contracts

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 The new administration believes that employees whether directly employed or working on Council business through outsourced contracts should have pay scales that reflect the Real Living Wage. This report sets out a path for moving towards this outcome.

2 Background

- 2.1 In April 2016 the Government introduced a higher minimum wage rate for all staff over 25 years of age inspired by the Living Wage campaign, calling it the 'national living wage'. However, the Government's 'national living wage' is not calculated according to what employees and their families need to live. Instead, it is based on a target to reach 60% of median earnings by 2020. Under current forecasts this means a rise to less than £9 per hour by 2020. For under 25's, the minimum wage rates also take into account affordability for employers.
- 2.2 The Real Living Wage rates are higher because they are independently-calculated by the Real Living wage Foundation and are based on what people need to get by. So as an employer we would be ensuring that our employees earn a wage that meets the costs of living, not just the government minimum.

2.3 The table below explains the wage rates:

	Minimum Wage	National Living Wage	Real Living Wage
What is it?	£7.70	£8.21	£9.00 ex London
Is it the law?	Statutory	Statutory	Voluntary
What age group is covered?	21 and older	25 and older	18 and older
How is it set?	Negotiated based on recommendation from business and trade unions.	A % of median earnings, currently at 55%, aims to reach 60% by 2020.	Calculation made according to the cost of living, based upon a basket of household goods and services.

2.4 There are a wide range of benefits from paying the Real Living wage:

Good for business

- Reduction in staff turnover and sickness rates,
- Less absenteeism,
- Improved staff morale and productivity,
- Better retention of staff,
- Recruitment of committed staff, and
- Reputation as a socially responsible employer.

Good for the worker

- Workers are able to provide properly for themselves and their family,
- They are less reliant on benefits,
- They don't have to work excessive hours, and
- They have more time for their family.

Good for the Council

- More money is spent locally, and
- Swale has a high-quality, better paid workforce.

2.5 The Real Living Wage is the only UK wage rate that is voluntarily paid by over 5,000 organisations including one third of FTSE100 companies. The rates are set annually on Monday in the first week of November.

2.6 The Real Living Wage impacts in two main ways:

Council Employees

As at 31 March 2019 the Council employed 290 staff. Based upon information from the Head of Human Resources 22 members of staff are paid below the Real Living Wage, primarily directly employed cleaners. The Head of HR has undertaken modelling based upon the existing pay scales and recommend that Scale 1 is deleted entirely and the first point of Scale 2 is increased by 12%, and the remainder of grade 2 by 5-8%. There will be an ongoing impact on the pay structure and over time there will need to be some amendment to the starting points of slightly higher grades so there is a differential with the top point of the previous grade. This is to ensure there are no overlaps between grades and to avoid creating equal pay issues.

The estimated cost impact is Pay £46,236, National Insurance £11,280 and Pension £11,172, giving a total cost of £68,688 or 1.2% of the total salary cost of the Council.

Contracted Services

The position is more complicated for contracted services and the Head of Commissioning, Environment and Leisure of has undertaken some initial investigation.

For contracted staff the exact definition is those contracted staff who work 2 or more hours a week, for 8 or more consecutive weeks a year. The Real Living Wage does not apply to contractors that supply your organisation with products eg stationary suppliers.

The Council would need to approach major contractors and set out the Council's intention to become a Real Living Wage employer. The Council does not know the staff costs of its contractors.

Where contracted staff cannot be moved onto the Real Living Wage immediately, the Council could choose to roll out the Real Living Wage across third party contracts over time, as the contracts come up for renewal.

The Council currently has 147 contracts on its Contract register. Using the definition of those contracted staff who work 2 or more hours a week, for 8 or more consecutive weeks a year and the fact that the Real Living Wage does not apply to contractors that supply your organisation with products, it has been assessed that the Council has 15 contracts definitely apply, 18 require more research with the lead departments and 114 do not. The contracts where it definitely does apply are:

- Grounds maintenance
- Leisure centre operation
- Leisure centre maintenance
- Mid Kent Waste, Recycling and Street Cleansing
- Cash Collection services
- Reactive and Planned Maintenance Term Contract
- Civil Parking Enforcement
- Perry Wood Arboricultural Service
- Supply and maintenance of summer bedding containers
- Beach Lifeguard Services
- Public Conveniences Minor Maintenance and Cleansing
- Minor works – Contracts
- Stray Dog Kennel and rehoming
- Environmental enforcement contract
- CCTV monitoring and maintenance

3 Proposals

- 3.1 That the Council applies the Real Living Wage with effect from 1 April 2019 for employees.
- 3.2 The Head of Commissioning, Environment and Leisure be authorised to write to all contractors to find out how many already meet the Real Living Wage standard and bring forward proposals as part of the 2020/21 budget process for how a phased implementation could be managed and the costs.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Council does not have to implement the Real Living Wage. The administration is committed to promoting living standards for residents of the borough and addressing inequality. The proposal supports those objectives.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 If the principle of applying the Real Living Wage to Council staff is agreed then consultation on implementation will be undertaken with trade unions.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Proposals will support plan objectives.
Financial, Resource and Property	The additional cost of applying to staff in 2019/20 will be treated as an in year budget pressure.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	Legal, statutory and procurement requirements will be met
Crime and Disorder	No direct implications.
Environment and Sustainability	No direct implications.
Health and Wellbeing	Improved income levels allowing for healthier life styles..
Risk Management and Health and Safety	No direct implications.
Equality and Diversity	Improved living standards and less reliance on benefits.
Privacy and Data Protection	No direct implications.

7 Appendices

None

8 Background Papers

None

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Cabinet Meeting	
Meeting Date	Wednesday 13 July 2019
Report Title	CCTV Future Service Delivery Options
Cabinet Member	Cllr Richard Palmer, Cabinet Member for Communities
SMT Lead	Emma Wiggins
Head of Service	Charlotte Hudson
Lead Officer	Stephanie Curtis
Key Decision	Yes
Classification	Open
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For Cabinet to approve the proposed Public Space CCTV monitoring delivery model 2. For Cabinet to note that officers will be conducting a procurement exercise for the proposed upgrade to the Public Space CCTV Service and Town Centre Wi-Fi, which will be brought back to Cabinet for approval

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks approval from Cabinet on proposed changes to the monitoring delivery model for the Public Space CCTV service. It also advises on the proposals for an upgrade to the CCTV equipment and transmission, which is required in order to future proof the service.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Swale Public Space CCTV Service currently consists of 52 field cameras and is monitored 24/7/365 by Medway Commercial Group from a control room in Strood, on behalf of the CCTV Partnership with Medway, Maidstone and Gravesham Councils.
- 2.2 The Public Space CCTV Service aims to:
- Help to prevent and detect crime and Anti-Social Behaviour;
 - Provide quality evidence to support Police investigations and prosecutions;
 - Support most vulnerable members of the community;
 - Support management of emergencies or major incidents, along with ongoing out of hours assistance;
- 2.3 A review of the Public Space CCTV has been completed, with Global MSC Ltd commissioned to provide technical CCTV advice to inform this. The review identified a number of key concerns regarding both the equipment and current operating model:

- The CCTV system is an aged and outdated analogue system, with many cameras and equipment having reached or nearing the end of their life, with parts becoming harder to source;
- There is difficulty in evidencing that the quality of recorded footage is of evidential standard in low lighting areas or when a recording has been retrospectively interrogated i.e. zooming required as part of investigation on a recording;
- The data from the cameras is fed back to a control room through Fibre Lines which are expensive and inflexible;
- Analysis of the current operating model has shown a significant decrease in the number of incidents detected by CCTV operators.

2.4 The review identified a number of opportunities for the CCTV Service looking to the future, if technological upgrades could be accessed. These include:

- A digital system would deliver better quality images meaning that they can now be retrospectively interrogated without the need for an operator to have zoomed into an incident; and advances in analytical software could change the way in which the system is used to identify concerns. Both advances could reduce the need for 24/7/365 monitoring.
- A wireless system would not only reduce the ongoing need for expensive fibre lines but allow a CCTV system to be more flexible in its deployment locations. It would also allow for the installation of Town Centre Wi-Fi.

2.5 There were a number of concerns regarding the current operating model within the CCTV Partnership. These included a lack of sound governance, business development and poor communication both at Partnership Board meetings and outside of these that had been raised by Swale Borough Council but not addressed to a satisfactory standard by the Partnership. The Agreement for the CCTV Partnership stipulated a that notice to leave must be provided in the March, to be able to leave at the beginning of the next financial year. Therefore, notice to leave the Partnership has already been given and this will currently see Swale leave the CCTV Partnership on the 31 March 2020.

3 Proposals

3.1 The monitoring delivery model proposed within this paper is interdependent on the proposal for the equipment and transmission upgrade.

Monitoring Delivery Model

3.2 The proposed CCTV Monitoring Delivery Model would be that a CCTV Control Room is installed within the Multi-Storey Car Park in Sittingbourne Town Centre, which will be under Swale Borough Councils direct Management. Monitoring hours would be reduced to be in line with periods of higher crime/ASB and retail and night time economy premises working hours to prevent excessive costs on

operators with limited outcomes. Operational hours would be reviewed on an annual basis and capacity would be built in to operate out of hours in the case of a major incident.

This proposed model would see operators with local knowledge of Swale and the ability to build good working relationships with key stakeholders (Police, SwaleSafe and SBC staff) to effectively target monitoring and share intelligence – both of which are limited within the current model.

There would be capacity within the proposed control room to in the future, monitor another Local Authority's CCTV system should it be required.

Equipment and Transmission

- 3.3 It is proposed that the Swale Public Space CCTV service equipment be upgraded to enable a fully digitised, wireless solution.

This will ensure that the service can continue to operate, removing the ageing equipment. It will provide better image quality of evidential standard and the availability of analytic technology will increase the effectiveness of the service. The implementation of wireless transmission will enable annual revenue savings and a more flexible system.

Town Centre Wi-Fi

- 3.4 It is proposed that Town Centre Wi-Fi is offered within Sittingbourne, Sheerness and Faversham Town Centres, utilising the wireless CCTV infrastructure. There would be an additional cost, however it would enable the Council to interact with the community in a new way – through community messaging; better access to the Councils website; access to electronic cash cards; and better access to online payment for car parking.

Recommendation 1: For Cabinet to approve the proposed Public Space CCTV monitoring delivery model.

Recommendation 2: For Cabinet to note that officers will be conducting a procurement exercise for the proposed upgrade to the Public Space CCTV Services and Town Centre Wi-Fi, which will be brought back to Cabinet for approval.

4 Alternative Options

Monitoring Delivery Model

- 4.1 'Do nothing' – To not amend the monitoring delivery model. This is not recommended as notice to leave the existing CCTV Partnership has already been given and without an alternative control room in place by the 1 April 2020, there would be no mechanism for monitoring of cameras or their footage. It is also not recommended to not review the service operating hours to be in line with high

crime periods – operator costs form a large percentage of the overall service costs and it is very difficult to prove the effectiveness of monitoring overnight when crime statistics show very little crime is actually recorded during these hours. The equipment upgrades to the system required can only be afforded through an invest to save approach using savings made largely from reduced monitoring hours.

- 4.2 Stay within the CCTV Partnership - The notice to leave the CCTV Partnership could be withdrawn in order for Swale to stay within the Partnership. This is not recommended as a number of contract management issues have been identified over the last 18 months and the effectiveness of the service has shown clear reductions through incidents detected. Maidstone Council are also withdrawing from the Partnership and this would have a financial impact on the costs to Swale. There is also a need to move the existing Strood Control Room and this is likely to have a large financial impact on those remaining partners. The need to upgrade the field equipment and transmission would still be required, even if we stayed within the Partnership.
- 4.3 Cease operating a public space CCTV service – This option is not recommended as it would result in both the prevention/detection element of the service, along with the loss of recorded footage that the Police require as part of retrospective investigations. A few Council, such as Westminster, have ceased their service, based on the limited research that is available regarding the effectiveness of CCTV and that their area has copious amounts of private CCTV systems. Such knowledge of Swale private CCTV systems is not known.
- 4.4 Creation of a 'passive recording centre' with the ability for live monitoring for special events: This option would involve a recording only CCTV service, with no live monitoring apart from special events e.g. Hop Festival. The recorded footage would still be made available to Police for retrospective investigations. If the equipment had been upgraded, the quality of images for such action would be superior to now. This option could see an increase in crime/ASB without operators, however advances in the analytical software could partly mitigate this. Swale Safe have expressed concern at such a model as their service is reliant upon interaction with operators.
- 4.5 Tender for a monitoring service with a private/local authority partnership: There are a number of local authorities within the Kent area that could offer a monitoring service, within a partnership arrangement. A private sector company may not provide the targeted crime/ASB monitoring that would be required as can be focused upon alarm calls, but are available. This option would also be unlikely to see operators with local knowledge of the area required for the most effective service. Delivery costs would vary and are unlikely to be significantly cheaper than the proposed solution.

Equipment and Transmission

- 4.6 'Do nothing' - It is not recommended to not upgrade the equipment as this will result in a service that can no longer operate in the near future when parts can no

longer be sourced for the aged equipment. Footage from the cameras would continue to be poorer quality and may not always be able to be used as evidence.

- 4.7 Undertake a gradual upgrade programme over a long-term period – The digital and wireless upgrade could be undertaken over a longer period of time, town by town, to reduce the amount of up-front expenditure or reduction in monitoring hours. However, based upon the current renewals fund and savings that could be made yearly from removal of fibre line transmissions, this would take over 5 years. There could also be an issue between compatibility of a new and old system and the benefits of the upgraded part of the system could not be realised.

Town Centre Wi-Fi

- 4.8 ‘Do Nothing’ – To not deliver town centre wi-fi as part of a CCTV equipment upgrade. This would see the loss of an opportunity to engage with the community through this mechanism, although it could be installed at a later stage.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Discussions have been held with key stakeholders including Kent Police and Swale Safe as the CCTV review has progressed. Feedback has included:
- Current operators often have limited knowledge of the area they are monitoring, and this has been a cause for concern;
 - Kent Police were supportive of an upgrade to the CCTV system and changes to an operating model. The importance of ensuring a mechanism is in place for CCTV monitoring of a major incident outside of normal operating hours was stressed.
 - Any technology upgrade also needs to consider the Police DAMS (Digital Asset Management System) Project and ensure that any new system is compatible with the objectives of this project (to share images online);
 - Swale Safe have stressed that any changes to monitoring hours or moving to recording only would result in operational risk to the Swale Safe scheme. However, if monitoring hours are inline with their members operating hours then this is less of a concern.
- 5.2 A public consultation was undertaken on a draft Public Space CCTV Strategy in May 2019. All responses were supportive of the Council continuing to deliver a public space CCTV service and to use technology to be the best advantage within this.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
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Corporate Plan	The proposals in this report delivers against the Corporate Priority 'Delivering the Council of tomorrow'.
Financial, Resource and Property	<p>The 2019/20 annual revenue budget for the Public Space CCTV Service is £277,000. The Service is funded solely by Swale BC.</p> <p>The proposed operating model has been estimated to save approx. £70,000 per year. The anticipated cost of the equipment upgrade and installation of a control room within the Multi-Storey Car Park is £335,000.</p> <p>Therefore, the cost of the proposals could be paid off within 5 years using an invest to save approach.</p> <p>The ongoing revenue budget also incorporates a renewals fund, to replace the field cameras after 7 years when they reach the end of their useable life and their technology is outdated. This renewal fund would mean there would be no need for a further modernisation programme in the near future.</p> <p>A contingency has been built into both the annual revenue costs and one-off costs as there are some elements of the proposal that cannot accurately be predicted. For example, there may be redundancy costs for MCG staff and the costs of the upgrades are based upon estimates from a technical consultant and knowledge of similar project costs from neighbouring authorities – exact costs will be determined following a tendering process and would be brought back to Cabinet for approval.</p>
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	<p>There is no Statutory Duty to deliver CCTV. However Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 places an obligation on local authorities to consider the crime, disorder and environmental issues affecting the local area and ensure their activities do all they reasonably can to prevent them. The implementation and monitoring of CCTV is one such activity delivered by Swale Borough Council that ensures this obligation is met.</p> <p>The Surveillance Camera Code of Practice provides guidance on how all public space CCTV services should be managed. This needs to be borne in mind along with the Data Protection Act and Freedom of Information Act. Adherence to our legal requirements is currently led through the CCTV Partnership, but a compliance role will be built into the staff modelling for the proposal.</p> <p>There will be a requirement for procurement activity for the delivery of the agreed model in relation to equipment and transmission upgrades; and installation of a control room. It is proposed that these are procured through the ESPO - Security and Surveillance</p>

	Equipment & Services Framework.
Crime and Disorder	<p>The main objective of the CCTV service is to prevent and detect crime and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). It is also in place to support vulnerable individuals such as those that go missing.</p> <p>The statistics currently available for the current service have shown a reduction in the incidents logged by CCTV operators – this could be related to changes in the way in which the current monitoring model operates (non local operators with at times limited knowledge of the areas they are monitoring – which is required for effective detection).</p> <p>Research has shown that CCTV is most effective when used as a package of tools to tackle a specified issue. There has been an increase in reported crime to Kent Police and a localised delivery model with improved equipment and linkage to local officers should provide a more effective service to help combat this increase in crime.</p> <p>The proposed change to the operating model would see monitoring hours more closely aligned to times of higher crime levels, in consultation with Kent Police.</p>
Environment and Sustainability	<p>A renewals fund has been built into the ongoing revenue budget for the service that would allow for the complete replacement of all field cameras every 5-7 years. This is due to the rate at which camera technology is improving and would ensure that any CCTV service operated remains modern and effective.</p>
Health and Wellbeing	<p>The Public Space CCTV service seeks to create safer communities - not only in a sense of feeling safer, but also by reducing the risk of physical injury. It also provides a service to protect vulnerable members of the community e.g. those that go missing.</p>
Risk Management and Health and Safety	<p>Risk assessments for the proposals have been compiled. Mitigating measures have been identified for the greater inherent risks. This includes monitoring in the case of a major incident out of hours for the Police. An on-call system would be considered along with training of wider SBC staff. There would also be an expectation that staff would be at times lone working and plans to reduce the health and safety implications would need to be considered.</p> <p>A full project plan will be compiled following agreement of the proposals to ensure that the project is carefully implemented to ensure there are no extra costs – if the monitoring centre is moved prior to the equipment upgrades, there would be an increased cost to ensure the existing BT fibre lines are fed into the control room. Given that notice has already been given to the CCTV Partnership,</p>

	<p>any delay to beginning the procurement process for the system upgrade could result in the control room needing to be moved before the end of March 2020.</p> <p>The proposed monitoring model's staffing levels is based upon a similar neighbouring authority – there is a risk regarding the resilience of staffing, but a budget has been provisionally allocated for on-call operators to help mitigate this.</p> <p>There is limited evidence to demonstrate the preventative element of monitored CCTV, however there would be a regular review of monitoring times and peak crime times to ensure that they are correctly aligned.</p>
Equality and Diversity	An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed. No specific implications on groups with protected characteristics have been identified.
Privacy and Data Protection	<p>The proposals within this report are to continue to operate and modernise the existing CCTV footprint. Additional cameras are not to be installed and there have been regular reviews of all camera locations to ensure that their ongoing deployment is justified considering the impact on individuals' privacy. The most recent review of camera locations and this justification process was completed in early 2018.</p> <p>There will be an ongoing requirement to ensure that the CCTV Service is delivered inline with Data Protection requirements (including the secure storage and management of images) and the other legal requirements for CCTV (CCTV Code of Practice).</p>

7 Appendices

There are no appendices.

8 Background Papers

There are no background papers.

Cabinet Meeting	
Meeting Date	10 th July 2019
Report Title	Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 – 2023
Cabinet Member	Cllr Ben J Martin, Cabinet Member for Housing
SMT Lead	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing, Economy and Community Services.
Head of Service	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing, Economy and Community Services.
Lead Officer	Charlotte Hudson, Head of Housing, Economy and Community Services.
Key Decision	Yes
Classification	Open
Recommendations	1. To adopt the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 - 2023

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 This report provides the background to the development of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and seeks approval for the adoption of the Strategy.

2 Background

- 2.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 places a statutory duty on the authority to carry out a homelessness review for the district and utilise the findings of the review to formulate and publish a homelessness strategy. It also needs to take into account the additional duties introduced through the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

- 2.2 HQN Ltd were commissioned to carry out an independent homelessness review and develop a Strategy for the Council in late 2018. The review documents are shown in Appendix II - Detailed Analysis of Housing Issues in and Appendix III - Homelessness Review and form the evidence base for the Strategy development. The main challenges identified in the review are:

- London displacement with Swale being an attractive option that is more affordable;
- The disparity between house prices and local incomes;
- The inability of our local market to meet the housing needs of local people;
- Lack of mobility in housing market;
- Lack of direct access to social housing properties;

- The cost of the private rented sector in Swale compared to Local Housing Allowance rates;
- The availability of services to support people in sustaining their tenancies;
- The general lack of truly affordable housing;
- Prison discharge – with 3 prisons on the Isle of Sheppey, Swale has several ex-offenders that present as homeless even if few qualify.

2.3 The Strategy was developed focusing on the following four priorities:

- Preventing homelessness;
- Reducing the need for emergency and temporary accommodation;
- Delivering the right homes in the right places; and
- Improving conditions in existing homes.

2.4 A consultation exercise took place for 7 weeks, closing on Friday 10th March. 26 responses were received as part of the consultation, although broadly supportive of the proposed priorities issues were raised regarding the quantity and affordability of housing, particularly for those in the local community who have low incomes.

2.5 The priorities for the new administration place a greater focus on housing and homelessness issues and the level of investment that they are prepared to direct towards tackling this issue. Therefore, as a result of the consultation responses and new administration focus the following priorities are proposed:

- Delivering affordable homes;
- Preventing homelessness;
- Reducing the need for emergency and temporary accommodation; and
- Improving conditions in existing homes.

2.6 The Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy has been developed around these priorities and is shown in Appendix I.

3 Proposals

3.1 To adopt the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 – 2023.

4 Alternative Options

4.1 The alternative option would be to not adopt the Strategy, this is not recommended as the Strategy has been developed based upon the evidence and need from the Homelessness Review and has also been amended to reflect the new administrations priorities and investment following the consultation.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

5.1 The Strategy went out to public consultation in May 2019 and the summary of the consultation responses are shown in Appendix IV

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	Housing and homelessness forms links to the corporate priority for Delivering Quality of Life. It is also a priority of the current administration and its emerging corporate plan.
Financial, Resource and Property	The Housing Service is currently undergoing a reorganisation in order to align officer resource to deliver against these priorities. Additional investment in affordable housing is being investigated and an individual business case will be brought forward in relation to these proposals.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	The Homelessness Act 2002 places a statutory duty on the authority to carry out a homelessness review for the district and utilising the findings of the review to formulate and publish a homelessness strategy. The additional duties introduced through the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 also need to be taking into consideration in delivering this strategy.
Crime and Disorder	The clients of the housing service cover a wide range of individuals from victims of domestic abuse to offenders leaving prison. Therefore, positive interaction to address the individuals needs will have a positive impact on crime and disorder.
Environment and Sustainability	There are no additional environmental and sustainability issues identified as part of the adoption of this strategy.
Health and Wellbeing	The Council has a legal duty under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to take such steps as it considers appropriate for improving the health of the people in its area. This includes people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness. A range of services provided by the housing services directly addresses individual's health needs.
Risk Management and Health and Safety	Due to the high demand on the Housing Options service and the statutory nature of this service, this is identified on the Corporate Risk register. The delivery of the housing strategy and the reorganisation of the service are mitigations to deal with this risk.
Equality and Diversity	A community impact assessment has been conducted and no adverse impacts have been identified on those with protective characteristics.
Privacy and Data Protection	There are no additional privacy and data protection implications identified through the adoption of the strategy. Any new partnership arrangements that deal with personal details will be dealt with in line with the Kent and Medway Information Sharing Protocol.

7 Appendices

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

- Appendix I – Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019 – 2023
- Appendix II – Detailed Analysis of Housing Issues in Swale
- Appendix III – Homelessness Review
- Appendix IV – Consultation Summary

8 Background Papers

None.

Housing, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2023



Foreword

Introducing our Strategy on Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping 2019-2022.

We are currently in the midst of a national housing crisis, a housing crisis which is becoming an emergency, with demand outstripping supply, making it difficult for some members of our communities to find and afford a place to live. Every member of our community deserves warm, safe, decent housing that they can afford. This is why tackling homelessness and accelerating affordable housing delivery are at the heart of this administration's priorities. This strategy will steer our resources and response to housing so we are focusing on the issues that will have the biggest impact for our residents, whilst we continue to lobby central government on the key policy issues that need to be addressed. This strategy alone won't solve the issues overnight and should be viewed as a first step towards providing a proactive response to the housing and homelessness crisis that affects too many families and individuals across our area.

As Cabinet Member for Housing I will ensure that we tackle this issue as best we can given current legislation by:

- Delivering Affordable Homes;
- Preventing Homelessness;
- Reducing the need for emergency and temporary accommodation;
- Improving conditions in existing homes;
- Supporting community led housing schemes;
- Working with third parties to provide necessary outreach and support.

We must be ambitious to bring about a step change for our residents and it is my commitment to ensure that our residents have the best opportunity to have the right access to housing that is warm, safe and affordable.

Cllr. Ben J Martin

Cabinet Member for Housing

Introduction

This Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy covers the period 2019-2023. The document sets out the high-level strategic issues affecting the Borough and the Council's plans to work in partnership with others to meet the identified housing needs in the Borough.

Preventing homelessness is a statutory requirement of the Council and one it takes very seriously and will use every opportunity it has to achieve. It has strong relationships with social housing providers and it is through these partnership that we want to accelerate the provision of affordable housing in the borough.

Rough Sleeping has also become an increasing issue and this strategy places a priority on support put in place to safeguard these most vulnerable individuals.

It is recognised that Swales' housing challenges are a result of many inter related issues both nationally and locally including:

- London displacement with Swale being an attractive option that is more affordable;
- The disparity between house prices and local incomes;
- The inability of our local market to meet the housing needs of local people;
- Lack of mobility in housing market;
- Lack of direct access to social housing properties;
- The cost of the private rented sector in Swale compared to Local Housing Allowance rates;
- The availability of services to support people in sustaining their tenancies;
- The general lack of truly affordable housing;
- Prison discharge – with 3 prisons on the Isle of Sheppey, Swale has a number of ex-offenders that present as homeless even if few qualify.

The strategy has been developed following a detailed analysis of the housing issues in Swale and a comprehensive review of the Council's Homelessness Service. These documents form the evidence base for the strategy and are included as appendices.

It recognises that the Council will be more effective by working together with other organisations in the public, private and voluntary sector. Examples include Kent County Council, the Health Sector and Housing Providers such as Optivo, Moat Homes and Hyde Housing and housing co-operatives. It is committed to improving its delivery relationships for the benefit of Swale residents.

Our strategic priorities are:

- 1 Delivering affordable homes;
- 2 Preventing homelessness;
- 3 Reducing the need for emergency and temporary accommodation; and
- 4 Improving conditions in existing homes.

In order to deliver these priorities, the Council has committed to deliver on 6 key objectives:

Key Objectives:

- Develop a borough wide approach to invest in and deliver affordable homes;
- Promote early intervention and a more customer focussed homeless prevention service;
- Develop and enhance the partnership approach to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough;
- Prevent the need for and length of time spent in temporary accommodation;
- Ensure support is available for vulnerable households; and
- Improve private sector housing conditions and management practices including helping older, disabled and vulnerable people to live in safe adapted homes through a range of initiatives.

National housing policies

Government direction for housing is set out in section 1 of Appendix I 'Detailed Analysis of Housing Issues in Swale' and includes:

- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Housing Green Paper – A New Deal for Social Housing
- Fixing the Broken Housing Market – Government's White Paper
- Changes to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- Housing and Planning Act 2016
- Government Changes to Delivery Agencies
- Welfare Reform
- Care Act 2016 and Better Care Fund
- Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018

Summary of national housing issues to respond to:

- Reduce homelessness and meet requirements of new legislation
- Housing growth – to meet the needs of current and future population.
- Encourage diversity in the market including modern/ non -traditional methods of construction that speed up delivery of housing and new products e.g. Self-build, modular, starter homes
- Improve conditions in the private rented sector
- Ongoing welfare reforms as they impact on housing
- Role of housing in prevention – helping vulnerable people to live independently and reducing costs on acute health and social care services.
- Reduce rough sleeping

Strategic context

The context within which this Strategy sits is set out in section 2 of the 'Detailed Analysis of Housing Issues in Swale' and includes:

- Corporate Plan 2019 – 2022 Delivering a Better Borough for you
- Statement of Accounts 31st March 2018
- Economic and Regeneration Framework 2018 – 2021
- Swale Community Safety Plan 2018/19
- Kent Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy - Outcomes for Kent
- Annual Public Health Report
- Bearing Fruits 2031 The Swale Borough Local Plan Adopted July 2017
- Kent Housing Group and emerging Housing Strategy.

Summary of strategic issues:

- The provision of housing and related services in Swale should sit within a coherent strategic framework with clear links to the strategic direction and commissioning priorities of other relevant public services. The Council will seek to work with partners to ensure seamless provision of service. This is a particular concern regarding vulnerable groups that KCC commissioned services lead on including substance misuse, mental health and domestic abuse, supported housing schemes and prison releases.
- The Council has the ability to use its borrowing powers to make meaningful interventions in the local housing market, in all likelihood with a partner. The financial proposition may also need some revenue budget support from the Council.
- A new Housing Strategy for Kent and Medway is being developed, using the countywide Growth Infrastructure Framework to frame a strategic conversation with Government about Kent's approach to planning and delivering housing growth. This will be used to help channel Government investment into the County and it is therefore important that Swale is appropriately linked into this workstream. The following four priorities have been agreed as strategic direction:
 - Accelerating housing delivery;
 - Affordability;
 - Health and wellbeing; and
 - Infrastructure and investment.

For a statistical profile of Swale see section 3 in Appendix I 'Detailed Analysis of Housing Issues in Swale'.

Summary of strategic issues:

- The Strategy needs to reflect the diversity of the Borough. There is a varied geography with urban centres and rural villages. The main centres of population are Sittingbourne, Faversham and Sheerness
- Swale's demographic make-up is equally as diverse, including a mix of affluent and less affluent areas, but in general the borough is less well-off than is typical for the south-east. There are some concentrated pockets of severe socioeconomic deprivation to be found in locations across the area.
- The population is growing and changing. The numbers of residents are due to increase by 20% over the next 20 years and there will be a significant increase in the over 65 years age group which needs to be recognised in the likely demand for housing and related support services.

Swale's housing market

For information on the housing market see section 4 in Appendix I 'Detailed Analysis of Housing Issues in Swale' document.

Summary of strategic issues:

- There are over 58,000 dwellings in Swale. 69.3% are owner occupied, 14.3% are housing association, and 15.2% are rented privately. Semi-detached and terraced properties make up the largest property type
- House prices vary across the Borough with hot spots in Faversham and surrounding affluent villages and cooler spots on the Isle of Sheppey and (to a lesser extent) Sittingbourne
- House prices in Swale are relatively affordable when compared to some other Kent boroughs and London and may be a reason why people choose to locate in Swale and commute into other areas, including London, where they have the level of income that allows that.
- Swale reflects the national trend and is seeing a long-term worsening in the affordability of accommodation in Swale across all tenures. The median income of employees in Swale in 2017 was £29.5k pa. The average house price was £262k and median house prices are over 9 times median incomes. Housing is therefore largely out of reach for local first-time buyers and those on low/moderate incomes.
- When comparing average rent levels and Local Housing Allowance rates it can be seen that in all areas, and across all property sizes and types, average weekly private sector rent levels exceed Local Housing Allowance rates. This means that the private rented sector is very difficult for those on low/moderate incomes to be able to afford. Use of the private rented sector as an option for homeless people is therefore severely restricted.
- The Council does not have substantial land holdings, and as such it will be dependent upon land that comes forward when it makes call for sites through the Local Plan process. The challenge is to ensure that the right affordable homes are delivered in the right places.

Priority 1 – Deliver affordable homes

For information about the scale and distribution of housing growth in Swale see section 5 of Appendix I 'Detailed Analysis of Housing Issues in Swale'.

Summary of strategic issues:

- There is a need for 190 new affordable homes per year. Recent output has been for 122 new affordable homes (17/18) and 144 (16/17). As such a more proactive negotiation with developers is needed, insisting on the numbers of affordable set out in the Local Plan.
- The current trajectory suggests that it will be challenging to meet the Council's housing targets for the next three years. Thereafter, given the developments planned, outputs will increase so we are more on track with targets. Given the current reliance on s106 to deliver new affordable housing we can expect the trajectory of new affordable homes to follow this trend line
- There are four active developing housing associations in Swale and there is commitment for ongoing investment in the Borough. Positively, two of the Council's housing association partners have recently become strategic development partners with Homes England. This should increase the chances of investment in the Borough and help to boost delivery, subject to Swale taking a proactive approach to this issue by negotiation with developers and insisting on the numbers of affordable set out in the Local Plan
- The highest need remains for affordable rented housing but there is also need for intermediate housing products for aspiring home owners. Going forwards it is important that the Council continues to diversify the housing offer to meet a range of housing needs at various price points
- To date, there has been a reliance on Section 106 to deliver the majority of new affordable homes and there is a need to consider other innovative ways to deliver. The opportunities for development on Council-owned sites have been taken with 11 new homes due to be built on land sold to Optivo for affordable housing. Options on other public sector land, use of borrowing abilities through PWLB, and the potential for a Council-led Housing Development Company could be considered.
- The Council has Government funding through the Community Led Housing Fund for proactive work in rural areas and it is important that this is used to generate new homes in rural areas

- Projections show an increase in the number of older people in our district. It is important that our housing supports healthy ageing and as well as initiatives to help people live independently for longer. We want to increase the provision including bungalows and well-designed single level accommodation, and potentially extra care, subject to KCC's commissioning priorities
- There is unmet need for additional supported housing for adults with learning disabilities and mental health problems.

Strategic objectives for the delivery plan:

- Develop a borough wide approach to invest in and deliver affordable homes;

Priority 2 - Preventing homelessness and supporting homeless people

For detailed analysis of homelessness see Appendix II - Homelessness Review.

Summary of strategic issues:

- The Council is challenged by the current housing market, with increased demand from people unable to access either owned or rented housing in the private sector
- The Allocations Policy sets a local connection for the Housing Register and does not give sufficient priority to homeless households. This should be reviewed in order to support the prevention of homelessness.
- There has been good progress in developing new initiatives and work with private landlords in the area is delivering results albeit slowly
- Operationally partnerships are good but more could be done to work with partners at a strategic level to build relationships and this could be achieved through holding a regular Housing Forum
- Supported housing funded by Kent County Council is generally meeting the need of vulnerable households, with single people in particular benefiting from the single homeless supported housing provision. There is a need to monitor support for both young people and people with complex needs who may fall through the net. Kent County Council's commissioning strategy needs to be closely monitored and informed by Swale BC since there are strategic and operational risks associated with their proposals to remodel the support service at The Quays and other services for vulnerable people. Swale BC need to work closely with Kent County Council to secure the best outcome for the population
- The number of rough sleepers is increasing. At the most recent count (November 2018) the numbers increased from 9 to 32, placing Swale in the top 10 authorities with the largest increase. Along with a strategic and co-ordinated approach to this, steps should be taken to agree more formal arrangements for periods of severe weather. The Council could also seek to develop their relationship with both voluntary sector and faith groups to further support the work of the team. A pro-active approach to early identification and prevention will support this.

Strategic objectives for the delivery plan:

- Promote early intervention and a more customer focussed homeless prevention service.
- Develop and enhance the partnership approach to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough.

Priority 3 – Reducing the need for emergency and temporary accommodation

For detailed analysis of temporary accommodation see Appendix II - the Homelessness Review.

Summary of strategic issues:

- Increasing demand on the service has resulted in an increasing number of households living in temporary accommodation with increased cost to the council. Numbers are likely to continue to increase and a pro-active approach to homeless prevention will be required. This is addressed through actions identified in the delivery plan.
- There is a mixed portfolio of temporary accommodation and this is used effectively although bed and breakfast is still used. Ending the use of B&B and significantly reducing the number of nightly let properties is a priority and is addressed in the Delivery Plan. Officers are aware of the need to work more closely with housing providers in order to address this and an interim Recovery Plan is already delivering results
- A review of the Allocations Policy will help bring down numbers in temporary accommodation as will a focus on pro-active prevention and delivering new housing supply.

Strategic objectives for the delivery plan:

- Prevent the need for and length of time spent in temporary accommodation.
- Ensure support is available for vulnerable households.

Priority 4 - Improving conditions in existing homes

For information about the current housing stock see section 7 of Appendix II 'Detailed Analysis of Housing Issues in Swale'.

Summary of strategic issues:

- There is an ongoing need for Council intervention to improve private sector housing conditions; an estimated 5% of all homes (2000) had some form of hazard, with the highest levels in Sheerness and Queenborough.
- Poor housing conditions have a detrimental impact on health outcomes and there is a need for ongoing work to tackle category 1 hazards (excess cold, falls on stairs, falls on levels, damp and mould) in the private rented sector and owner occupied sector, especially where these homes are occupied by older or vulnerable people. The highest levels of category 1 hazards are found on the Isle of Sheppey
- There are 7,695 properties identified in fuel poverty, with 48% being occupied by a retired resident and 41% containing a disabled resident. Initiatives to tackle fuel poverty are in place and therefore remain important
- The Council undertakes some proactive work but reactive work is the main action to improve housing conditions in the private rented sector. About 300 cases are investigated per year and appropriate action is taken. In 2017/18, 45 homes were improved to the Decent Homes standard, 130 homes required enforcement action of some type, 9 HMOs are currently licensed, with more expected due to changes in legislation, and 111 empty homes were returned to use.
- Recognising the links between housing and health, the Staying Put services provide flexible and person-centred Home Improvement Agency Services. In 2017/18 they provided advice to over 2,000 people, completed 160 Disabled Facilities Grants, over 1,000 Handyperson jobs, 270 health and safety assessments to identify and remedy hazards, facilitated over 130 hospital discharges and prevented over 550 potential falls. This low level preventative work has a huge impact on people's quality of life and provides savings to health and social care budgets preventing or delaying the need for more institutional forms of care.

Strategic objective for the delivery plan:

- Improve private sector housing conditions and management practices, helping older, disabled and vulnerable people to live in safe, adapted homes, through a range of initiatives within resources.

Delivering the Strategy

A delivery plan has been developed for this Strategy (pages 15 – 21). It is intended to be a live document, with the flexibility to deliver in a responsive way against the priorities.

It will be reviewed annually to identify any new opportunities and ensure our approach achieves the most effective outcomes.

Along with the existing Housing Services budget additional funding has been invested in staffing. Business cases will be explored in order to accelerate affordable homes and inform investment decisions. External funding will be sourced to ensure that delivery opportunities are maximised in Swale.

Performance Monitoring

Key Data Indicators have been selected to ascertain performance of the delivery of the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. These are based upon data that is readily available to the team. They will be chosen to ensure a golden thread between this strategy, the Corporate Plan and Housing Service plans. A focus will be on customer satisfaction, early intervention and proactive approaches to homelessness.

Priority One – Deliver affordable homes

- No. of affordable homes negotiated/planned
- No. of affordable housing completions

Priority Two – Preventing Homelessness

- % of customers who rated the customer service as positive
- % of households who secured accommodation for 6+ months when prevention duty ended.
- % of households who secured accommodation at end of relief duty
- No. of rough sleepers identified at annual rough sleeper count /estimate.

Priority Two – Reducing the need for emergency and temporary accommodation

- No. of households in temporary accommodation at end of each quarter.
- No. of households in Bed or Breakfast or shared facilities
- No. of new households in temporary accommodation this quarter
- No. of households moved out of temporary accommodation this quarter.
- No. of lettings through the Housing Register per quarter
- % of Housing Register lets by band

Priority Four – Improving conditions in existing homes

- % of long-term empty properties brought back into use
- % of enforcement cases closed with positive outcome
- % of DFG grant allocated
- No. of homes brought up to the decent homes standard
- No. of cases completed by Home Improvement Agency that allow residents to stay in their house safely.

Delivery Plan 2019 – 2023

Priority One: Deliver affordable homes				
Objective	Action	Resource Requirement	Lead Officer	Timescales
1. Develop a borough wide approach to invest in and deliver affordable homes (with a focus on social rent);	1.1. Seek opportunities where the Council can intervene in the market to increase affordable housing in the borough.	Officer Time / Investment	Strategic Housing / Planning Policy	March 2020
	1.2. Develop the housing offer in Swale by delivering a range of affordable homes that meet a range of incomes and needs.	Officer Time		March 2023
	1.3. Maximise opportunities for Swale through Homes England Strategic partnerships and Housing Infrastructure Funding.	Officer Time		Quarterly Review
	1.4. Work proactively with KCC, RP's, developers and planning to deliver schemes to support its Accommodation Strategy for older people and other 'groups' (LD, Mental Health etc.) to ensure need is met.	Officer Time		Quarterly Review
	1.5. Support initiatives emanating from the Community Led Housing Fund in our rural communities.	CLH Funding		Quarterly Review
	1.6. Work with owners to bring back into use long-term empty properties.	Officer Time	PS Housing Manager	Quarterly Review

Priority Two: Preventing Homelessness				
Objective	Action	Resource Requirement	Lead Officer	Timescales
2. Promote early intervention and a more customer focussed homeless prevention service	2.1. Promote the Housing Options service through the website and social media to encourage early access to the service.	Officer Time	Housing Options Manager	Dec 2019
	2.2. Review the current customer process from end to end and ensure effective and consistent delivery (including effective use of Locata).	Officer Time		Dec 2019
	2.3. Explore co-location opportunities with partner agencies to improve access to the service for residents.	Office Time		March 2020
	2.4. Develop a prevention first approach within the Housing Options Team through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a prevention protocol • Developing a prevention toolkit, especially focusing on parental, end of tenancy evictions and caravan park homes. • Evaluate current pilot initiatives (e.g. Landlord Introduction Scheme) • Create a dedicated prevention and outreach team 	Officer Time / Prevention budget		Dec 2019
3. Develop and enhance the partnership approach to tackling	3.1. Establish a Housing Forum to enhance joint working on homelessness and rough sleeping projects.	Officer Time	Housing Options Manager	Sept 2019
	3.2. Promote and monitor referrals through the duty to refer and commitment to refer mechanisms to ensure	Officer Time		Quarterly Review

homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough.	<p>that homeless prevention is a priority with partner agencies.</p> <p>3.3. Develop a response to rough sleeping in Swale, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review response to SWEP • Bid to government for resources through Rough Sleeping Initiative • Develop an enhanced outreach service • Work with the voluntary sector to increase provision for night shelters and support. 	Officer Time / RSI Funding		Nov 2019
Priority Three: Reducing the need for emergency and temporary accommodation				
Objective	Action	Resource Requirement	Lead Officer	Timescales
4. Prevent the need for and length of time spent in temporary accommodation	<p>4.1 Work with the social housing sector to identify properties suitable for move-on accommodation for those in temporary accommodation.</p> <p>4.2 Review the Housing Allocations Policy to ensure it maximises opportunities for those in most need to access social housing.</p> <p>4.3 Work with the private rented sector to overcome the barriers for residents to access their accommodation.</p>	<p>Officer Time</p> <p>Officer Time</p> <p>Officer Time</p>	Housing Options Manager	<p>Quarterly Review</p> <p>March 2020</p> <p>Quarterly</p>

	4.4	Review current arrangements for the provision of emergency and temporary accommodation in order to eradicate the use of B&B and Shared Accommodation for families by end of 2019.	Officer Time		Review Dec 2019
	4.5	Lobby to address the root cause and policy issues in relation to the housing market that are impacting on homelessness in Swale.	Officer / Member Time		Quarterly Review
5. Ensure support is available for vulnerable households	5.1	Engage with the new providers of Adult and Young People KCC commissioned services for homelessness, to ensure integration with Swale Services.	Officer time	Housing Options Manager	Quarterly Review
	5.2	Work with Social Services and Early Help to provide Housing advice and support to reduce homelessness for young people.	Officer Time		Quarterly Review
	5.3	Inform and engage with commissioned services for Substance misuse, Mental Health and Domestic abuse services to ensure our residents receive the right support.	Officer Time		Quarterly Review
	5.4	Commit to the armed forces covenant to ensure that those who serve or who have served in the armed forces, and their families are treated fairly.	Officer Time		Quarterly Review

Priority Four: Improving conditions in existing homes				
Objective	Action	Resource Requirement	By Who	By When
6. Improve private sector housing conditions and management practices including helping older, disabled and vulnerable people to live in safe adapted homes through a range of initiatives within resources	6.1. Target enforcement action on the worst private rented sector properties and licensable HMO's to improve living conditions within the private rented sector	Officer Time	Private Sector Housing Manager	Quarterly Review
	6.2. Work in partnership to improve energy efficiency within homes	Officer Time		Quarterly Review
	6.3. Promote the Landlord Forum in partnership with Housing Options, holding events twice a year	Officer Time		Quarterly Review
	6.4. Review use of Better Care Funding in relation to disabled grants to maximise its use	Officer Time / BCF		Quarterly Review
	6.5. Promote Disabled Facilities Grants by working in partnership with agencies/ organisations to enable individuals to live independently in their own homes	Officer Time/ DFG		Quarterly Review
	6.6. Promote HIA, home safety checks, preventative work on falls preventions, hospital discharge and admissions	Officer Time		Quarterly Review
	6.7. Explore selective licencing schemes in Swale	Officer Time		Quarterly Review

Swale Borough Council

Housing, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2023

Detailed Analysis of Housing Issues in Swale

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Introduction

This document sets out the detailed analysis of the housing market in Swale and sets out the information that informs the Strategic Issues and Priorities for Swale Borough Council's interventions and partnership work for the forthcoming five years.

1. National Housing Policies

1.1. Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and Rough Sleeping

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has introduced new duties around preventing and relieving homelessness. This includes extending the period within which an applicant is considered to be threatened with homelessness, and new requirements around provision of advice.¹

Homelessness and rough sleeping levels continue to increase both nationally and locally, and the government has been making more funding available for dealing with homelessness. The government has also committed to halve rough sleeping by 2022 and eliminate it by 2027; and consultation is due on identifying the barriers to landlords in making longer, more secure tenancies available. This document should be read in concert with the Homelessness Review 2019.

1.2. Housing Green Paper – A New Deal for Social Housing

This was published in August 2018 for consultation. It aims to rebalance the relationship between residents and landlords, tackle stigma and ensure that social housing can be both a stable base that supports people when they need it and support social mobility. It sets out the following themes:

- Tackling stigma and celebrating thriving communities
- Expanding supply and supporting home ownership
- Effective resolution of complaints
- Empowering residents and strengthening the regulator
- Ensuring homes are safe and decent.

1.3. Fixing the Broken Housing Market – Government's White Paper

In February 2017 the government published a White Paper 'Fixing our Broken Housing Market'. This sets out the government's plans to boost new housing supply; speed up the delivery of new homes; help aspiring home owners; tackle the shortage of affordable housing; widen the definition of affordable housing; boosting delivery of infrastructure; and increasing skills and capacity in the construction industry². With a sharp focus on the delivery of new housing, Government expects local authorities to be ambitious and

¹ Homelessness Reduction Act 2017: <https://services.parliament.uk/bills/2016-17/homelessnessreduction.html>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/housing-white-paper>

innovative in seeking to meet their objectively assessed need for housing. A national target to build 300,000 new homes a year was subsequently set in the Budget 2017.

1.4. Changes to National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

In July 2018 Government released a revised version of the NPPF. Changes to policy and associated changes to planning practice guidance include proposals for reforming developer contributions, and proposed changes to the standard assessment methodology for housing needs. The definition of affordable housing has been revised and the 'starter home' provisions have been set out. Initiatives such as changes to starter homes requirements, promoting new methods of construction, reintroducing grant for new social rented homes in areas of greatest need, and promotion of self build and custom build housing are also welcome, offering opportunities to diversify the local market, particularly in more rural areas.

1.5. Housing and Planning Act 2016

This Act contained numerous legislative changes to housing policy including:

- **Introduction of Starter Homes** – A new product for people aged under 40 years who will be able to purchase a Starter Home at 80 percent of the market level capped at £450,000 in London and £250,000 elsewhere. The intention in the Act was for a proportion of new affordable homes to be 'starter homes' and the NPPF sets out how this should be interpreted
- **Extension of Right to Buy** – The Right to Buy is due to be extended to housing association tenants. Housing associations will be required to replace homes on a 'one for one' basis. This is particularly important in rural areas where there is less affordable housing. At the time of writing the detail on how this Policy will be implemented is yet to be released but a national pilot is underway
- **Tackling Rogue Landlords** – The Act introduced various measures to improve standards in the private rented sector by tackling rogue landlords. These include introducing civil penalties of up to £30,000; rent repayment orders; banning orders and a database of rogue landlords. Other recent changes in the sector include a draft Tenant Fees Bill (November 2017) stamps out letting agents' fees and capping deposits, and the extension of mandatory HMO licensing including minimum room sizes and a specification of the maximum number of people the HMO should house
- **End of Lifetime Tenancies** – The Act phases out lifetime tenancies by enacting that all new tenancies are flexible with a review every two to ten years. The aim of the policy is to make best use of the housing stock by offering short term tenancies to people in need with periodic reviews to ensure the household still requires the size of accommodation they are occupying. The detail is yet to be released by Government
- **Self-build and custom built housing** – Political aspirations are to increase the proportion of self-build and custom built housing. Local authorities are required to hold a register of applicants who are interested in self and custom build housing and to allocate appropriate sites through the planning system.

1.6. Government Changes to Delivery Agencies

In 2017 Government changed the main delivery agencies for housing. The Government department was renamed 'Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government' raising the profile of housing delivery. A new Minister for Homelessness was created. The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) was disbanded and 'Homes England' was established to oversee housing growth and supporting infrastructure and the 'Regulator of Social Housing' was established. These changes emphasise the importance of housing growth.

1.7. Welfare Reform

The implementation of a major national programme of welfare reforms aimed mainly at working age people is well under way. Key aims are to cut the overall welfare bill and encourage people into work.³

A key driver of the welfare changes is to make it financially worthwhile for people to take on paid employment rather than claim benefits. This, combined with advice and support around seeking employment, education and/or training should lead to improved opportunities for some people who would previously have been caught in the 'benefit trap'.

However, with severe cuts to the national welfare budget happening at the same time, many claimants are finding their benefits reduced, and struggling to make ends meet; including those who are already in work. Local Housing Allowance rates are insufficient to cover even the cheapest rents in parts of Swale, making it extremely difficult for those on benefits to access or remain in private rented housing.

Nationally the risk of Universal Credit claimants falling into rent arrears has been found to be high and both councils as landlords will need to find ways of managing this risk going forwards.

1.8. Care Act 2016 and Better Care Fund

The Care Act 2016 requires local social services authorities to carry out a needs assessment in order to determine whether an adult has needs for care and support, it also supports closer working between health, housing and social care services. From 2015/16 onwards the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) allocation has been included within the Better Care Fund (BCF). The BCF created a pooled budget in each local authority area to encourage health, social care and other related services to work more closely together. The inclusion of the DFG allocation is intended to recognise the vital role that the home plays in helping people to remain healthy and independent. Central Government has increased the amount given to local authorities significantly over the last few years with the expectation that local areas will be more flexible in how the money is spent. Wider health and social care priority health outcomes such as delayed transfers of care and readmission to hospital can be supported using some of the DFG capital allocation.

³ CLG Welfare Reform web pages: <https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/welfare-reform>

1.9. National Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018

The Government is committed to halving rough sleeping by 2022 and ending it by 2027. The Rough Sleeping Strategy published in August 2018 sets out the Government's 2027 vision to support every person who sleeps rough off the streets and into a home. This is backed up by £100 million of funding in the next two years and marks the beginning of plans to meet the 2027 ambition.

A Rough Sleeping Strategy Delivery Plan was published in December 2018 which sets out more information on the 61 commitments made in the strategy. It also includes examples of projects which are underway, people who have been helped by this work, and new approaches to partnership working in local areas.

2. Corporate Context and links to other strategies

2.1. Draft Corporate Plan 2019-2022 Delivering a Better Borough for you

At the time of writing the Council's new Corporate Plan has been drafted but not yet adopted. This suggests a number of medium term objectives, and the following have clear links with housing:

Priority one: delivering regeneration

- Progress the redevelopment of Sittingbourne town centre and extend regeneration into other parts of the borough
- Develop a coherent, flexible and multi-dimensional long-term plan to help Sheppey fulfil its potential for the benefit of all its residents
- Take steps to help the most disadvantaged families and communities to embrace opportunities from regeneration, skills provision and economic growth.

Priority two: delivering great quality of life

- Maximise opportunities from sustainable development to improve infrastructure and create attractive and functional new neighbourhoods
- Develop a pragmatic and adaptable approach to helping local families to access affordable decent housing.

Priority three: delivering the Council of tomorrow

- Continue to reduce dependence on government-controlled funding sources and support innovative ways to ensure other objectives can be met in the context of diminished resources
- Experiment with a more differentiated approach to service delivery for key neighbourhoods and key groups of customers

- Develop new approaches to partnership working based on shared objectives with statutory agencies, other councils, and the private and voluntary sectors.

2.2. Annual Statements of Account / Financial Report 2017/184

In light of cuts to Government funding, the Council is pursuing a number of options that will generate income into the future, improving the resilience of the Council. The Council has historically kept Council Tax rates low and adopted a modest approach to investment. More recently the Council's ambitions have led to significant investment, most notably in Sittingbourne Town Centre Regeneration project. Going forwards, the financial strategy recognises that Revenue Support Grant will disappear from 2020/21 and adopts a strategy based on:

- Income from fees and charges, new sources of income and asset management
- Regeneration which will generate additional Business Rates, New Homes Bonus and Council Tax
- The relet of contracts to achieve business outcomes and savings
- The Transformation Team's review of council services including seeking opportunities to make more use of digital service provision; and
- Traditional approaches seeking efficiency savings.

The Financial Report recognises pressures within housing including risks associated with increased spending on temporary accommodation, and challenges in delivering housing growth to meet the requirements of the Local Plan. These need to be closely monitored.

This Strategy needs to be realistic given the financial position of Swale BC, and recognise that most of the housing objectives need to be achieved through directing partnership resources, rather than by direct investment from the Council.

2.3. Economic Development Strategy – 'Open for Business'⁵

The Vision is:

To ensure that the borough is 'Open for Business' so that Swale is one of the best places in Britain in which to live, work and invest.

The Aim is:

To create the right conditions to help stimulate economic growth and ensure that the benefits of this are experienced by residents and businesses.

The strategy sets out the local context and four priorities:

- Creating an 'open for business' environment through transport and broadband infrastructure, town centre improvements and by planning for growth

⁴ <https://www.swale.gov.uk/assets/Finance/Statements-of-Account/2017-18/Annual-Financial-Report-2017-18.pdf>

⁵ <https://archive.swale.gov.uk/assets/Strategies-Plans-and-Policies-2014/Open-for-Business-2014.pdf>

- Understanding and supporting local business
- Promoting Swale, to attract investment, visitors and to improve local confidence
- Support for local people in to new job opportunities.

2.4. Swale Community Safety Plan 2018/19⁶

This Plan has been developed by the multi-agency Swale Community Safety Partnership and sets out the priorities for action for the forthcoming year. Priorities and cross cutting themes recognise the role of housing and homelessness and include:

- Violence Against Women and Children
- Crime
- Anti-social behaviour
- Supporting Vulnerable People
- Reducing Re-Offending
- Communication and Information Sharing.

2.5. Kent Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy - Outcomes for Kent⁷

The Strategy covers the period to 2021 and aims to achieve the vision: 'To improve health and wellbeing outcomes, deliver better coordinated quality care, improve the public's experience of integrated health and social care services, and ensure that the individual is involved and at the heart of everything we do.'

Based on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), the outcomes to be achieved are:

- Every child has the best start in life
- Effective prevention of ill health by people taking greater responsibility for their health and wellbeing
- The quality of life for people with long term conditions is enhanced and they have access to good quality care and support
- People with mental health issues are supported to 'live well'
- People with dementia are assessed and treated earlier, and are supported to live well.

⁶ <https://www.swale.gov.uk/community-safety-plan/>

⁷ http://www.kent.gov.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0014/12407/Joint-health-and-wellbeing-strategy.pdf

2.6. Annual Public Health Report⁸

In 2016 Kent Public Health dedicated their annual report to focus on 'Better Housing for Better Health. This recognises the well established links between housing and health and focuses on three areas:

- Growth, affordability and planning
- Indoor housing environment
- Maintaining a stable home life.

The report highlights the excellent partnerships and good practice across Kent and makes recommendations for future work including:

- Deliver proposed number of new affordable homes to address future population changes
- Engage with partners to undertake Health Impact Assessments so that opportunities for improving health and wellbeing can be adequately provided
- Promote implementation of 'social prescribing' with partners across statutory and voluntary organisations. This will increase collaborative working to provide advice, guidance, appropriate grants and enforcement to support home improvements that will consequently improve health and wellbeing outcomes, particularly for vulnerable people
- "We need to 'Make Every Contact Count', having holistic conversations and signposting or referring for housing, debt, employment and health advice
- There is a wealth of empty homes in Kent that could be renovated to good standards to avoid the chaos created in lives of people with insecure housing needs.

2.7. Bearing Fruits 2031: The Swale Borough Local Plan adopted July 2017

The vision is that by 2031 Swale is known by the fruits of its endeavours. We have harnessed our assets – a strategic location, diverse communities and an outstanding natural environment – and are a sustainable, flourishing place in which to enjoy life and do business, with:

- Sittingbourne transformed into an attractive, competitive and prosperous town, with a thriving centre that residents across the Borough are proud to use;
- Sheerness and Queenborough as beacons of coastal rejuvenation leading the way to success for all communities on the Isle of Sheppey;
- Faversham, a thriving market town and heritage destination that has grown organically; and

⁸ <http://www.kpho.org.uk/annual-reports#tab1>

- Successful rural communities across the downs, farmed plains and coast as places of innovation; nurturing enterprise, local produce and greater self-reliance.

The life of the Plan is 2014 to 2031. Over this period, there is an Objectively Assessed Need for 776 dwellings per annum (dpa) in Swale (13,192 for the plan period). Economic testing showed that by providing 776 dpa the Borough provided enough new homes to meet the area's theoretical demand for labour over the plan period (noting that Swale has significant net out commuting patterns).

2.8. Kent Housing Group and Housing Strategy

The Kent Housing Group includes the 14 Councils in Kent plus 16 housing providers. The Group aims to ensure that high quality affordable homes are delivered across Kent and Medway, and that partnership working ensures the best possible outcome for the residents of Kent. The current Housing Strategy is being revised and a new document should be available in 2019. Strategically, the following themes have been agreed:

- Accelerating housing delivery
- Affordability
- Health and wellbeing
- Infrastructure and investment.

An action plan will be developed which sets a small number of key objectives to achieve for each of these themes and the document will be used to shape the discussion with Government about future investment in Kent.

Within the wider Kent Housing Group structure, a number of thematic groups exist which add value to the member organisations' work. Examples include joint protocols, training, bids and peer support.

3. Statistical profile of Swale

All of the information reproduced in this section is taken from the Kent County Council Analytics team and is based on the Census, HMRC, ASHE and other statistical sources which are referenced in the District Profile.⁹

3.1. Geography

Swale is located on the County's north coast between Medway, Maidstone and Canterbury, around 45 miles from London. It includes the towns of Sittingbourne, Faversham and Sheerness, as well as an extensive rural hinterland which takes in the whole of the Isle of Sheppey and part of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. The Borough covers an area of 140 square miles, roughly one-tenth of Kent.

Swale has strong communication links primarily oriented east-west. It is close both to London and mainland Europe and well connected to the national motorway network. The M2 runs east-west across the Borough, providing access to destinations between the

⁹ <http://www.kent.gov.uk/about-the-council/information-and-data/Facts-and-figures-about-Kent/area-profiles>

Channel Ports and London. Via the A249 there is alternative access along the M20. London is accessible in a little over an hour by high speed rail services. As a coastal Borough, the Port of Sheerness gives access, via its deep water berths, to the largest ships in the world; its imports distributed to all corners of the UK. Swale is also within easy reach of other major Kent centres – Canterbury, Ashford, Maidstone and the Medway Towns.

3.2. Population and forecasts

The mid 2017 estimates, based on the 2011 Census suggest:

- There are 146,700 people living in Swale
- The population is due to increase by almost 20 percent to 175,400 by 2036.

Between 2017 and 2036:

- The number of young people aged 0-15 years is projected to increase by 13 percent
- The number of people aged 16-64 is projected to increase by almost 10 percent
- The number of people aged over 65 years is projected to increase by 38 percent.

Population forecasts – Swale – 2016-2036				
Year	Total	0-15	16-64	65+
2016	145,000	29,000	88,600	27,500
2021	151,600	30,700	90,200	30,600
2026	161,300	31,900	94,400	34,900
2031	168,500	32,300	96,000	40,200
2036	175,400	32,800	97,900	44,700

3.3. Ethnicity

Of the 135,835 people who were counted in the 2011 Census, just 4,680 of them confirmed they were from a BME background (3.4%).

Swale also has one of the larger Gypsies and Traveller communities in Kent, both on their own sites and in permanent housing.¹⁰

Swale has the third highest number of international migrant workers of all Kent local authorities and has seen significant growth in economic migration from within the EU

¹⁰ <http://services.swale.gov.uk/media/files/localplan/adoptedlocalplanfinalwebversion.pdf>

(particularly Lithuania, Poland, and Bulgaria) not only for agricultural work but for an increasing number of other work opportunities.¹¹

3.4. Deprivation

There is considerable variation within the Borough, with affluent and up-and-coming areas sitting alongside some of the worst-off neighbourhoods in the country. While there is wealth and prosperity, Swale still encompasses some pockets of entrenched poverty and disadvantage.

According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015, Swale is ranked:

- Second most deprived district within Kent, out of 12
- 77th most deprived of the 326 districts in the Country.

3.5. Economy

Swale's economy has historically been most strongly associated with manufacturing, port activities and agriculture, but the last 25 years have seen a successful diversification towards a broad range of small and medium-sized businesses and the attraction of large distribution focused companies.

44 percent of Swale's working residents are employed in the Borough whilst 56 percent commute to areas outside.

Of those who work outside the Borough:

- 26 percent work in the main towns of Kent
- 18 percent within Medway, Canterbury and Maidstone
- 8 percent travel to London.

70 percent of the journeys to Canterbury are generated from Faversham alone. The main reason for working outside Swale is the lack of availability of certain types of jobs within the Borough and the higher salaries available elsewhere¹².

According to the SHMA¹³, the Census provides an overview of the employment situation in Swale in 2011. It shows that of all residents in work in Swale (excluding those who are also students):

- 15.9 percent are self-employed
- 61.5 percent full-time employees
- 22.6 percent part-time employees.

¹¹

¹² <http://services.swale.gov.uk/media/files/localplan/adoptedlocalplanfinalwebversion.pdf>

¹³ <https://archive.swale.gov.uk/assets/Planning-General/Planning-Policy/Evidence-Base/Local-Plan-2014/Further-evidence-2015/Part-2-SHMA-Sep-15-SBCPS25g.pdf>

The level of part-time employment is higher than both the regional (21.1 percent) and national averages (22.1 percent).

3.6. Employment rates

In 2017, the unemployment rate was 2.3 percent, higher than the Kent average of 1.7 percent and the national average of 1.9 percent.

In February 2018, 9.4 percent of people aged 16-64 years claimed an out of work benefit compared to 7.4 percent in Kent and 8.3 percent nationally.

3.7. Earnings

One of the legacies of Swale's industrial past is the 'skills gap', with a higher than average proportion of residents having insufficient skills to be competitive in the modern workplace and fewer than average highly qualified professionals. This relative lack of professional jobs and marketable skills means that unemployment remains higher than the regional average and salaries are lower.

The median weekly full time earnings of employees in Swale were £492 in 2017. The median weekly full time earnings of employees living in Swale were slightly higher at £566 (£29,500 pa).

3.8. Child poverty

Child poverty is a problem in Swale with 23.6 percent of children under 16 classed by HMRC as living in poverty, compared with 18.4 percent in Kent, and 20.1 percent nationally.

3.9. Health

The statistics suggest that the health outcomes and life expectancy of people in Swale is below the national average.

- Men in Swale can be expected to live for 78.8 years, compared to 79.5 years nationally. Women can be expected to live for 82.6 years compared to the national average of 83.1 years
- 80.6 percent of people in Swale reported that they have very good or good health compared to 81.7 percent nationally
- 18.1 percent of people in Swale claim that their day to day activities are limited by their health or disability, compared to 17.2 percent nationally
- 9.3 percent of the population in Swale claim disability benefits and a higher proportion of people claim carers allowance in Swale than the national average (one percent compared with 0.7 percent nationally).

3.10 Older people

The Census indicates that 21.1 percent of households in Swale were older person only households (households where all members are 65 or over), compared to 21.7 percent regionally and 20.5 percent nationally.

Of these older person only households in Swale in 2011, 57.8 percent contained only one person, a similar percentage to that recorded in the South East (58.5 percent) and England (60.0 percent). The SHMA (2015) showed that whilst single older person households in Swale were more likely than average to reside in social rented accommodation; both of the older person groups show a high level of owner-occupation. Older person households were also more likely than average to have multiple spare bedrooms in their home.

The population aged 65 or over is likely to increase dramatically to 38,132 in 2031, a rise of 46.2 percent. Some 18.6 percent of the resident population in Swale have a long-term health problem or disability, with 46.5 percent of all those aged 65 or over and 84.5 percent of those aged 85 or over. The current rate of provision for specialist accommodation is much lower than the base recommended and, in light of an ageing population, the Council will seek to increase the provision of housing that is suitable for people as they age. This includes well designed single level accommodation as well as extra care, subject to Kent County Council's commissioning priorities.

4. Swale's housing market

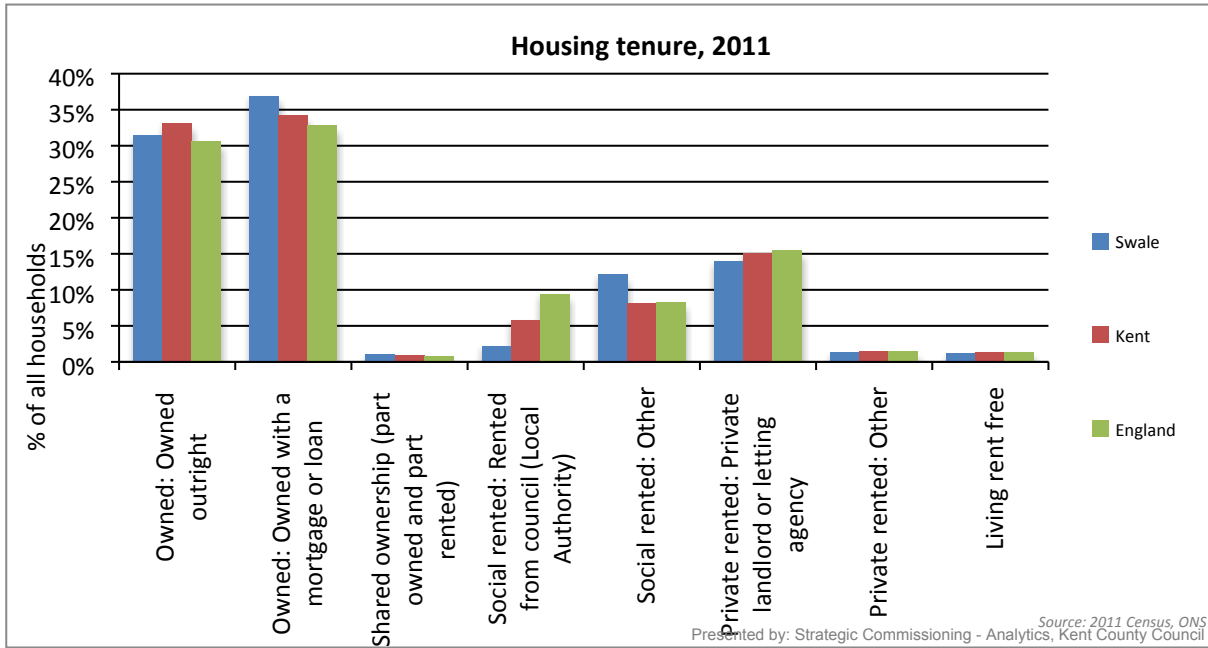
4.1 Number of households and dwellings

At the time of the Census:

- There were 55,585 households living in Swale
- There were 57,989 dwellings in Swale.

4.2 Housing tenure

- 31.4 percent of households in Swale are owner-occupiers without a mortgage, compared to 32.5 percent in the region and 30.6 percent nationally
- The proportion of owner-occupiers with a mortgage in the Swale (37.9 percent) is however higher than the regional (36.2 percent) and national average (33.6 percent)
- 14.3 percent of households in Swale are resident in the affordable housing for rent sector (being social rented housing or affordable rented housing), higher than the figure for the South East region (13.7 percent), but lower than England as a whole (17.7 percent)
- 15.2 percent of households in Swale live in private rented accommodation, compared to 16.3 percent in the South East and 16.8% across England.



4.3 Housing type

According to the SHMA 2015:

- Swale contains more terraced houses and fewer flats than the regional and national averages
- Caravans/mobile homes make up a higher proportion of the housing stock in Swale than in the South East region or England
- Semi-detached houses/bungalows and terraced properties make up the largest property type, and this is reflected across all tenures.

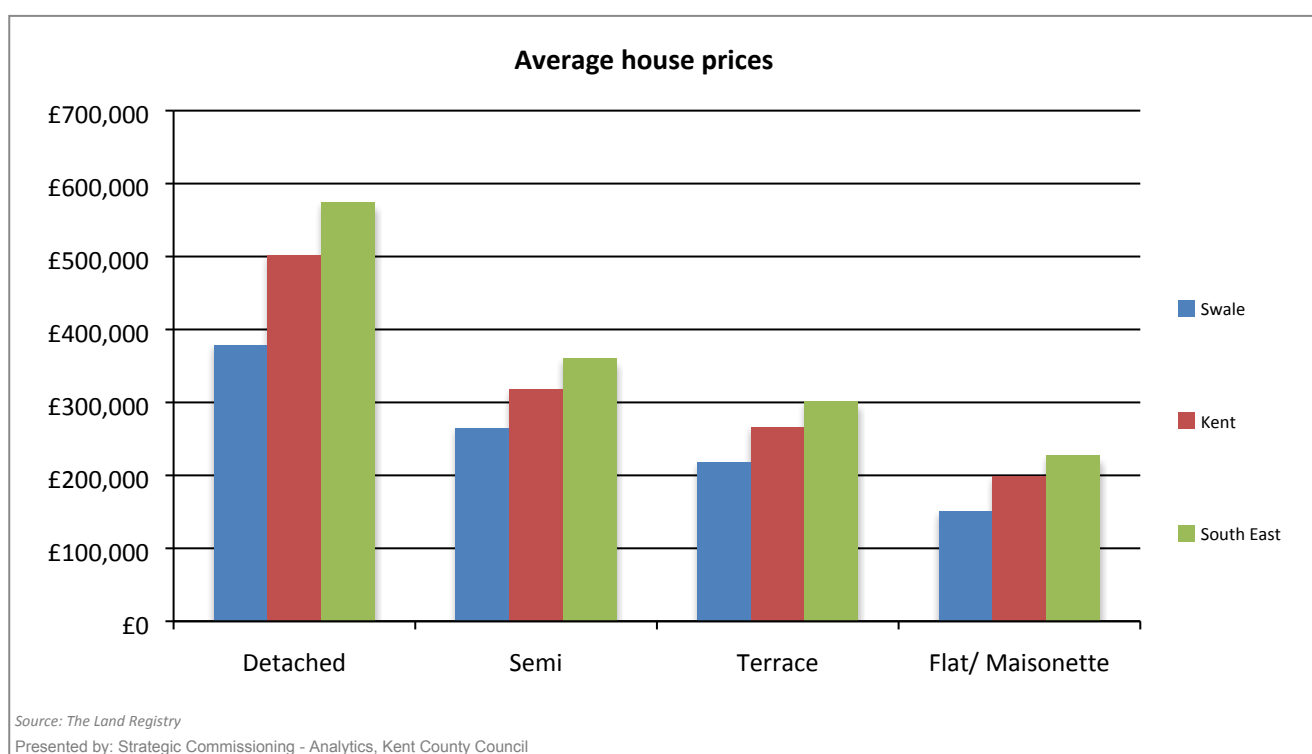
4.4 House prices and affordability

The housing market in Swale reflects an east/west split. In the east (Faversham) house prices are similar to Canterbury. In the west (Sittingbourne) they are similar to Medway.

Housing on the Isle of Sheppey can be significantly cheaper with a market distinct from either Sittingbourne or nearby Medway. The Isle of Sheppey has the lowest house prices in the borough. On average, prices are among the lowest in Kent and this creates challenges for viability to market developers, which in turn has impacted on the ability to achieve affordable housing in the Borough, especially for social and affordable rent, which is the greatest need, and in the absence of grant funding for section 106 sites.

2017 ¹⁴	Swale	Kent	South East
Detached	£378,706	£502,414	£574,026
Semi	£265,081	£317,412	£360,371
Terrace	£217,539	£266,390	£301,592
Flat/Maisonette	£150,359	£198,575	£227,188
All	£262,073	£323,591	£371,404

Median house prices in 2017 were 9.18 times median incomes. People on the lowest incomes face a bigger struggle with accessing housing that is suitable for their needs as lower quartile house prices were 9.3 times lower quartile incomes in 2017.¹⁵



4.5 Private sector rent levels and affordability

Rent levels vary across Swale with the average weekly rent for a one bedroom costing £135 in Sheerness, £138 in Faversham and £155 in Sittingbourne (2017). Two bedroom houses cost an average weekly rent of £177 in Sheerness, £190 in Sittingbourne and £217 in Faversham.

¹⁴ Land Registry 2017 Data

¹⁵

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian>

There is a gap between the cost of rents and the Local Housing Allowance. This gap ranges from £14.60 for a one-bedroom flat in Faversham (Rent £138.46, LHA rate £123.86) to £124 per week for a four-bedroom house in Sittingbourne (Rent £319.34, LHA rate £198.11) making accessing privately rented housing extremely difficult for people on low incomes or reliant on benefits.

When comparing average rent levels and Local Housing Allowance rates it can be seen that in all areas, and across all property sizes and types, average weekly private sector rent levels exceed Local Housing Allowance rates. This gap ranges from £14.60 for a one-bedroom flat in Faversham (Rent £138.46, LHA rate £123.86) to £124 per week for a four-bedroom house in Sittingbourne (Rent £319.34, LHA rate £198.11) . This means that the private rented sector is very difficult for those on low/moderate incomes to be able to afford to rent privately. Use of the private rented sector as an option for homeless people is therefore severely restricted.

5. New Housing Supply

5.1 Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

The SHMA was completed by Peter Brett Associates in September 2015 as part of the evidence base for the Bearing Fruits Local Plan, which was subsequently adopted in July 2017. It sets out two parts:

- Part one: Objectively assessed housing need
- Part two: Affordable housing need.

5.2 Objectively assessed need for new housing

The SHMA recommended that the OAN for Swale be set using a 10-year projection (2004-14). This shows a need for 776 dwelling per annum (dpa) in Swale from 2014 (13,192 for the plan period).

Economic testing showed that by providing 776 dpa the Borough provided enough new homes to meet the area's demand for labour over the plan period.

A review of the local plan has already commenced, with adoption expected early in 2023. This is to comply with new national planning policy and regulation for five yearly reviews of local plans. It is also in response to the Local Plan Inspector's recommendation to address serious constraints on delivery of development after 2022, in respect of the capacity of local road network especially the A2 and A249. Government has also introduced a standard methodology for assessing overall housing need. Although this is not yet completely finalised, it is likely to significantly increase the housing target for Swale by almost 40% on the current target, requiring delivery of 1000 dwellings per annum. The Local Plan review is currently at evidence gathering stage and as part of the Local Plan process, the Council will need to decide if continuing its currently adopted Local Plan Strategy can deliver the uplift in housing numbers and necessary supporting infrastructure. One avenue of research is the potential for new garden communities to assist with this.

5.3 Location of housing growth to 2031

Of the 13,192 new homes over the adopted Local Plan period, 4,026 are already committed on exiting completions, existing allocated sites with permission, and windfall sites. The Local Plan therefore had to set out sites for the remaining 9,166 homes.

As well as meeting its local plan housing target, the Council needs to provide for a five year supply of housing land in accordance with national planning policy and practice. The Council sought to achieve this by ensuring that sufficient of the sites it has allocated will deliver completions within the first five years of the plan period and has, as a contingency, reinforced its position with an allocated surplus of dwellings allocated over and above the housing target.

The Local Plan sets out that:

- 85 percent of Local Plan housing growth should be in Swale Thames Gateway (comprising Sittingbourne and the Isle of Sheppey); and
- 15 percent in Faversham and the rest of Swale (also comprising the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty).

5.4 Housing completions

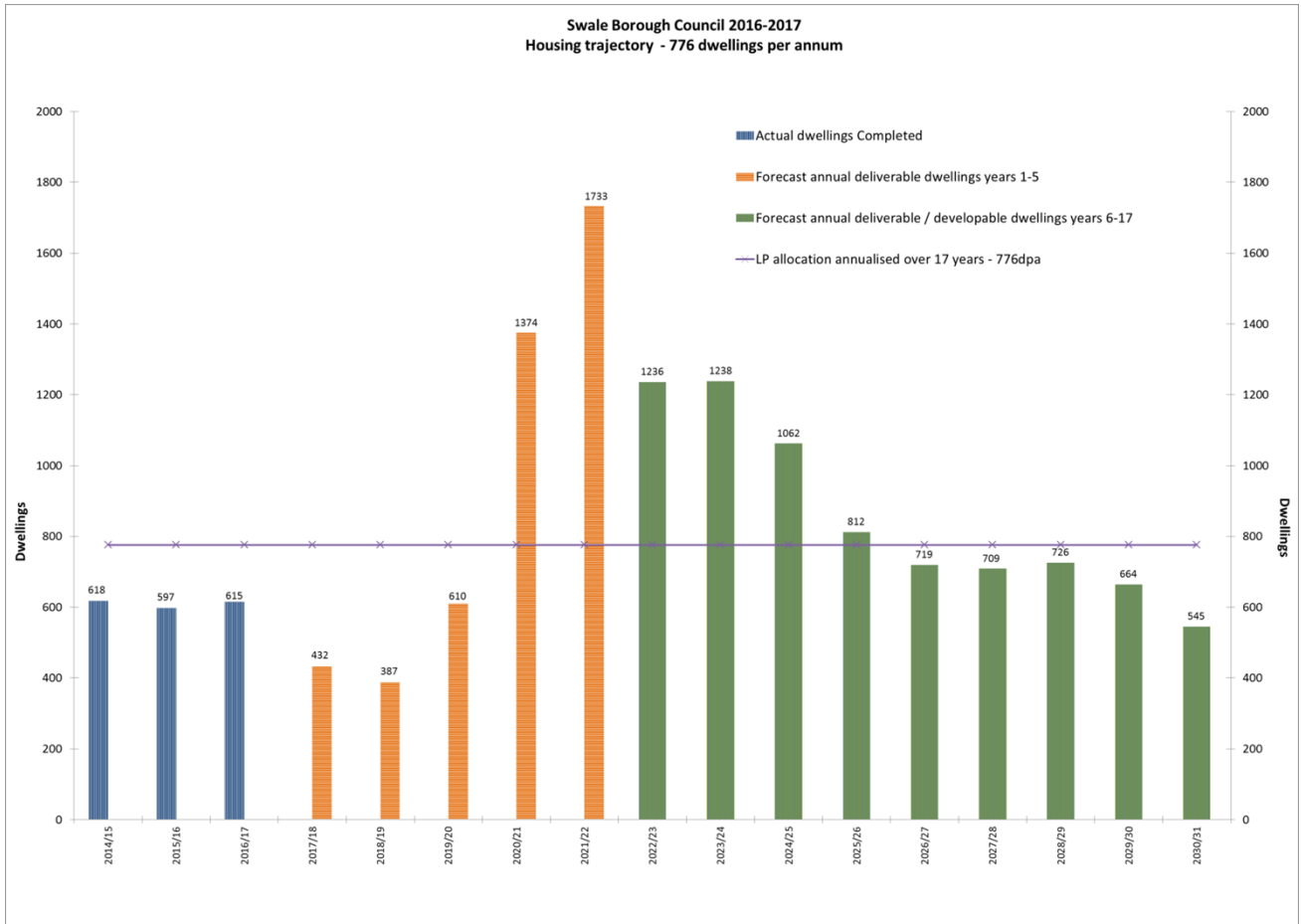
Swale has historically delivered an average of over 600 dwellings per annum and this has been the case between 2014/15 and 2016/17. However, this is still somewhat below the adopted Local Plan target of 776 dwellings per annum. The outcome of the new Government Housing Delivery Test for progress over the last three years to 2017/18 is expected imminently.

5.5 Housing trajectory

The Council's Housing Land Supply Statement¹⁶ suggests that the housing target of 776 dwellings per annum is unlikely to be met in 2017/18 (432 expected completions), 2018/19 (387 expected completions), and 2019/20 (610 completions). Thereafter the number of completions exceeds the housing target of 776 dwellings per annum and is expected to deliver almost 1400 new homes in 2020/21 and over 1,700 new dwellings in 2021/22.

Given the current reliance on Section 106 to deliver new affordable housing we can expect the trajectory of new affordable homes to follow this trend line.

¹⁶ <https://archive.swale.gov.uk/assets/Planning-General/Planning-Policy/Annual-Monitoring-Report/Statement-of-2016-17-housing-land-supply-mid-year-review-1-December-2017.pdf>



5.6 Assessment of affordable housing need

The Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment September 2015 indicated that 190 affordable dwellings per annum were needed as a sub set of the overall housing target. The Government's new standard methodology for assessing overall housing need includes an affordability allowance on top of the demographic need. This will then need to be refined into a specific affordable housing target as a subset of the new overall housing target.

5.7 Delivery of affordable housing

The Council seeks affordable housing on eligible sites through section 106 agreements. The policy for affordable housing differs throughout the Borough reflecting viability and the need to deliver other essential supporting social and physical infrastructure. The policy is:

- Sittingbourne – 10 percent
- Faversham – 35 percent
- Isle of Sheppey – 0 percent
- Rural – 40 percent.

	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19*	19/20*	20/21*	21/22
Delivery of new affordable/social rented	109	24	90	72				
Delivery of shared ownership	47	36	54	60				

*projected completions

There is a 'policy gap' since it is not viable to deliver new affordable housing on the Isle of Sheppey. Only 10 percent is viable in Sittingbourne and yet these are the areas of highest need (according to the Housing Register). It is therefore important that the Council pursue other ways to deliver new affordable housing, especially in these areas.

To date, there has been a reliance on s106 to deliver the majority of new affordable homes and going forwards there is a need to consider other innovative ways to deliver. The opportunities for development on Council-owned sites have been taken with 11 new homes due to be built on land sold to Optivo for affordable housing. Options on other public sector land, use of borrowing abilities through PSBR, and the potential for a Council-led Housing Development Company could be considered.

5.8 Location of new housing

The largest allocations (over 200 homes), arising from the adopted Local Plan and the likely delivery of affordable housing is:

Allocation	Number of dwellings	Likely % of Affordable Housing
Total Allocations Sittingbourne	4,417	10% = 442 affordable homes
Total Allocations Sheerness	0	
Total Allocations Faversham	1,739	35% = 608 affordable homes
Total Queensborough and Rushenden	1,245	25% = 311 affordable homes
Total Boughton	37	40% = 15 affordable homes
Total Eastchurch	15	0%
Total Iwade	603	10% = 60 affordable homes
Total Leysdown	10	0%

Allocation	Number of dwellings	Likely % of Affordable Housing
Total Newington	129	40% = 52 affordable homes
Total Teynham	410	40% = 164 affordable homes
Total Allocations exc windfalls/losses	10,099	1,652* (16% AH)

Note: Table above does not include windfalls and losses.

*This is subject to viability and delivery mechanism for each site.

Positively, sites in Faversham and rural areas will deliver more affordable housing due to the viability.

Other positive interventions to boost affordable housing delivery include:

- The opportunity to deliver new affordable housing on the regeneration of Sittingbourne Town Centre. These sites are in public ownership and grant may therefore be available since these are not traditional s106 sites
- Two RP partners who are active within Swale are now Strategic Partners with Homes England and may pursue land-led development, attracting increased grant for additional affordable housing
- Hyde have the whole of Stones Farm and are planning on delivering a scheme of 50% affordable housing of mixed tenure. They are also looking at a 40+ plus site in Minster for 100% affordable with social rent tenure
- Sanctuary HA at Milton Pipes is due to deliver a scheme with 50% affordable housing of mixed tenure
- Moat are delivering a windfall site of 40+ affordable homes in Sittingbourne
- The large site at NW Sittingbourne may produce 12 percent affordable housing.

5.9 Type and mix of housing

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) indicates that the largest growth will come from single person and lone parent households. In terms of the accommodation required to provide a balanced housing market over the plan period, the SHMA suggests two and three bedroom homes and that new private rented housing should ideally be three and four bedroom homes.

According to the housing register, the greatest need is for one and two bedroom homes, including ground floor and adapted housing. There is also a need for larger homes,

subject to rent levels falling within LHA rates since 80% of market value can push rents above this level.

On new development sites we strive to meet a range of needs. Whilst the Council is keen to diversify the housing offer and meet a range of needs, affordable rented housing remains the priority need and therefore we expect delivery to reflect this.

5.10 Council-owned land

A recent Asset Review has highlighted a number of opportunities for residential development on land that is surplus. A small number of sites were sold at auction and a number of sites were recommended for targeted sale to the housing association, Optivo. These are earmarked for the development of affordable housing where they are located within their ex-Council estate and the access is via Optivo owned land. Following a viability assessment for these sites Optivo agreed to acquire two sites subject to planning consent.

These are:

- Colegates Close, Oare – Proposed for seven no. 2 bed houses
- Evergreen Close, Iwade – Proposed for four no. 3 bed houses.

Optivo have the option to buy a further two sites in Milton Regis and Murston but these face viability problems and are being appraised.

5.11 Regeneration

Phase one of the regeneration plans for Sittingbourne are near completion. These include retail, restaurants and a new hotel and related road works.

Phase two has been planned but faces delivery hurdles associated with viability and delivery of this will need to be kept under review. There is potential within Phase 2 to deliver new housing, along with civic buildings and changes to the Town Centre. The delivery challenges associated with the investment requirements mean that the housing gain from Phase two, and the numbers and tenure, will need to be kept under review.

5.12 Rural exceptions sites

The Local Plan includes a Policy to support the development of rural exceptions sites. A small number of private sector homes may be permitted on rural schemes where necessary to cross subsidise the affordable housing under national planning policy.

There are currently seven exceptions schemes in Swale. A site for six homes to help meet the needs in Sheldwich, Badlesmere and Leaveland (Joint scheme with Throwley) is on site. A further scheme in Hernhill is proposed, subject to planning.

Swale have recently been allocated funding from the governments Community Led Housing Fund and we will use this to kick start a pro active programme of work, encouraging and supporting rural parishes to appraise their needs and identify appropriate sites. This is a partnership with Action for Communities in Rural Kent (ACRK).

5.13 Gypsies and travellers (including Travelling Show People)

The accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers has been considered. A study was completed which concluded that 61 pitches would be needed to 2031, with no additional pitches for travelling Show people (using revised Government definition).

6. Supported housing for vulnerable people

According to Kent County Council's Accommodation Strategy there is a need for:

- An additional 29 units of supported housing for adults with learning disability
- An additional 17 supported housing units for adults with mental health problems
- Needs are greatest on the Isle of Sheppey

7. Improving conditions in existing homes

7.1 Housing Stock Condition

The latest stock condition survey was completed in 2008/09. 1,016 properties were surveyed, which is equivalent to 2.1 percent of private sector housing, the surveys being deliberately weighted towards areas of particular interest. The survey was conducted on private dwellings only. Key findings include:

Category one hazards		
Homes with Category one Hazard HHSRS	9,739	20.5% of PSH stock
With Category one Hazard and vulnerable person	2,113	4.4% of PSH stock
Top four hazards found		
Excess cold	9,025	
Falls on stairs	935	
Falls on levels	234	
Damp and mould	106	

- In the owner occupied sector 17.4 percent (6,882) have a Category One hazard of which 16.8 percent (1,158) are occupied by vulnerable households. This compares with private rented sector where 35.2 percent (2,789) of homes have a Category One hazard, of which 34.2 percent (955) are occupied by vulnerable households
- 23.7 percent (2,312) of homes that have a Category One hazard are occupied by a retired resident

- The highest percentage of homes with Category One Hazards was found on the on the Isle of Sheppey 25.7 percent (3,527), followed by Faversham Town and surrounding villages 21.6 percent (2,277) with Sittingbourne Town and surrounding villages 16.8 percent (3,935).

7.2 Decent homes

- In the owner occupied sector 25.9 percent (10,279) of homes were non decent, with 24.9 percent (2,557) occupied by vulnerable households. This compares with private rented sector where 41.9 percent of (3,324) homes are non decent, of which 53.4 percent (1,774) are occupied by vulnerable households
- 26.8 percent (3,662) of non Decent Homes are occupied by a retired resident
- The highest percentage of non Decent Homes was found on the on the Isle of Sheppey 34.4 percent (4,701), followed by Faversham Town and surrounding villages 32.5% (3,419) with Sittingbourne Town and surrounding villages 23.7 percent (5,552)
- 59.3 percent (2,673) of homes in Sheerness failed the decent home standard
- Across the private sector, the cost of remedying Decent Homes failures (excluding HHSRS) is £24,479,923, an average of £2,170 per failing property.

7.3 Energy efficiency

- The average annual heating cost is assessed at £694.50 per property
- Of the 1,660 properties with a SAP rating below 35, 58.3 percent (979) are in the owner occupied sector and 41.7 percent (701) are in the private rented sector. 36.9 percent (620) are occupied by a retired resident
- Of the 7,695 properties identified in fuel poverty, 77.8 percent (5,985) are in the owner occupied sector and 22.2 percent (1,710) in the private rented sector. 47.9 percent (3,688) are occupied by a retired resident and 40.7% (3,310) contain a disabled resident
- The highest percentage of vulnerable persons in fuel poverty was found on the on the Isle of Sheppey 21.9 percent (1,682), followed by Sittingbourne Town and surrounding villages 19.9 percent (1,531) with Faversham Town and surrounding villages 16.2 percent (1,248).

Household amenities			
Source: 2011 Census - Tables KS403EW & KS404EW			
2011	Swale	Kent	England
All Households	55,585	605,638	22,063,368

Does not have central heating	1,598	14,759	594,561
Does have central heating	53,987	590,879	21,468,807
No cars or vans in household	11,184	121,094	5,691,251

7.4 Improving housing conditions in Swale

The Council's private sector housing interventions aim to improve property standards and drive up management standards and practices.

- HMOs – there are 9 existing licensable HMOs in Swale with a further 15 likely to be licensed as a result of the changing legislation. Anecdotal evidence suggests an increase in HMOs resulting from the influx of Eastern European workers. This is being kept under review with appropriate enforcement action taken when these HMOs are identified
- Housing Enforcement/complaints – the Council responds to about 300 housing complaints a year and investigates, taking enforcement action where necessary. In 2017/18 almost 130 formal and informal Notices were issued requiring remedial work to improve housing conditions. 45 homes were improved to the Decent Homes standard last year through grants and loans
- Empty Homes – Excluding non permanent dwellings and housing association properties, there were 407 long term empty homes in Swale in October 2018. The Council is part of the countywide 'No use empty' initiative which offers advice and financial incentives to landlords to return properties to use. Through this, and other interventions, the Council returned 92 empty homes to use in 2017/18
- Energy Efficiency – the Council provides loans and grants to improve heating in vulnerable and older people's homes. Last year, eight properties were improved in this way
- Partnerships with Landlords – the Council is part of the London Landlord Accreditation Scheme which offers discounts on licences, advice and forums to support landlords and promote good practice in management.

7.5 Home Improvement Agency – staying put

Staying Put provides a range of person-centred services including housing advice, income maximisation, health & safety assessments, falls prevention, hospital discharge, DFGs, home repairs and de-cluttering services. These services are funded in a range of ways including through the Better Care Fund DFG Allocation, a revolving fund for home repairs loans, and self funders for chargeable works.

Staying Put has a positive impact on people's health and has a strong track record in delivering the following outcomes:

	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
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	2017/18	2016/17	2015/16
Enquiries – general advice	2,048	1,880	1,517
DFGs completed	160	195	109
Home Repair Loans Completed	13	15	11
Self funding cases completed	8	15	8
Charitable Funding Cases Completed	14	1	1
Home Repair Assistance Cases Completed	12	15	15
Handyperson Jobs (inc by contractor)	1,032	1,079	854
H&S Assessments	273	263	210
Works to facilitate Hospital Discharge	139	105	103
Preventative Cases (falls)	554	527	368



Homelessness Review 2018 Final Report

Swale Borough Council

NOVEMBER 2018

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Executive summary

The background

HQN was commissioned by Swale Borough Council to carry out an independent Homelessness Review and develop a new Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy for the borough. The review was undertaken during October and November 2018 by HQN associates – Trish Reed and Jo Barrett who are both specialists in homelessness. Their activities included a desktop review of statistical information, consultation with officers and engagement with partners and key stakeholders. The review focussed on the homelessness service provided by Swale Borough Council and links to other support services.

The review of homelessness in Swale found that the Council is challenged by the current housing market, with significant demand predominately coming from households under 45 years of age. This group is increasingly unable to access either owned or rented housing in the private sector due to high market values and the lack of affordable housing, even for working households. Local Housing Allowance rates across the borough set at significantly below the market rent levels mean that private rented housing is not an option for many low income households.

Pressures on the service have resulted from an increasing number of households presenting to the Council as homeless and being owed a statutory homeless duty. This has led to an increase in the number of households being accommodated in temporary accommodation, and resulted in increased costs to the Council.

The two main causes of homelessness in Swale are parental eviction and loss of privately rented tenancies. These two reasons account for 50% of homeless acceptances. Numbers are likely to continue to increase and a pro-active approach to homelessness prevention is required in order to address this.

The Homelessness Prevention Act 2017 came into force in April 2018 and brought with it increased prevention duties for local housing authorities, who are now required to take a much more pro-active approach to prevention, and to work with partners to deliver advice and support to people at an earlier stage.

Key findings

Homelessness prevention

- The front-line Housing Options service would benefit from a much stronger customer focus. More can be done to develop a culture within the team of an open and pro-active service, making advice readily available at all customer access points and out in the community, allowing officers to develop specialist roles and lead on these for the team
- Although the demand for affordable housing continues to rise, new supply is limited and officers need to be supported to challenge the public perception that social housing will be provided for anyone who approaches the Council. Social housing is a scarce resource and homelessness prevention initiatives and alternative housing solutions in the private rented sector will be actively sought. Further publicity is required detailing the homeless prevention offer
- Officers are currently office-based dealing with customers predominately via a telephone appointment system. A more pro-active approach should be adopted, developing a comprehensive prevention policy and procedures in line with the National Gold Standard approach, including home visits, outreach surgeries, mediation, tenancy relations, financial support, etc
- The Allocations Policy sets restrictive local connection criteria for the Housing Register and does not give sufficient priority to homeless households. The Allocations Policy should be amended to reduce the length of local connection required and increase the priority awarded to homeless households in order to bring down numbers in temporary accommodation.

Working with partners

- There has been good progress with developing new initiatives, specifically the Landlord Introduction Scheme with officers working much more closely with, and providing support for both private landlords and tenants. This scheme is starting to deliver results albeit slowly and should be expanded
- Operationally partnerships are good but more could be done to work with partners at a strategic level to build relationships and develop a shared approach to homeless prevention. This could be achieved through holding regular Homelessness Forum meetings
- Protocols and partnerships with Social Housing Providers in the borough would benefit from review and updating, exploring opportunities for delivering new housing supply and encouraging sign up to the Commitment to Refer to support early identification of those at risk of homelessness.

Support for vulnerable people

- Supported housing funded by the County Council is generally meeting the need of vulnerable households in the borough, with single people in particular benefiting from the single homeless supported housing provision available. However, proposals to remodel this provision are being discussed and will need to be informed by pro-active local engagement
- The number of rough sleepers is increasing and steps should be taken to agree more formal arrangements during periods of severe weather than the use of bed and breakfast. The relationship with both local voluntary sector organisations and faith groups could be developed to support this work
- While it is unlikely that any additional supported housing will be commissioned there is a need to monitor support for both young people and people with complex needs who may 'fall through the net' in future. A pro-active approach to early identification and prevention will support this, including promoting work in schools to educate young people about the realities of leaving home.

Temporary accommodation

- There is a mixed portfolio of temporary accommodation and while this is used effectively, bed and breakfast is still used on a regular basis. Ending the use of B&B and significantly reducing the number of nightly let properties should be a priority especially those that are out of area
- Optivo is a key partner providing hostel and self-contained temporary accommodation. Care should be taken not to increase the number of properties taken 'out of stock' for use as temporary accommodation as this reduces the ability to permanently house people and reduce overall numbers
- The Council's recovery plan is starting to see results but is a short-term fix to a long-term problem and while Optivo is willing to help in the short term, long term solutions including a review of the current Allocations Policy will be key to addressing this issue
- Investment in 'up-stream' advice and prevention will in the long term deliver savings on the cost of providing temporary accommodation. Adopting a spend to save approach to delivering prevention services, promoting partnership working to tackle homelessness and delivering new housing supply will all contribute significantly to achieving savings for the council in future.

Conclusions and priorities

In conclusion, pressure on the Housing Options Service continues to present challenges especially in terms of managing customer demand, balancing prevention activity and the requirement to deal with the needs of those owed a statutory duty.

The Homelessness Review has identified some good practice across the housing service and some areas for improvement. The following will be key priorities to take forward into the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy:

- Promote early intervention and a more customer focussed homelessness prevention service
- Develop strategic partnerships to address homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough
- Ensure support is available for vulnerable households.
- Reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation.

1. Introduction

The Council published a Homelessness Strategy in 2008 and again in 2014 providing a plan for tackling homelessness in the borough. With the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and new duties to prevent and relieve homelessness, the 2014 Homelessness Strategy needs to be reviewed and a new action plan put in place for the forthcoming five years.

In order to develop a new Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy HQN was commissioned to carry out a review of homelessness in the borough, taking into account the requirements of the Homelessness Act 2002, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, and the new Homelessness Code of Guidance. The review covered the following key areas:

- The levels, and likely future levels of homelessness
- A review of activities to prevent homelessness
- The needs of vulnerable groups
- A review of temporary accommodation
- Housing options to relieve homelessness
- Housing Register and Allocations Policy
- Implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Existing and new housing supply

- Staff structure and resources.

The review was undertaken during October and November 2018 by HQN associates – Trish Reed and Jo Barrett who are both specialists in homelessness. Their activities included a desktop review of statistical information, consultation with officers and engagement with partners and key stakeholders. The review focussed on the homelessness service provided by Swale Borough Council and links to other support services.

This report sets out the findings of the review which will provide the basis for formulating the Council's new Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-23 and accompanying Delivery Plan.

2. Homelessness in Swale

2.1. The Swale Borough

Swale is located on the County's north coast between Medway, Maidstone and Canterbury, around 45 miles from London. It includes the towns of Sittingbourne, Faversham and Sheerness, as well as an extensive rural hinterland which takes in the whole of the Isle of Sheppey and part of the Kent Downs.

The mid 2017 estimates, based on the 2011 Census suggest there are 146,700 people living in Swale with the population due to increase by almost 20% to 175,400 by 2036. At the time of the Census there were 55,585 households living in Swale. Of those, 31.4% are owner-occupiers without a mortgage, 37.9% are owner-occupiers with a mortgage, 14.3% are resident in the affordable housing for rent sector (being social rented housing or affordable rented housing), and 15.2% of households in Swale live in private rented accommodation.

There is considerable variation within the Borough, with affluent and up-and-coming areas sitting alongside some of the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country. While there is wealth and prosperity, Swale still encompasses some pockets of entrenched poverty and disadvantage. According to the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015, Swale is ranked second most deprived borough within Kent, out of 12, and 77th most deprived of the 326 districts in the Country.

One of the legacies of Swale's industrial past is the 'skills gap', with a higher than average proportion of residents having insufficient skills to be competitive in the modern work-place and fewer than average highly qualified professionals. This relative lack of professional jobs and marketable skills means that unemployment remains higher than the regional average and salaries are lower. The median weekly full-time earnings of employees living in Swale were £566 (£29.5k pa) in 2017. Statistics also suggest that the health outcomes and life expectancy of people in Swale is below the national average.

Following the national trend and across all of the South East there has been a long-term worsening in affordability of accommodation, which is particularly pronounced in the Swale

borough. The housing market in Swale shows an east/west split. In the east (Faversham) house prices are similar to Canterbury. In the west (Sittingbourne) they are similar to Medway. Housing on the Isle of Sheppey can be significantly cheaper with a market distinct from either Sittingbourne or nearby Medway and with the lowest house prices in the borough.

Average house prices in Swale vary between £183,996 for a flat to £387,188 for a detached property, slightly lower than for the Kent or the South East. Median house prices in 2017 were 9.18 times median incomes. Lower quartile house prices in 2017 were 9.3 times lower quartile incomes so people on the lowest incomes face the biggest struggle to access housing that is suitable for their needs.¹

There is a gap between the cost of rents and the Local Housing Allowance. This gap ranges from £14.60 for a one-bedroom flat in Faversham (Rent £138.46, LHA rate £123.86) to £124 per week for a four-bedroom house in Sittingbourne (Rent £319.34, LHA rate £198.11) making accessing privately rented housing extremely difficult for people on low incomes or reliant on benefits.

2.2. Current levels of homelessness

2.2.1. Homelessness acceptances

Over the last three years the homelessness caseload has fluctuated, but on average about 450 decisions are issued per year. Whilst the number of applications has not changed significantly, the number of homeless acceptances has increased by 50%. This is reflective of the depleted private rented sector, increasing private rent levels and static Local Housing Allowance levels.

Table one: Homeless accepted households

Homeless accepted households	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Total decisions made (caseload)	418	514	441
Accepted	112	163	168
% accepted	27%	32%	38%

2.2.2. Reasons for homelessness

The two main causes of homelessness in Swale are parental eviction and the loss of a private rented tenancy. These two reasons account for 50% of homeless acceptances.

¹

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian>

Interestingly, a significant number of single people are accepted as vulnerable when they leave prison (5), hospital (7), and care (9). Collectively, people leaving these institutions accounted for 12% of homeless priority need acceptances in 2017/18. It should however be noted that there are three prisons in Swale and a higher than average proportion of prisoners have significant mental health issues. Swale also has one of the highest levels of care leavers and children in care across the County and is the second most deprived borough in Kent bringing with it associated health problems.

Table two: reasons for homelessness

Reason for homelessness	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Parental eviction	29	45	43
Other friends'/relatives' eviction	27	35	17
Loss of private tenancy AST	26	31	51
Non-violent relationship breakdown	6	12	13
Violent relationship breakdown	7	11	11
Other forms of violence	5	3	0
Racial and harassment	1	0	0
Mortgage arrears	0	2	1
Rent arrears – social tenancy	0	2	2
Rent arrears – private tenancy	2	4	4
Left hospital/prison/care	8	14	21
Other	1	4	5
Total	112	163	168

2.2.3. Priority need

Across the three years, having dependent children or being pregnant together account for the largest 'priority need' category, making up 58% of cases. 14% are from those who have mental ill health; 12% from young people or those who have been in care. This on the whole reflects the picture nationally.

Table three: homeless acceptances by priority need

Priority need category	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Dependent children	50	77	94
Pregnant	8	16	12

Priority need category	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
16/17 years old/care leavers	17	20	17
Physical disability	13	15	11
Mental illness/disability	17	20	25
Domestic violence	4	8	2
Violence (non-DV)	1	1	
Old age	1	6	6
Emergency (fire flood, etc)	1		1
Total	112	163	168

2.2.4. Age profile

The age group most vulnerable to homelessness in Swale is people aged 25-44, accounting for almost half of all homeless acceptances in 2017/18. This number will include mainly families and reflects the difficulties young families have in securing housing in other sectors. The second largest age group at risk of homelessness is those aged 16-24 and while this will also include some young families, it is important that there is adequate support available to enable the most vulnerable young people to remain living at home.

Table four: homeless acceptances by age

Age	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
16 – 24	55	72	71
25 – 44	37	65	73
45 – 59	14	18	14
60 – 64	1	3	4
65 and over	5	5	6
Total	112	163	168

2.2.5. Household type

The household type at most risk of homelessness is families with dependent children who account for just over 60% of acceptances in 2017/18. This reflects the national picture and

the affordability problem in Swale in both the private rental market and in home ownership.

Table five: homeless acceptances by household type

Household type	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Family with children	59	92	105
Single People	49	57	57
Couple	4	14	6
Total	112	163	168

2.2.6. Ethnicity

The accepted homeless households are mainly white, although there are a small number from other ethnic groups. This broadly reflects the makeup of the borough which has 3.4% minority ethnic population.

Table six: ethnicity of accepted households

Ethnic Group	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
White	108	156	159
Black	0	2	5
Asian	0	1	1
Mixed	1	4	3
Other	3	0	0
Total	112	163	168

2.2.7. Comparison with other authorities

In comparison with other authorities it appears that the number of homeless acceptances in Swale per 1,000 households is higher than the All England and the South East authorities with a rate of 0.81 per 1,000 households. However, Dartford, Thanet and Dover are comparable and have similar numbers.

With regards to the number of households in temporary accommodation, the South East average is 2.24 per 1,000 households with Swale being slightly higher at 2.48. This is comparable with three other Kent authorities, Thanet, Medway and Ashford with 2.63, 3.01 and 3.16 respectively.

As a further comparison, the homeless numbers per 1,000 population have been compared with the CIPFA Nearest Neighbour Group top three. This shows that, when compared with similar authorities, Swale's numbers in temporary accommodation are relatively high and further investigation will take place as part of this review.

Table seven: homeless acceptances/No. in TA per 1000 households as at 31/03/18²

	Acceptances per 1000 households	Number in TA per 1000 households
All England	0.57	3.40
London	0.92	14.93
Rest of England	0.50	1.28
South East	0.48	2.24
Swale BC	0.81	2.48
Other Kent LAs		
Ashford	0.68	3.16
Canterbury	0.26	1.05
Dartford	0.86	2.48
Dover	0.91	1.75
Gravesham	0.00	1.63
Maidstone	0.62	1.43
Medway	0.27	3.01
Sevenoaks	0.10	1.33
Folkestone & Hythe	0.34	0.71
Thanet	0.71	2.63

² Table 784a MCHLG homelessness statistical reports

	Acceptances per 1000 households	Number in TA per 1000 households
Tonbridge & Malling	0.39	0.68
Tunbridge Wells	0.22	0.92
CIPFA Group		
Braintree	0.23	0.45
Dover	0.91	1.75
East Staffordshire	0.58	0.42

2.3 Demand on the housing options team

Demand on the Housing Options service continues to rise. In 2015/16 there were 845 prevention cases opened, rising to 1,247 in 2016/17 and 1,338 in 2017/18. This clearly demonstrates an increasing demand, which is forecast to continue especially in light of the new prevention duties contained in the Homelessness Reduction Act.

Data is available on the number of approaches since the Homelessness Reduction Act came into force in April 2018. This shows that in the first six months 772 new cases were opened, an average of 128 each month. If demand continues at this level the annual demand for 2018/19 will be around 1,544, an increase of 200.

However the biggest change for the service will be the requirement to engage in ongoing homelessness prevention casework for those meeting the new 'homeless in the next 56 days' criteria. At the end of October, caseloads for prevention were in the region of 12-14 cases per officer in addition to their day to day duties.

The demands on the service seem to be well understood by the team and graphs which have modelled the potential impact of various initiatives (including the Landlord Scheme and Direct Lets) have been shared. Information seems to be recorded well and this has assisted in analysing and understanding trends.

2.4 Future levels of homelessness

It is difficult to accurately predict future levels of demand but homelessness is predicted to continue to rise nationally as highlighted in the Crisis report: The Homelessness Monitor: England 2018. This shows that the number of homeless families and individuals placed in temporary accommodation nationally jumped to 78,000 last year, an 8% rise on the year and a massive 60% rise since 2012³.

³ https://www.crisis.org.uk/media/238700/homelessness_monitor_england_2018.pdf

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 when it came into effect in April 2018 brought new duties to provide advice and support to any person facing homelessness in the borough irrespective of their local connection or priority need status.

The following factors are likely to impact on the demand for services in future:

- Welfare Reform including the full roll out of Universal Credit
- Escalating private rent levels and Local Housing Allowance rates
- Lack of new affordable housing supply.

With a renewed emphasis on preventing homelessness and Government funding to help relieve rough sleeping, the aspiration is that current levels of homelessness will remain consistent if not reduced.

Officers report a culture within Swale of high expectations of access to social housing, especially amongst the families of existing social housing tenants. In order to address this, steps need to be taken to change public perceptions and publicly advertise what the Housing Options Service can and cannot provide; that access to social housing has changed with the new HRA prevention approach and that as a result access to social housing for people in housing need is no longer guaranteed.

2.5 Homelessness in Swale – key issues

- The number of homeless acceptances has increased by 50% over three years. This is reflective of the challenges in accessing affordable homes in the private rented sector, increasing private rent levels and static Local Housing Allowance rates
- The two main causes of homelessness in Swale are parental eviction and the loss of private rented tenancies. These two reasons account for 50% of homeless acceptances
- The age group most vulnerable to homelessness in Swale is 25-44, accounting for almost half of all homeless acceptances in 2017/18. This number includes families and reflects the difficulties younger people have in securing alternative housing
- Compared to other similar local authorities, the numbers in temporary accommodation are high (see page 10 for context) and continued effort is needed to reduce this
- Demand for frontline housing advice services is increasing, especially driven by the challenges people face in accessing the private sector. This is likely to continue to increase unless LHA rates are brought in line with market level rents
- Although the demand for affordable homes continues to rise, officers need to challenge and change the public perception that social housing is available to anyone who approaches the Council. Social media may be used to help reinforce this message.

3. Findings - review of the activities to prevent homelessness

3.1 Housing information and advice – Frontline

The Housing Options Service is based in the Council offices in Sittingbourne and is available during normal working hours predominately via a telephone system. An out of hour's homeless emergency service is available through a corporate emergency line which will connect with an on call frontline officer.

General housing advice can be given over the phone by a duty officer who will do an initial assessment of the client's circumstances. The Housing Options team was, up until a re-structure in March 2018, fully generic with officers being responsible for all functions across the entire service. Due to the pressures on the team created by this approach the structure was changed to three teams: Housing Options, Housing Register and an Accommodation Team managing temporary accommodation.

The Council's website has been 'under review' for some time and officers report that they were unable to make changes to reflect the Homelessness Reduction Act when it was introduced in April but that updated pages have been ready for some time. The current website has limited information about homeless prevention and does not reflect the new approach and the strengthened focus on prevention and personalised housing plans. There is more information on the website relating to the Housing Register with links to Kent Homechoice which has a very helpful video explaining about how to apply along with a pre-assessment on-line tool. Additional promotional methods could be utilised for example the Councils Facebook pages to ensure information about the housing service is readily available and giving the right homelessness prevention messages.

We found that when people visit the Council office they are directed to a telephone kiosk to call Housing Officers to discuss their circumstances. This is not private and phone calls can be overheard by other staff and customers. This can be embarrassing for customers and should be reviewed as other methods would provide a better customer experience. The phone line is not always available and if it is busy people have to 'hold' for prolonged periods before their call is answered. If the duty officer is able to see customers face to face they can be left waiting in reception for lengthy periods of time and can become anxious. While the telephone service was introduced in order to save time, there are better methods of managing demand and providing a better customer experience. The telephone system should therefore be reviewed.

A large demand for housing advice comes from the Isle of Sheppey (Sheppey Gateway hub). There was a daily front line presence at the Gateway until about 18 months ago and Members of the public were able to book appointments there, however due to staff resourcing it was decided to remove this service. This should be reviewed in order to improve the customer experience.

Customer Services staff across the Council are not qualified, trained or tasked with giving basic housing advice and do not have any information to hand out about what Housing Services can or cannot help with. There is opportunity for Customer Service staff to up-skill and provide basic housing advice. This is a tried and tested approach among local authorities and a useful way of helping manage customer demand and expectations as well as improving customer service. Staff would need to be appropriately trained and have clear boundaries of responsibilities.

3.2 Early identification and pre-crisis intervention – Triage

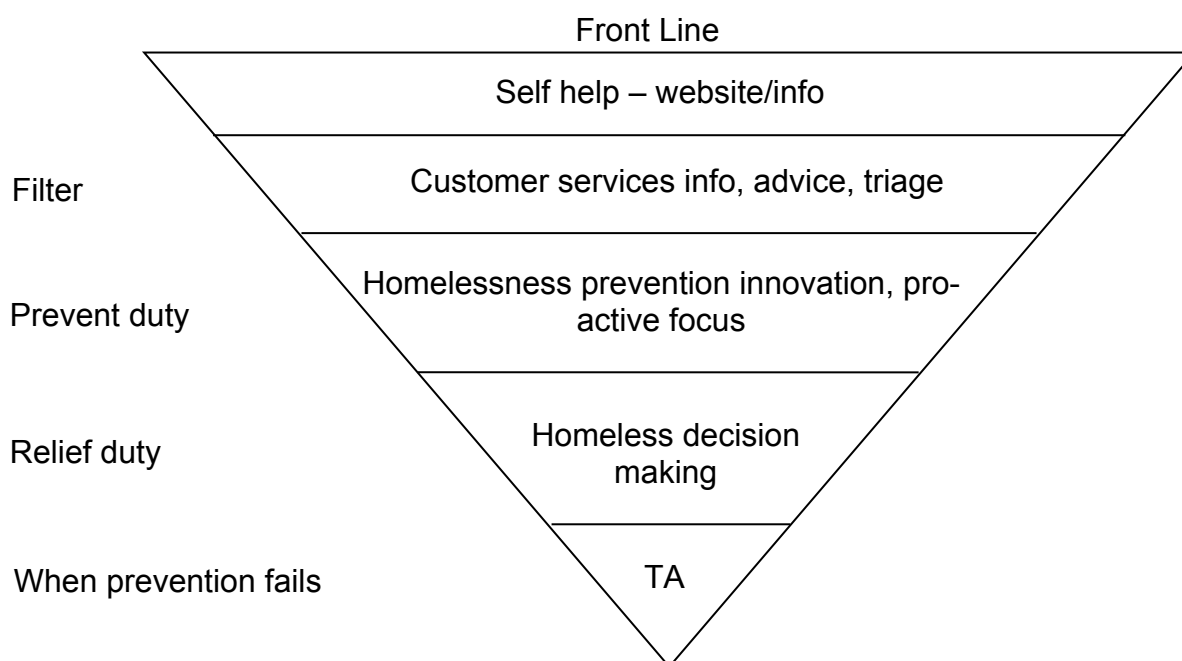
Customers identified through an initial triage telephone call as threatened with homelessness within 56 days are sent a letter asking them to provide numerous documents, evidence of their impending homelessness and a fully completed income and expenditure form. On receipt of this information the applicant will qualify for a full telephone interview. That interview will inform a personalised housing plan drawn up by the Housing Options Officer. This seems to be a 'system' rather than 'customer focussed' approach to homelessness prevention and the amount of paperwork that potential applicants are asked to provide before they are offered a telephone interview is substantial and must be unmanageable for some. The IT system used to implement the Homelessness Reduction Act introduced a Housing Assistance Referral Portal through which people can be either referred or self-refer for housing assistance however there is no link on the Councils website and it is understood that this is not routinely used.

The Housing Options service is currently structured as a 'generic' service with Officers carrying out all roles including initial triage, homeless prevention, homelessness assessment and relief, booking into temporary accommodation and housing register assessment. Despite the recent move away from specialisms towards generic roles, there seems to have been an informal practice of directing some staff members in the accommodation team to focus on certain aspects of the service, e.g. single homeless with support needs, private rental eviction. This has led to a blurring of roles and responsibilities. There is a need to reconsider how the service is structured in order to improve customer service.

There is a strong case for reintroducing specialist roles within the team, providing focus and resources where it is most needed. Redefining and clarifying roles and responsibilities going forwards will help staff and lead to greater transparency. Home visits are not carried out routinely in cases of threatened homelessness from family or friends, nor from loss of private rented properties and this should be reviewed given that the majority of homeless cases are either parental/family eviction or loss of a private tenancy. Interventions should include relationship-building with private landlords and lettings agencies and active engagement, mediation and provision of support to families to prevent family breakdown.

Good practice for housing advice services involves making best use of front facing customer service staff to deliver basic housing advice, information and the initial referral of cases through the Referral Portal. Homelessness prevention and homelessness decision making requires a significant level of knowledge and understanding of housing law, welfare benefits, homelessness case law etc. and experienced staff. Making best use of existing frontline services delivers a more efficient model of service. The model illustrated

below demonstrates how the housing advice 'filter' can makes best use of front line services.



3.3 Homelessness prevention

The Council monitors and records the number of approaches, how many households receive advice and how many cases of homelessness are prevented or relieved. The table below shows the position for the last three years.

Table eight: Homelessness prevention

Prevention outcome	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
New prevention cases opened	845	1247	1338
Able to remain in current home	150	141	92
Assisted to obtain alternative housing (inc. via deposit scheme)	127	88	77
Total	277	229	169

There is some very effective prevention work undertaken by officers but it can be seen that this is getting more difficult, with the total prevented in 2017/18 reduced to 169, the lowest in the last three years. This is as a direct result of unaffordable rents in the private rented sector and the increasing difficulty in accessing housing.

Table nine: Number of homeless cases prevented via Deposit Bond

Deposit Bond Cases	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
Prevented via the use of Deposit Bond Scheme	73	49	20	26

The reduced number helped via the Deposit scheme over the last four years also illustrates the increasing difficulty in prevention homelessness through help with a rent deposit. However, there are very effective links with the Council’s Revenues and Benefits service and a dedicated officer assigned to the Housing Options service ensures that applications for Housing Benefit and/or Discretionary Housing Payments are dealt with quickly and efficiently. This is an example of good practice within Swale.

3.4 Homeless Prevention Fund

The Housing Options Officers have access to a Homeless Prevention Fund to provide financial support to people facing homelessness where it may prevent their homelessness. This fund is delivering significant results. In 2017/18 the team spent £35,245 on preventing homelessness for 44 households.

There is no formal policy or procedure and the team are encouraged to come up with ‘creative solutions’ to prevent homelessness. Any requests for payments are considered by a Manager and a ‘spend to save’ approach is taken, considering how much temporary accommodation would cost the Council if a payment wasn’t granted. Payments include a mixture of Rent in advance, deposits, paying arrears and some property disrepair. A £1,000 limit is usually adhered to but higher payments can be made in exceptional cases where sensible.

Good use is made of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to prevent homelessness. Prior to considering a Homelessness Prevention Fund payment, officers consider whether the client could be awarded a DHP. In 2017/18, 709 discretionary housing payments were made using the total £482,106 DHP budget A new Landlord Introduction Scheme has been introduced recently to enhance the prevention offer and this is covered in more detail later.

At present, the Prevention Fund is only available to households who fall into a priority need category. With the new relief duties towards single people, it is recommended that consideration be given to broadening it to include payments for single non-priority homeless threatened with homelessness.

There is a need for clear Policy documents to be written for the use of the Homelessness Prevention Fund (and the Landlord Introduction Scheme). A Policy should set out the

eligibility criteria, use of funds, financial limits, outcomes and delegated powers of officers. This would enable transparency and equity in the use of public funds.

3.5 *Housing Register and Allocations Policy*

Social housing in the borough is provided solely by housing associations, the Council having transferred its housing stock in 1990. Optivo (formerly Amicus Horizon) is the biggest provider and owns around 6,750 homes a mix of social rent, affordable rent and shared ownership. A number of other registered social landlords are active in the borough, owning a mix of tenure types. These include Anchor, CDS, Habinteg, Hexagon, Hyde, Moat, Orbit, West Kent, Riverside ECHG, Sanctuary and Grainger. Together they own around 1,550 homes bringing the total to around 8,300.

All homes are allocated through a choice-based lettings system 'Kent Homechoice'. When properties are advertised on the Kent Home Choice website applicants are able to express an interest (bid) for the appropriate size of home but with type and location of their choosing. These expressions of interest are then shortlisted and the property is offered to the household on the shortlist with the highest position in the highest band who qualifies for the type of property advertised. To help applicants make an informed choice, the Policy includes information about the number, type and location of homes that have become available for letting in the previous years.

The Allocations Policy was updated in 2014 in response to the Localism Act which allowed Councils to apply stricter local connection criteria to their housing registers. To qualify to join the Swale housing register, applicants currently should:

- Have lived in the Borough for four out of the last five years
- Have income of less than £35,000 and assets of less than £50,000
- Not have any unspent conviction for housing fraud
- Not have rent arrears, or if they do, they should have a sound history of repayments.

Table ten: Housing Register Applications as a snapshot

	31/03/14	31/03/15	31/03/16	31/03/17	31/03/18
Number on Register	5,417	1,423	1,119	1,123	1,112

The numbers on the housing register reduced significantly when the new Allocations Policy was introduced in 2014. Since then it has remained steady at around 1,100 applicants. It is interesting to see that the demand for affordable rented housing has not

risen despite market conditions and worsening affordability, although this may be in part due to the residency qualification criteria in the Policy.

Applicants are placed in a Band according to their housing priority. The law requires that Councils give Reasonable Preference for housing to those set out in the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) and these are clearly detailed in the Policy.

The Council uses a Banding system with four bands and applicants are further prioritised by length of time in band.

- Band A – Urgent Housing Need
- Band B – Serious Housing Need
- Band C – Reasonable preference
- Band D – General Housing Need.

The current Allocations policy does not allow applicants to register if they are renting privately but cannot afford their current home, and this does impact on the demand. The number of Housing Register applications received remains high with on average 35 – 40 applications assessed each week, approximately half of which are placed on to the Housing Register.

Because of the residency criteria, households in need have to wait until they are accepted as ‘homeless’ before they can be considered on the Housing Register. Households even if they are in temporary accommodation are placed in Band C, so not awarded any significant priority.

The Housing Register is not therefore supporting the prevention of homelessness and is contributing to the increasing numbers accommodated in temporary accommodation.

3.6 Social lettings

According to the Housing Services Quarterly Performance Report, the following allocations were made in 2017/18:

Table 11: Allocations/Lettings by Band and Size

	1 bed	2 bed	3 bed	4 bed	Total	Number on register	% of lets
Band A	45	29	13	0	87	203 (18%)	22%
Band B	42	77	43	2	164	161 (15%)	42%
Band C	45	32	64	0	141	746 (67%)	36%

Band D	0	0	0	0	0	2	0%
	132	138	120	2	392	1,112	

Over 60% of allocations went to people in Bands A and B; 18% of applicants were in Band A and yet 22% of allocations went to people in this Band. Despite only 15% of applicants being in Band B, the majority of lettings (42%) went to people in this Band. The majority of applicants (67%) were in Band C. This includes homeless households to whom the Council has accepted a duty. Only 36% of allocations went to people in this Band which means that people in this Band would be waiting for the longest time to be housed. Despite making up two thirds of people on the register, Band C applicants receive only one third of lettings.

Given that the level of homeless applicants who are accepted is increasing, and given the use and cost of temporary accommodation is growing, it is important that homeless households are housed as quickly as possible. 400 lettings opportunities per year should be adequate to enable good management of 150 homeless households, accepting that a number of available properties will be for over 55s.

Prioritising categories of people in housing need is difficult and contentious but given the statistics above there is a case for re-prioritising homeless applicants to Band B, and also reconsidering the priority given to those at risk of homelessness. If the Housing Register can be used as a prevention tool, homelessness prevention will include recommending an applicant applies to the Housing Register, ensuring their needs are correctly assessed, that they receive appropriate priority banding, and information and advice about how the Allocation Scheme works.

In order to manage the numbers in temporary accommodation we have found examples of positive practice in allocations including periods of direct letting to homeless households in an effort to reduce the number of households accommodated. It is hoped that this practice be continued at times of high pressure to alleviate housing stress and associated costs as an interim measure until the Allocations Policy can be reviewed.

3.7 Debt and money advice

The Council provides £133,000 core funding to the Citizens Advice Bureau annually in the form of a Grant. The Service has a base in Sittingbourne within the borough council offices. They also run advice services from Stone Street in Faversham and Sheppey Gateway in Sheerness to which Minster-on-Sea Parish Council contributes funding.

It is a relatively small service offering advice and information to people who live and work in the community. They are equipped to respond to any issue, including benefits, consumer, relationships, housing, employment and money advice. There are two debt caseworkers and two welfare benefits specialists within the team. The CAB reports good working relationships with the Housing Options service on an operational case level, but CAB Managers find it difficult to keep up to date with changes in service provision across the wider partnership and would look to the Council to facilitate partnership networks.

In addition there are other financial advice services in the borough such as Kent Savers and a Family Finance Worker within Children and Families Ltd.

3.8 Private landlords and letting agents

The number of private landlords working with the Council directly to meet housing need is relatively high given the rates of Local Housing Allowance in the borough and steps are being taken to further develop these relationships.

The Council holds regular twice yearly Landlord Forums and these are well attended. 200 private landlords are signed up to the Landlord Accreditation scheme and relationships are generally good. Landlords are required to attend ten hours training each year to maintain their accredited status and courses and training are provided in partnership with Medway Council. Focus at the forums in recent years has been on benefits including Universal Credit as these are a major concern for landlords.

The Council has introduced a new 'Landlord Introduction Scheme' for individual private landlords (not Letting Agents) designed to offer private landlords more help and support in addition to the Deposit bond. This acknowledges the concerns landlords have regarding benefit changes and the impact this is having on their willingness to work with the Council. It is a measure of the strength of relationship with landlords that they are keen to continue to work with officers and resist pressure from other councils and London boroughs to take large incentive payments.

The new offer is a trial and involves the payment of six-months rent in advance to the landlord, with the Council collecting the rent repayments back directly from Housing Benefit or Universal Credit during the initial period. Many landlords will now approach the Accommodation Team directly if they develop problems with tenants. There are examples of positive interventions to prevent homelessness including tenancy sustainment work. In addition the accommodation team will work with the new tenants providing them with the necessary support and knowledge to maintain their homes and ensure rent payments are made regularly.

During the initial tenancy period support needs are identified and referrals are made to other partner agencies to continue providing support where needed, ensuring a holistic approach to homelessness prevention. This service is responsive to people's needs and currently provides support for 23 people across the LIS and Deposit bond schemes.

The new Landlord Introduction Scheme has got off to a positive start with 4 households being housed, and another four households in the pipeline. The potential for partnerships with private landlords has been explored and this scheme has great potential and is a useful tool in the Council's approach to prevention. The trial has been running since May and has several other landlords interested in the scheme but with no vacancies available.

3.9 Mortgage rescue schemes

There are very low levels of homelessness due to mortgage repossession with only two cases accepted in 2016/17 and one in 2017/18 so this is not a priority area for service

development. Information and advice on financial planning is of benefit in these cases and owners would be referred to advice and support agencies as appropriate. The Homelessness Prevention fund can be accessed if small grants can be used to solve homelessness.

3.10 Social landlords

There are pre-eviction protocols with social landlords in the borough. A protocol was agreed in 2015 with Optivo and officers report that this generally works very well and they have few social housing evictions. The protocol includes arranging a multi-agency meeting prior to court action to ensure alternative solutions to eviction are explored. Evictions by Optivo must be authorised by a Regional Director and housing staff must complete a full 'Permission to Evict' form prior to gaining such approval.

The protocol provides that the agreement should be kept under review and should be subject to a health check every three years. With the move to Optivo and the introduction of the new Homelessness Prevention Act duties it is recommended that this, and protocols with other social housing providers are reviewed and updated.

The National Housing Federation is encouraging social landlords to adopt a 'Commitment to Refer' as they are not covered by the statutory Duty to Refer. It would be helpful to encourage all social landlords in Swale to sign up to this.

3.11 Partnerships

The Council has some effective strategic partnerships that seek to prevent homelessness. These include the Kent Homelessness Officers Group which meets six times a year also attended by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and which has achieved numerous outcomes including:

- Joint Homelessness Reduction Act training
- A Duty to Refer workshop with all agencies
- Care Leavers/16&17 year olds protocol with Social Care
- Joint Intentional homeless protocol with Social Care.

Housing Options Managers are also well linked operationally with social care, health, probation and the police taking part in joint panels and meetings on issues including vulnerable families, serious organised crime, offenders, prison release, hospital discharge, domestic abuse, etc.

There are however no local strategic homeless partnerships and no regular Homelessness Forum in Swale. Officers have tried to establish meetings locally but came up against information sharing issues as they sought to discuss individual cases. There are significant benefits for organisations who are involved in preventing homelessness and supporting homeless households to meet regularly. These strategic level discussions pave the way for operational interventions across agencies. It is recommended that a regular

Homelessness Forum is established in Swale with organisations including CAB, housing associations, support providers, food bank, etc.

3.12 Activities to prevent homelessness – key issues

- Customer access points for the Housing Service need to be reviewed along with provision of leaflets, posters and other basic customer information both on the website and in hard copy reflecting the new culture of preventing homelessness
- How the homeless prevention service is delivered operationally is a key area for future consideration with a move away from a telephone only triage service, and a move towards more customer focussed specialist officers and home visits
- The Housing Register and the Allocations Policy is not supporting the prevention of homelessness and is contributing to the increasing numbers accommodated in temporary accommodation and requires urgent review
- A Homelessness Prevention Fund Policy should be developed with clear aims, criteria and examples of appropriate uses, broadening it to include single non-priority homeless threatened with homelessness
- The Landlord Incentive Scheme should be evaluated and relationships with private landlords and letting agents further developed providing them with a dedicated officer
- Protocols with Social Housing Providers would benefit from review and updating, exploring whether RPs will sign up to the Commitment to Refer
- There is no current Homelessness Forum for partner agencies within Swale. This should be re-established in order to develop a shared approach to homeless prevention.

4. Findings – considering the needs of vulnerable groups

In order to develop effective partnerships and homelessness prevention services the Review has considered the needs of vulnerable groups in Swale, and what services are in place to support them. This exercise was carried out through a workshop with Housing Staff and discussions with Commissioners at Kent County Council. While financial pressure is affecting Kent CC as elsewhere in the country, Commissioners are clear that they value the prevention role that housing support plays in the wider context and are not intending to withdraw funding from housing related support services in the near future. They are however moving towards an evidence based commissioning model and seeking greater value for money through the remodelling of services.

Kent CC also manages the former Social Fund welfare fund having taken this over when it passed from the Department of Work and Pensions. The Council created an integrated offer including provision of food, furniture, white goods, clothing, travel warrants and

energy credits. This works well and administration of this fund was included in the specification, and can be accessed through homeless support providers.

4.1 Rough sleepers

The numbers of rough sleepers in Swale has been slowly increasing over the last seven years. The 2018 Rough Sleeper estimate was agreed with partner agencies in Swale on 22 November during the Homelessness Review project. This showed 32 people sleeping rough in the borough a significant increase on previous years. Rough sleeping is the most extreme form of housing need and the increase in Swale shows that a fresh approach is needed.

Table 12: Rough Sleepers in Swale by Year

2013	5
2014	2
2015	6
2016	6
2017	9
2018	32

The increase can be put down to the lack of affordable accommodation in the area combined with the additional support needs experienced by this group. Landlords are reluctant to let their properties to this cohort and even though the Council has had some success with HMO's, many of the identified rough sleepers are known to the housing service and have been evicted from various accommodation types.

There are no night shelters running in the borough and the Council is working on a bid from MHCLG for the rough sleeping cold weather fund with a plan to work with Porchlight to deliver it.

New Severe Weather Emergency Provision and Extended Winter Provision Guidance has been published recently by Homeless Link in partnership with MHCLG. Historically, the minimum SWEP response from Local Authorities was to open provision when there was a forecast of zero degrees, or below zero, for three consecutive nights.

Local Authorities such as Swale where rough sleeping numbers have historically been low have not developed a formal SWEP response. An adequate policy would ensure that the local authority can provide suitable accommodation quickly to prevent harm and death due to severe weather conditions. This could be through delivering SWEP in partnership with neighbouring authorities. In Swale SWEP provision is available through the use of bed and breakfast accommodation in periods of severe weather.

In the period February to March 2018, the coldest part of the year, the Council accommodated 7 rough sleepers at a cost of £990 (Gross - Housing Benefit was claimed for the placements). In extended periods of severe weather this could prove costly and a partnership approach to developing provision is recommended and underway using the Rough Sleeper Initiative.

4.2 *Single homeless people ‘sofa surfers’*

There are people in the borough who are not rough sleeping but have nowhere settled to live. Experience demonstrates that these are likely to be mainly younger people who move from one friend or relative to another as they are unable to secure a permanent social rented home. Usually their income is insufficient to afford privately rented accommodation and the only option for this group is to share with friends, try to access the private sector or access the Riverside Supported Housing project at The Quays in Sittingbourne. Kent CC is currently re-designing the pathway for homeless people with support needs which includes a review of the large scale hostel model which is evident at The Quays. This is an outdated model and placing lots of vulnerable households in on location creates its own issues as well as brining in vulnerable single people into the borough (referrals can be made by any Kent LA). Commissioners are looking towards Housing First and Trauma Informed Care as more effective combined with a more integrated service approach.

Support can currently be accessed through Porchlight who can provide support for single homeless people or those sofa surfing. It is this group in particular that the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act is designed to assist through providing a personalised housing plan and support needs assessment. The new HRA relief duty also applies to single people who do not have a priority need, so options to increase the number of properties available to this group in the private sector through shared housing or Houses in Multiple Occupation will be key.

4.3 *Young people and care leavers*

The number of young people approaching the Council is relatively low, and joint protocol arrangements are in place with Kent County Council to assess the needs of any young person aged 16/17 who may be at risk of homelessness. There are excellent joint working procedures in place between the Housing Options Team and Social Services Adolescent Team, ensuring joint assessments are undertaken to establish how a young person's homelessness will be managed moving forward. Most young people move into dedicated supported housing in the borough.

Kent County Council however, has been severely impacted in recent years by large numbers of unaccompanied asylum-seekers arriving in the County, placing significant pressure on young people's services. In response, Commissioners have re-tendered the contract for young people's supported housing and will, in future, ring-fence its use to those young people whom the County Council has a statutory responsibility towards, i.e. Care Leavers, along with homeless 16/17 year olds owed a duty under the joint protocol.

This risks leaving a gap in provision for those who may not meet statutory thresholds for provision. In response, the Council could consider adopting a pro-active prevention approach including home visits, using officers skilled in mediation to resolve problems and working with Social Care and other partners to talk about housing and homelessness in schools.

4.4 Vulnerable families

Families who are at risk of homelessness or who have become homeless and have moved into temporary accommodation have a variety of support needs. They may have to move away from their usual family support networks, and children may have to change schools. This combined with a relationship breakdown or financial worries can result in households with support needs of one type or another.

Financial support can be offered through arrangements with the local Citizens Advice Bureau and through support provided by Christians Against Poverty (CAP) who provide a money advice helpline and support with budgeting. The Council also has good links with Step Change and Kent Savers Credit Union. Housing Options officers can provide food bank vouchers and refer to other agencies to ensure that support needs of vulnerable families are met including Family Action and Home-Start. A local second-hand furniture store is available providing cheap furniture to families in need.

Supported accommodation is available for families who need additional support at Plough Court, a Kent CC commissioned project which takes referrals from across Kent. Both Optivo and Moat, the two main social housing providers, run their own in-house floating support services ensuring that evictions from their properties are rare.

4.5 Victims of domestic abuse (DA)

Incidents of domestic abuse leading to homelessness are common and require a multi-agency response to keep victims safe. There is a Refuge in the borough provided by Centra delivering accommodation and support.

Outreach and support services are provided for victims by SATEDA (Swale Action to End Domestic Abuse) a local organisation which provides support and advocacy, raises awareness of domestic abuse and delivers preventative projects. SATEDA are part of Kent Domestic Abuse Consortium and are based within the Council offices allowing direct referrals to be made.

The Council contributes £21,000 annually to the Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service which includes IDVA provision, refuge and outreach services (medium risk victims). In addition, £14,500 is contributed to SATEDA.

Housing managers are involved with multi-agency partnership working around domestic abuse including attendance at the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) which aims to reduce the risk of serious harm to high-risk victims and their children by sharing information. The officer previously responsible for dealing with domestic abuse victims has been moved to another role within the team. Consideration

should be given to whether it would be of benefit to victims to re-instate this specialist service.

4.6 *People with a mental health problem*

With mental health being one of the highest 'priority need' categories of those accepted as homeless, it is essential that good relationships exist with partners in this field. Officers report good relationships with the Community Mental Health Team and effective support for this group is provided by Porchlight.

A Kent-wide protocol exists for those being discharged from Psychiatric Hospital although this is rather out of date. A local procedure has since been created and operationally, this works well and has improved the discharge of homeless applicants directly to the housing service.

A gap in services has been identified for complex dual-diagnosis clients who may have drug and alcohol addictions in addition to mental health problems. These customers present challenging behaviours and often fall through the net due to a lack of specialist services. There is no intensive high needs supported housing provision for this group and this gap in service should be kept under review.

4.7 *Offenders, former offenders and those at risk of offending*

Within Swale there are three prisons on the Isle of Sheppey. The inmate population is in the region of 2,800. One of the prisons, Standford Hill, is an open prison holding 484 category D sentenced male adults. The main prison focus is for prisoners to work in the community, carrying out reparative work or engaging in paid employment towards the end of their sentence. Many prisoners who have settled in employment locally approach the Council on release for housing.

The Housing Options Team work well with probation services and has good relations with Probation and the prisons. Kent Housing Group agreed a Kent Accommodation Protocol for Resettlement and Housing of Offenders in May 2013, although officers report that this outdated and in practice not really followed. Managers have focussed on building strong operational relationships with agencies and have set up their own referral processes and regular meetings with Probation regarding prison releases.

More recently, Kent Housing Group has produced a Factsheet available through Kent Homechoice which outlines the services and support available to prisoners both before their sentence ends and outlining what options are available to them if they are to become homeless on release. Only a few who are considered vulnerable will qualify for housing with the Council as homeless.

Nacro, in partnership with Centra have been commissioned by the Kent, Surrey and Sussex CRC to deliver housing brokerage services both in custody and in the community throughout Kent. The service provides information, advice and guidance to service users to ensure they have a realistic understanding of their housing options and support them to take steps to secure safe and secure placements.

In custody, Nacro support individuals as they begin their sentence and also as they prepare for release with an aim to ensure that they leave custody with safe and secure accommodation. In the community, Centra provide support to those on community orders and on licence with an aim to ensure that they obtain and sustain a safe and secure placement.

It should be noted that Kent CC has decided to withdraw support funding for the Hope Project in Sheerness from April 2019. This is as a result of the changes in 2014 which resulted in the formation of the Kent, Surrey and Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) and their new responsibility to provide support to offenders and former offenders. The Council may wish to work with Pathways the current provider to plan for the future if it wishes to retain this resource.

Housing Officers are represented on the Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) panel and cases are dealt with through a partnership approach. On the whole partnerships and associated services for this group are mature and well developed.

4.8 People with substance misuse or drug and alcohol problems

People with substance misuse issues approaching the Council often have complex needs, including mental health problems (as mentioned earlier in this report) and can be hard to engage and work with. The Forward Trust took the Kent County Council contract for the Drug and Alcohol Service over from Turning Point in May 2017. The service provides practical support to residents who are struggling with drug and alcohol misuse and is provided in partnership with Nacro and ReThink to continue to improve services by placing a team around individuals and their families.

4.9 Older people

The number of older people becoming homeless is minimal due to the availability of sheltered and general over 55's housing. Older people can usually be housed through the Housing Register into suitable accommodation before homelessness occurs. Dedicated frail older persons supported housing is provided in the borough's extra care scheme at Regis Gate in Sittingbourne. The Council's Staying Put Service manages older persons/vulnerable discharges via their own processes, and when required, joint working on cases is undertaken.

4.10 People with a learning or physical disability

Numbers of people approaching the Council with either physical or learning disabilities are relatively low and when accepted as homeless a pro-active approach is taken to identifying adapted properties. As above, the Council's Staying Put service has a pro-active approach to ensuring people are able to access accommodation and have a dedicated Occupational Therapist sitting within the team.

4.11 Identifying what supported accommodation is available

There are a number of supported housing schemes in Swale. The County Council is currently re-tendering all supported housing and the outcome of this process is awaited. However current provision is shown below:

Table 13: Supported housing in Swale

Client Group	Provider	No.	Location
Young People	Centra	20	Bridge House, Sheerness
	Porchlight	10	Old Johnson House, S'bourne
Domestic Abuse	Centra	9	Swale
Single homeless	Riverside	84	The Quays, Sittingbourne
Mental Health	Sanctuary	14	Prices Ct, Sittingbourne
	Sanctuary	8	Church House, Faversham
	Community Rehab Services	8	Archer House, Sittingbourne
Offenders	Pathways	4	Hope Project, Sheerness
Homeless families with support needs	Centra	14	Plough Court, Sittingbourne
Homeless families Temporary accommodation	Optivo	14	Tylden House, Sittingbourne
Extra Care 55+	Optivo	51	Regis Gate, Sittingbourne
Total		236	

As can be seen by the table above there is still a significant amount of supported housing with most vulnerable client groups provided for. ** Please note referrals into these schemes are accessible to all local authorities across Kent

4.12 Floating support service

In addition to the accommodation based supported housing, Kent Floating Support Service is funded by Kent County Council and currently provided by Sanctuary Supported Living and a number of other support providers. This is a housing related support service providing support in the following areas.

- Managing housing-related issues such as homelessness, evictions and re-settlement
- Securing and maintaining a tenancy, transitioning to a new tenancy or moving on from supported accommodation
- Finding suitable accommodation and applying for accommodation via social or private landlords
- Signposting and accessing other services
- Managing finances (budgeting and benefits).

The service is accessed Kent County Council who act as a 'portal' assessing the client's needs and referring on to the most appropriate service provider. Support workers assist clients to create a personalised support plan, identify their personal goals and take the steps needed to become more independent. The service supports people in their own homes as well as supporting homeless people in the community and the support is flexible and personalised to individual needs.

4.13 The support needs of vulnerable groups – key issues

- There is currently no formal SWEP provision for rough sleepers, with bed and breakfast being offered in periods of severe weather. Options to develop SWEP provision with faith groups, charities and neighbouring authorities should be explored along with opportunities to bid for Government funding for other initiatives.
- Young people's supported housing provision will be restricted to those meeting statutory thresholds in future, leaving a gap in service for young people not considered vulnerable.
- There is a potential gap in service for complex dual-diagnosis clients who may have drug and alcohol addictions in addition to mental health problems and demonstrate challenging behaviours. This group may fall through the net and end up sleeping rough due to a lack of high needs supported housing
- Supported housing is currently generally meeting the needs of vulnerable groups but could become at risk should the County Council decide to withdraw support funding in future. This should be kept under review. In the meantime, the Council should ensure it is fully engaged with service providers and commissioners and the re-modelling of services in order to meet the needs of Swale's most vulnerable residents.

5. Findings – review of temporary accommodation

5.1 Number of households in temporary accommodation

The table below illustrates the numbers in temporary accommodation over the last four years and how these have more than doubled.

Table 14: Numbers in temporary accommodation as a snapshot SWALE

Type of accommodation	30/6/15	31/03/16	31/03/17	31/3/18
Bed and breakfast	19	27	36	24
Of which. No in B&B with children for > 6wks	0	2	1	2
Nightly paid, private accommodation.	8	11	61	53
Hostel	14	13	13	13
Private Sector Leased/RP	6	5	3	3
Own Stock	1	2	6	6
RP Stock	20	37	36	51
Total	68	95	155	150
No. housed outside of borough	14	22	60	25

There is a mixed portfolio of temporary accommodation and there is evidence that the staff make good use of this resource by matching people and property appropriately. There appear to be some ad hoc proposals for developing new temporary accommodation but it is not clear who is leading on this within the Council.

5.2 Bed and Breakfast

The Council still uses bed and breakfast accommodation for a number of households although usually manages to move families with children on into other accommodation before the six-week legal limit. All bed and breakfast establishments are inspected by Environmental Health Officers to check their suitability before households are placed there and if they are out of area checks are made with that local authority.

Positively, the Council responded to the increased use of B&B and intervened, buying three properties for use as additional Temporary Accommodation – see below.

5.3 Hostel accommodation

The Council's main social landlord Optivo owns and manages a 14 unit hostel called Tylden House in Sittingbourne. This is mostly used to move families on from bed and

breakfast although if families have their own furniture and are an ‘accepted’ case self-contained accommodation will be sought instead.

The hostel provides good quality accommodation including communal rooms and laundry facilities. Accommodation can be used flexibly with the ability to add rooms to a unit or block them off depending on the size of household being accommodated. Bathrooms are however shared between two households which is not ideal.

The hostel is staffed part-time during normal working hours Monday to Friday by two Partnership Officers who also manage the Optivo owned self-contained temporary accommodation units in the area. The officers are experienced and knowledgeable and appear to have effective policies and processes in place to robustly manage the hostel. Rents for the units vary from £127.64 for a one-bedroom unit to £130.57 for a two bedroom with all this covered by benefits except a £10.93 ineligible charge the resident pay themselves for heating, lighting and hot water, etc. The Council is charged £40 per week per household for hostel provision.

5.4 Swale BC owned houses

The Council owns and manages three properties as temporary accommodation in the borough. The first property in London Road was purchased over 10 years ago as a long term empty. This was initially rented out through a letting agent but it has been used for homeless households for the last six years. Oak Road was purchased in November 2014 and Coronation Road in January 2016 to alleviate pressure on temporary accommodation and reduce the use of bed and breakfast.

Table 15: Council owned temporary accommodation

Location	Size	No. households	Total occupancy	Rent level
Oak Road Sittingbourne	Three bed house	2	5 people (inc child)	£109.62
Coronation Road Sheerness	Three bed house	2	5 people (inc child)	£109.62
London Road Sittingbourne	Two bed house	1	5 people	£138.08

These three properties are managed in-house by the newly formed Accommodation Team which provides management, cleaning of communal areas, rent collection and general support to the households living there. One of the Sittingbourne properties is currently empty awaiting refurbishment including the conversion of a downstairs living room into a further bedroom.

These properties cover the costs of the staff used to manage them and are significantly cheaper than alternative temporary accommodation available although a full review is recommended taking into account the costs of maintaining and refurbishing the properties

5.5 Optivo temporary tenancies

The Council has a service level agreement with Optivo, the main housing provider in the borough, to use some of its social rented properties as temporary accommodation. The SLA was revised recently to provide up to 100 properties (an increase of 46 from the last SLA, although not all 100 at any one time). The Council has a good relationship with Optivo and it is clear they are supportive of the Council's efforts to reduce numbers however, the Optivo Board have made it clear that this is not a permanent arrangement and should not be relied upon going forward.

The number of Optivo properties in use was 51 on 31 March 2018. The arrangement with Optivo is helpful in the current climate with costs increasing and is offered at a significantly favourable rate to the Council (£40 per week per property) than nightly let properties (c. £40 per night). However, it must be noted that every property taken out of stock to use as temporary accommodation is a property not then available for permanent letting. If it were permanently let then a homeless household could have been offered it with no ongoing additional cost.

Some efforts have been made to convert temporary tenancies to permanent homes where the property is the right size and the tenant has settled well. This is reviewed at regular partnership meetings with Optivo and each case is reviewed on an individual basis.

The temporary tenancies (as mentioned above) are managed by the Optivo Partnership Officers based at the hostel in Sittingbourne providing basic tenancy support as required.

5.6 Nightly lets

The Council along with many others has taken on properties which although self-contained are paid for on a 'nightly let' basis. The nightly cost of these properties is usually lower than the cost of bed and breakfast and provides self-contained, so more suitable accommodation especially for families.

The Council has procedures in place for procuring temporary accommodation which were the subject of a recent Audit Review. This included a finding that accommodation rates are negotiated where possible, that rates are subject to market forces not under the control of the Council but that sufficient controls are in place to mitigate the risk of overspending although being demand led this is still a risk. All nightly let properties in the borough are subject to inspection by Environmental Health prior to occupation.

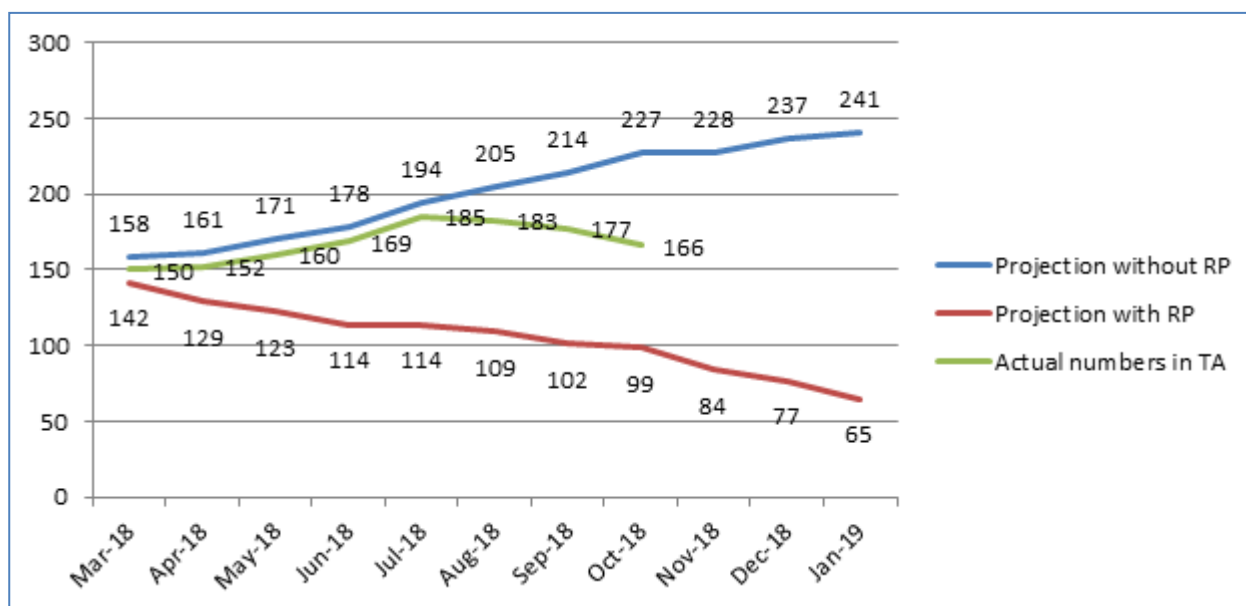
As the nightly rate is well above the Local housing Allowance rates the Council only re-charges residents rent to the LHA rate level. This ensures that the cost is covered by Housing Benefit or Universal Credit but effectively means the council is subsidising the accommodation. A priority will be a reduction in these most expensive nightly let properties, especially those properties located out of the borough.

5.7 Numbers and move on

With numbers in temporary accommodation increasing year on year the Council has developed a recovery plan to better manage demand. The figure below shows the projection for temporary accommodation numbers with and without a recovery plan. Arrangements have been put in place for 'direct lets' to be made for homeless households and from 1 October 2018, 50% of all voids will be offered to Housing Options as direct lets for homeless. As at 11 October Optivo had offered 19 properties for direct letting, of which five have moved in, with seven planned moves due to take place. The number of households in temporary accommodation on the 23 October 2018 was 165.

As can be seen below the plan is delivering results with the numbers in temporary accommodation already beginning to fall. This demonstrates an effective management framework able to identify and manage this issue but also highlights the need to award increased priority for homeless households on the Housing Register through the Allocations Policy if the numbers and associated costs are to be brought down in the longer term.

Council temporary accommodation recovery plan



5.8 Costs of temporary accommodation

The cost of increasing numbers in temporary accommodation is of major concern to the Council. In 2018/19, the estimated gross cost is £1.3m set against income including Housing Benefit and the government's Flexible Homelessness Support Grant of nearing £800k, the total net cost to the Council is in the region of £0.5m.

Reducing the cost of temporary accommodation is a key priority for the Council so consideration could be given to purchasing additional properties to manage in house using

the existing Accommodation Team resources or consider developing alternative accommodation on Council or Optivo owned sites. This will depend on the availability of capital for this type of investment.

5.9 Out of area placements

The Council avoids out of area placements whenever possible but inevitably some households are placed out of borough. These are either bed and breakfast or self-contained nightly let properties and are usually in the Medway Council area which is around 10 miles away and on a direct rail line. Placing vulnerable households out of area causes disruption to the existing informal support networks of vulnerable families and is to be discouraged where possible or at least minimised to short prior of time.

Each placement is assessed on the circumstances of the household, what accommodation is available in Swale and what the household's support needs are, but mostly what is available.

The decision to place out of area is made by a senior housing officer or the Housing Options Manager following completion of a suitability of location form and consideration of the applicant's circumstances. There is a Kent Protocol in place for temporary accommodation placements between Kent and Medway local housing authorities. Officers did not seem to be aware/use this Protocol and so it might be appropriate for review/re-launch across the wider Kent partnership.

5.10 Review of temporary accommodation – key issues

- There is a mixed portfolio of temporary accommodation. There is evidence that staff make good use of this resource by matching people and property appropriately
- Bed and breakfast is still routinely used although officers strive to move families on to more suitable accommodation as soon as possible
- Optivo is a key partner providing hostel and self-contained temporary accommodation. Care should be taken not to increase the number of properties taken out of stock to use as temporary accommodation as this reduces the ability to permanently house people and reduce overall numbers
- Nightly lets remain costly and if there is a decrease in overall numbers handing back properties especially out of area should be a priority
- The Council's recovery plan is starting to see results but is a short term fix to a long term problem. While Optivo is willing to help in the short term, long term solutions including an overhaul of the Allocations Policy will be key to addressing this issue.

6. Findings - Housing options to relieve homelessness

The Council is well placed to help single people access housing through the use of the Riverside Supported Hostel at The Quays in Sittingbourne. The hostel is well run and can

accommodate 84 single people taking referrals from across Kent, with move on cluster flats in nearly blocks which residents can move on to when they are ready to live independently.

There are also opportunities to encourage private landlords to consider taking on groups of single people sharing properties either through lead tenant models or joint tenancies and to develop more affordable shared properties and HMOs. While these may seem like risky options to landlords, the support that the Council can now offer will be key to encouraging that offer and developing the partnership approach.

The availability of lodgings can be promoted through encouraging people to rent out a room in their home and providing information and advice on letting a room in your home. This can be promoted to home owners and can improve incomes for households struggling to manage high housing costs.

6.1 Housing options to relieve homelessness – key issues

- The Quays provides a significant resource to the Council to meet the needs of single people facing homelessness but may be at risk in future.
- Private landlords can be encouraged via the Landlord Forum to take on sharers and/or develop more shared HMO type accommodation with the Council offering dedicated landlord support
- Developing and promoting information and advice on letting rooms in your home could encourage people to make available rooms for single people at affordable rents.

7. Findings- the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

7.1 The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 (HRA)

The HRA places new legal duties on English local authorities, so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless has access to meaningful help, irrespective of their priority need status; as long as they are eligible for housing assistance.

The Act largely amends part VII of the Housing Act 1996. It redefines the meaning of threat of homelessness by extending the period of threatened with homelessness from 28 to 56 days. There are six key aims of the Act which include:

- a) Prevention – Duty to provide casework intervention to resolve threatened homelessness and work with applicants to draw up a personalised housing plan tailored towards their individual circumstances
- b) Relief - Homelessness relief occurs when an authority has been unable to prevent homelessness but helps someone to secure alternative accommodation, even though the authority is under no statutory obligation to do so
- c) Duty to provide advisory services – Local authorities must provide free homelessness advice and information to any person in their local authority area.

This should include advice and information on preventing homelessness, securing accommodation when homeless, the rights of homeless people or those threatened with homelessness, the help that is available from the local authority or others and how to access that help

- d) Full Homelessness Duty – The full homelessness duty of settled accommodation for priority need households where prevention or relief duties have failed remains in place
- e) Co-operation – Applicants will be expected to co-operate with local authorities as the duties outlined can be ended if applicants are found to have deliberately and unreasonably refuse to co-operate
- f) Duty to refer – The new duty on other public services to refer people to homelessness teams if they are working with people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness came into force in October 2018.

7.2 Swale's progress with implementation

In Swale significant progress has been made to implement the new legislation. This has included:

- Recruitment to two additional fixed term Housing Options Officer posts
- New triage procedures on the frontline
- The purchase of an ICT system to monitor and review cases
- The adoption of best practice template plans
- Interim re-structure to provide additional resource to work with private landlords and offer support
- Commissioning a Homelessness Review and a new Strategy
- Renewed focus on developing new services
- Plans to reduce the need for temporary accommodation in the borough
- Commissioning a Staffing Review to ensure the service is fit for purpose.

This review forms part of the progress to date. The new Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will identify the Council's priorities and include recommendations for further changes to meet the requirements of the Act and deliver a pro-active homeless prevention service.

8. Findings – Assessment against Gold Standard (Good Practice)

8.1 National Practitioners Support Service (NPSS)

The NPSS supports local authorities to work together in clusters of three or more to undertake Diagnostic Peer Reviews of their services against those set out in the Gold Standard. This process is a voluntary one and helps local authorities:

- Assess how they are preventing and tackling homelessness
- Identify key strengths and weaknesses in service delivery by identifying gaps in provision and highlighting good practice
- Identify recommendations for service improvement
- Develop effective improvement plans to help maximise homelessness prevention where possible
- Help to make the best use of current resources.

Making Every Contact Count, a report written by the Ministerial Working Group on homelessness, provides the basis for the 10 local challenges. Local authorities can apply for Gold Standard recognition at Bronze, Silver or Gold level if they meet at least 60% of the 10 Local Challenges in the Diagnostic Peer Review.

Although this is a voluntary ‘quality mark’ process, currently no Kent local authorities are listed as meeting the Gold Standard at any level. As an indicator of quality however we have used the 10 local challenges to undertake a brief gap analysis of the Swale Housing Options Service. We are aware that there is a new model of Gold Standard becoming available in early 2019 taking into account the new duties in the HRA.

8.2 Ten local challenges

The table below demonstrates how the Council is partly meeting the requirements of the Gold Standard. Improvements can be made in all 10 challenge areas.

Gold Standard Challenge	Key elements	Swale position
1) To adopt a corporate commitment to prevent homelessness which has buy in across all local authority services	a) Strategic level sign up b) Investment of Government homelessness funding into services c) Evidence of joint working	Homelessness hasn't been a strategic priority until recently. Government resources have been allocated appropriately but further work is needed on joint working with both internal and external partners
2) To actively work in partnership with voluntary sector and other local partners to address support,	a) Mapping of all Voluntary and Community organisations in area b) Designated contacts	A directory of support services is available for staff listing organisations, however this does not cover education, employment and

Gold Standard Challenge	Key elements	Swale position
education, employment and training needs.	<p>identified</p> <p>c) Partners have agreed a structured approach to working together</p>	<p>training and dedicated contacts only exist in some organisations</p>
3) To offer a Housing Options prevention service to all customers including written advice.	<p>a) Service standards are in place</p> <p>b) All customers receive a meaningful baseline service including online information and home visits</p> <p>c) Systems in place to record approaches across all customer access points.</p> <p>d) Confirmation of advice is provided</p>	<p>Service standards are in place but out of date, customers receive a very limited service across customer access points. A telephone appointment system is used for most assessments, online information on homelessness is sparse and home visits are not offered</p>
4) To adopt a No Second Night Out model or an effective local alternative	<p>a) Evidence based approach to service delivery around rough sleeping</p> <p>b) Timely response to rough sleepers</p> <p>c) Members of the public able to activate the local response</p> <p>d) Access to emergency accommodation and wider services, and needs assessment carried out</p> <p>e) Offers of reconnection made where appropriate</p> <p>f) Formal safeguarding case reviews triggered where appropriate</p>	<p>Numbers of rough sleepers are relatively low (9) and the response is to offer B&B in severe weather. The authority's response is limited and under developed bearing in mind the priority the government is giving via the National Rough Sleepers Strategy</p>
5) To have housing pathways agreed or in development with each key partners and client	<p>g) Evidence based pathways</p> <p>h) Partner organisations</p>	<p>Under the HRA client's support needs are assessed and pathway arrangements are in place for most client</p>

Gold Standard Challenge	Key elements	Swale position
group that includes appropriate accommodation and support.	<p>engaged in facilitating pathways</p> <p>i) Appropriate support to access accommodation</p> <p>j) Flexible approach to pathway support</p>	groups, although some protocols are out of date and should be reviewed.
6) To develop a suitable private rented sector offer for all client groups, including advice and support to both client and landlord.	<p>a) Quality of stock available</p> <p>b) Promoting access</p> <p>c) Tackling issues around affordability</p> <p>d) Supporting tenants</p> <p>e) Supporting landlords</p> <p>f) PRS discharge of duty options</p> <p>g) Supporting shared accommodation</p> <p>h) Making best use of local service and resources.</p>	Significant progress has been made in this area through appointing dedicated staff working on a Landlord Introduction Scheme, offering support to both parties. However, this is currently only offered to 'priority need' clients, not single people and could be developed further.
7) To actively engage in preventing mortgage repossessions	<p>a) Clear strategic response and trained staff</p> <p>b) First contact point is effective with clear advice</p> <p>c) LA and partners publicise services</p> <p>d) Preventing repossession process is effective locally</p>	The number of mortgage repossessions is low so this has not been a priority for Swale.
8) To have homelessness strategy which sets out a pro-active approach to preventing homelessness and is reviewed annually to be responsive to emerging needs.	<p>a) Strategy meets basic legal requirements</p> <p>b) Focuses on positive actions, demonstrates commitment to prevention</p> <p>c) Supports operational delivery of service improvement</p>	The Service is currently being reviewed and the emerging Strategy will meet these elements

Gold Standard Challenge	Key elements	Swale position
	d) It is monitored and reviewed in partnership and aims to make the most of available resources	
9) To not place any young person aged 16 or 17 in bed and breakfast accommodation	e) No YP to be placed in B&B in previous 12 months f) Joint protocol focuses on prevention. g) Early intervention and prevention service for YP in housing need (under 25s) h) Positive pathway approach to preventing youth homelessness i) Appropriate and supportive accommodation options available for YP	Swale works closely with Kent County Council on 16/17 year olds and has mature and effective pathways for this group where this is a statutory responsibility, although occasionally B&B is used as an emergency measure. Further work is needed on the broader prevention offer to young people to whom the LA does not have a duty to accommodate.
10) To not place any families in bed and breakfast accommodation in an emergency and for no longer than six weeks	j) Not to place in B&B and for no longer than six weeks k) Strategic approach to ensure B&B is only ever used in an emergency l) Prevention focus supports reduction in use of B&B m) When B& is used in an emergency it is with ongoing support.	B&B is still routinely used for families although it is rare that families are there more than six weeks. Basic support is provided and the new prevention approach in the Strategy will support the reduction of numbers going into B&B.

9. New supply

9.1 New affordable housing

While efforts are being made to reduce the numbers in temporary accommodation, without a pipeline of new housing supply this will not resolve the housing pressures on the

Council. Delivery of new affordable housing must be a key corporate priority for the Council as this presents a significant risk to the Council’s ability to manage the demands on the homelessness service. The Council’s approach to increasing the provision of affordable housing is set out in the Strategy.

10. Staffing structure

The Housing Options Service carried out an interim re-structure in March 2018 moving away from a fully generic officer role and enables the Housing Register and Accommodation Team to operate separately. This has however placed increased pressure on the remaining generic housing options officers to largely carry out the introduction of the HRA, deal with triage advice on the frontline, in depth homelessness prevention, homelessness assessments and decisions and nominations into temporary accommodation.

This has resulted in a service that has lost a customer focus on the frontline and requires further re-structure in order to allow officers to effectively deliver a good homeless prevention service. The service is subject to a separate review of staffing and resources. The recommendations from this review will inform that process.

11. Resources

11.1 Use of additional Government resources for homelessness services

The Government has provided significant additional resources in order to support local authorities to deliver the Homelessness Reduction Act. The funding is designed to allow councils to be innovative and adopt a ‘spend to save’ approach to tackling homelessness at a much earlier stage when prevention activity is much more likely to succeed.

Table 16: Government resources to tackle homelessness

Government Grant	2018/19
Flexible Homeless Support Grant (FHSG) (ring fenced)	£197,520
Burdens Fund (ring fenced)	£87,495
Homeless Prevention Fund (non ring fenced)	£140,340
Discretionary Housing Payments	£403,738

The Council has effectively utilised some of its Burdens and Homelessness Prevention funding to recruit into fixed term housing options officer posts providing additional capacity for the team.

The Flexible Homeless Support Grant has been used predominately to cover the deficit created by the loss of the Temporary Accommodation Management Fee although there is no guarantee that this Government funding stream will continue indefinitely so this cannot be considered a long term solution.

Homelessness Prevention Funding is also used imaginatively by the team for prevention and is delivering results. In 2017/18 the team spent £35,245 on preventing homelessness for 44 households which is significantly lower per household than the cost of providing temporary accommodation for a lengthy period of time.

Good use is made of Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) to prevent homelessness. Prior to considering a Homelessness Prevention Fund payment, officers consider whether the client could be awarded a DHP. In 2017/18, 709 discretionary housing payments were made using the total £482,106 DHP budget.

12. Consultation

12.1 Homelessness Forum

A Homelessness Forum was held in January 2019 attended by 40 representatives from local statutory services and the voluntary and community sector. A workshop was held to understand the challenges for Swale in terms of homelessness and to comment and agree on the key findings and priorities resulting from the Homelessness Review.

There was general support for the findings arising from the Review which reflected their experience of homelessness in Swale. Partners agreed the priorities and would particularly support actions relating to access to services, single homeless, rough sleepers, tenancy training, support for landlords, mental health and budgeting support.

The opportunity to meet together to seek solutions and develop initiatives was also supported and it was agreed that a regular Homelessness Forum meeting would be beneficial to all parties.

The feedback from the event will help inform the Delivery Plan which will form part of the wider Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2019-2023 to be adopted during 2019. This Strategy will be the subject of formal consultation prior to adoption.

13. Conclusions

In conclusion, pressure on the Housing Options Service continues to present challenges especially in terms of managing customer demand, balancing prevention activity and the requirement to deal with the needs of those owed a statutory duty. The Homelessness Review has identified some good practice across the Housing service and some areas for improvement.

Demands on the service have resulted in an increasing number of households living in temporary accommodation with increased cost to the council. Numbers are likely to continue to increase and a pro-active approach to homeless prevention will be required.

The Housing Options service on the front line lacks customer focus and more can be done to change the culture of the team towards delivering a more open and pro-active approach allowing officers to develop specialist roles and lead on these for the team as well as making best use of new IT systems.

The Allocations Policy sets restrictive local connection criteria for the Housing Register and does not give sufficient priority to homeless households. A review of the Allocations Policy will help bring down numbers in temporary accommodation as will a focus on pro-active prevention and delivering new housing supply.

There has been good progress in developing new initiatives and work with private landlords in the area is delivering results albeit slowly. There is a well-established Landlords Forum and good links with private sector housing colleagues.

Operationally partnerships are good but more could be done to work with partners at a strategic level to build relationships and this could be achieved through holding a regular Homelessness Forum.

The number of rough sleepers is increasing rapidly and steps should be taken to agree more formal arrangements for periods of severe weather. The council could also seek to develop their relationship with both voluntary sector and faith groups to further support the work of the team.

While it is unlikely that any additional supported housing will be commissioned, there is a need to monitor support for both young people and people with complex needs who may fall through the net. A pro-active approach to early identification and prevention will support this as will close working with service providers and commissioners.

There is a mixed portfolio of temporary accommodation and while this is used effectively bed and breakfast is still used on a regular basis. Ending the use of B&B and significantly reducing the number of nightly let properties should be a priority. Officers are aware of the need to work more closely with housing providers in order to address this and an interim Recovery Plan is already delivering results.

14. Key priorities

The following will be key priorities to take forward into the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy:

- Promote early intervention and a more customer focussed homeless prevention service
- Develop strategic partnerships to address homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough.
- Ensure support is available for vulnerable households.
- Reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation.

Appendix one: Good Practice and other relevant links

MHCLG – Homelessness Code of Guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homelessness-code-of-guidance-for-local-authorities>

Ministry of Housing Community and Local government – HRA Policy factsheets

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/homelessness-reduction-bill-policy-factsheets>

National Practitioner Support Services – Gold Standard

<https://www.npsservice.org.uk/gold-standard>

Homeless Link

<https://www.homeless.org.uk/facts/our-research>

Shelter Good Practice guide for Early identification and Prevention

https://england.shelter.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/193134/Homelessness_early_identification_prevention.pdf

Crisis- 'spare to share' toolkit- developing shared housing

<https://www.crisis.org.uk/ending-homelessness/housing-resource-centre/for-local-authorities/how-to-set-up-shared-social-housing/>

Herts Young Homeless- good practice on young people's homeless prevention services

<https://www.hyh.org.uk/>

Centrepoint – More than a number – research on youth homelessness

<https://centrepoint.org.uk/media/2396/more-than-a-number-the-scale-of-youth-homelessness.pdf>

MIND – Brick by brick - A review of mental health and housing

<https://www.mind.org.uk/media/26223865/brick-by-brick-a-review-of-mental-health-and-housing.pdf>

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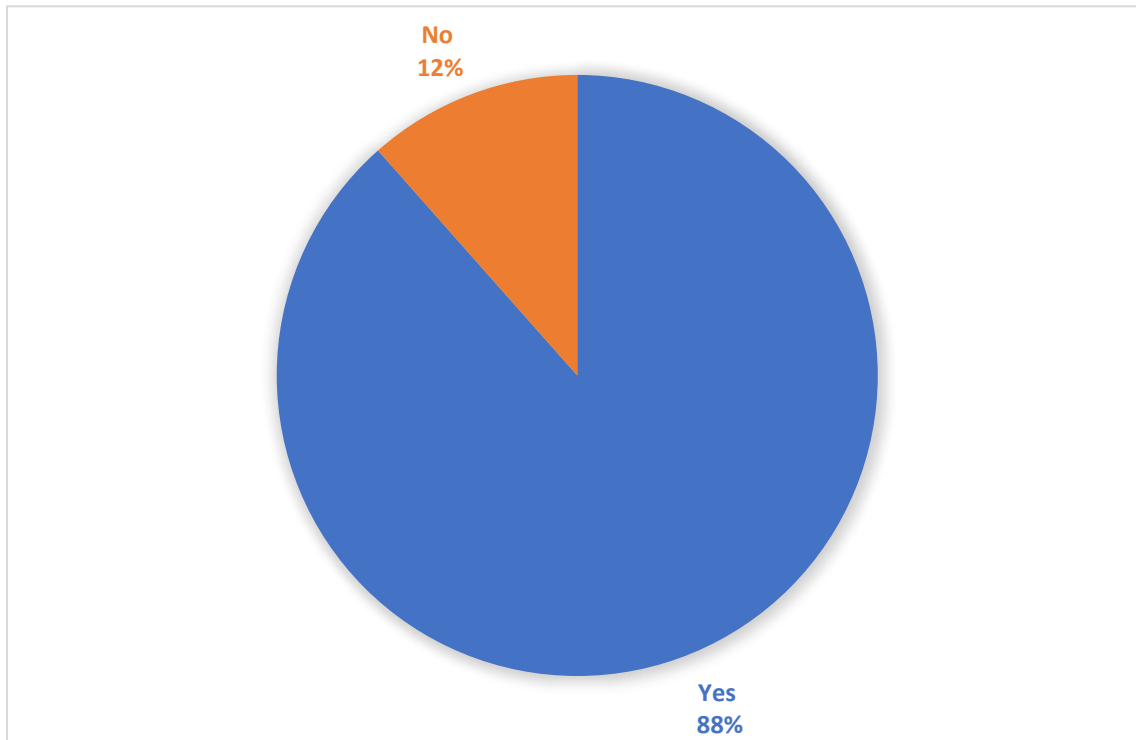
Find out more about HQN and our network membership by visiting www.hqnetwork.co.uk or call us on +44 (0)1904 557150.



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Appendix IV - Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Consultation Responses

Q1. Do you agree that these are the correct priorities for the Council to focus on?

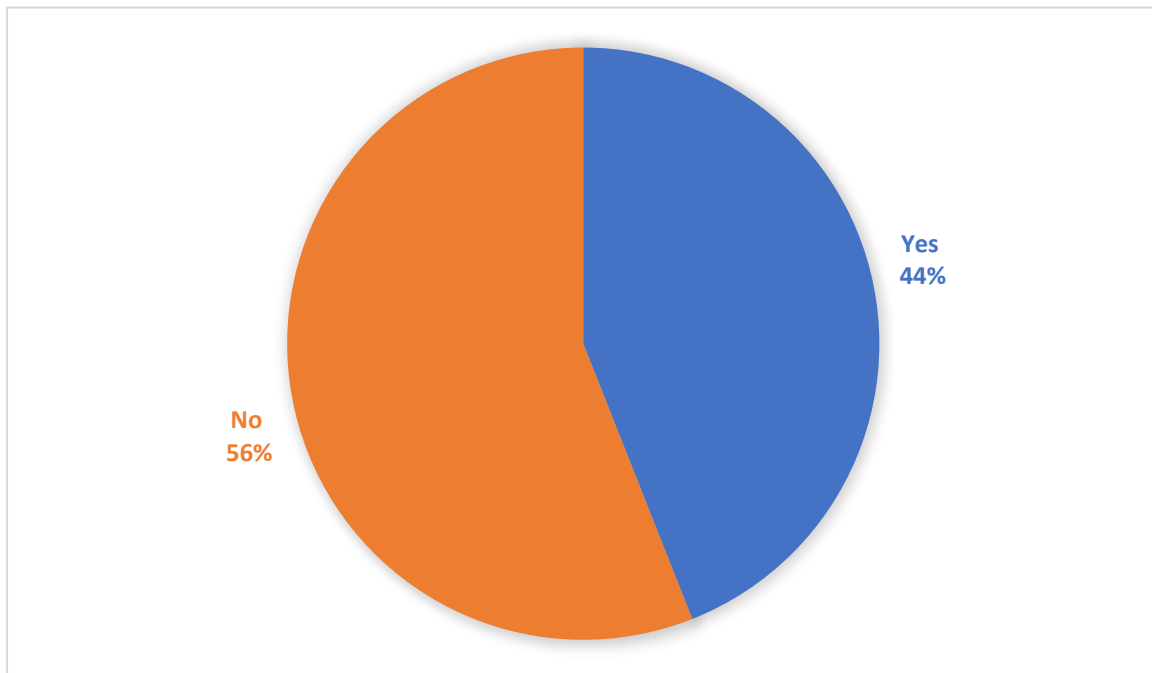


Comments

The comments included:

- that the needs of the local community need to be addressed;
- the requirements of individuals with Pets in homeless accommodation;
- availability of the right type of accommodation in the right location;
- lack of suitable temporary accommodation in the borough;
- limited power for the Council to have an impact on housing and support services as need national policy changes.

Q2. Do you feel there are any other strategic priorities that should be incorporated into the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy?

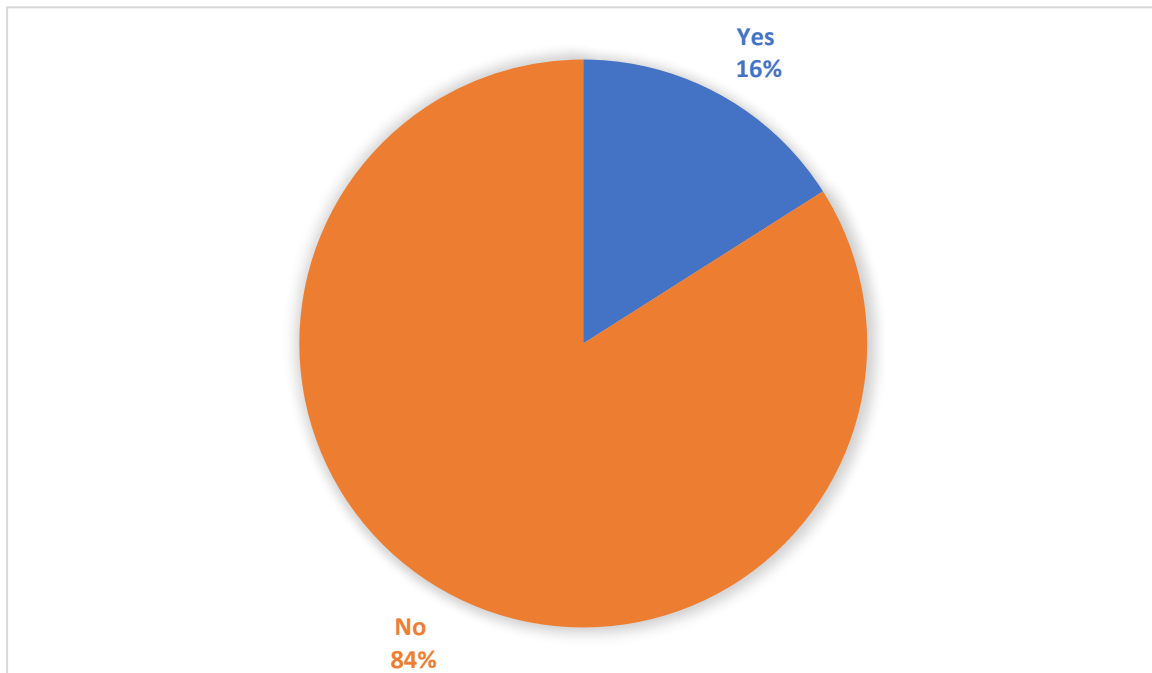


Comments

The comments included:

- use of diverse housing methods;
- more focus on need and types of housing;
- increase social rent properties that are affordable to the local community;
- improve infrastructure as well as increasing houses esp. schools and health provision.

Q3. Do you feel this strategy has an adverse impact on any groups or individuals due to age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, ethnicity, religion or belief, gender or sexual orientation?



Comments

The comments included:

- Difficulty low paid workers have accessing housing;
- Prison releases tend to be younger males and therefore this cohort needs to be considered in future policies.

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Cabinet Meeting	
Meeting Date	10 th July 2019
Report Title	Authority to complete contract documentation for two parking services
Cabinet Member	Cllr Roger Truelove, Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance
SMT Lead	Emma Wiggins, Director of Regeneration
Head of Service	Martyn Cassell, Head of Commissioning, Environment and Leisure
Lead Officer	Martyn Cassell, Head of Commissioning, Environment and Leisure
Key Decision	Yes
Classification	Open
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To approve the award of contract for cash collection services to Contract Security Services Ltd. 2. To approve the award of contract for cashless parking solution to Cobalt Telephone Technologies Ltd. 3. To delegate authority to the Head of Commissioning, Environment and Leisure and Head of Legal, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Environment to complete the contract award.

1 Purpose of Report and Executive Summary

- 1.1 During a recent review of historic contracts, it has become apparent that two services contracted on behalf of Swale Borough Council did not receive the relevant authority as per our contract standing orders.
- 1.2 The report details the reasons, summarises the services that have been contracted and requests Cabinet approval in order to allow completion of the contracts.

2 Background

- 2.1 Contract standing orders (CSOs) form part of the Swale Borough Council constitution and are there to ensure consistent and transparent processes are followed when spending public money. These CSOs are regularly reviewed to remain in line with national legislation and were last approved by General Purposes Committee on 21/3/2018. The current threshold for contracts requiring Cabinet approval is £100,000.

- 2.2 Swale Borough Council formed a 'Parking Partnership' with Maidstone Borough Council in 2011. This resulted in the sharing of staff, consolidation of procedures and economies of scale in commissioning outsourced contracts such as civil parking enforcement, cash collection and alternative pay and display payment methods.
- 2.3 CSOs across the two authorities differ and therefore approvals for two existing services were assumed to be given by Maidstone using their CSOs. However given the contracts required separate agreements with each Council, legal services are unable to complete the contracts without the relevant authority being received at Swale. Both contracts are being delivered already and so this report aims to retrospectively award the authority to award the contracts.
- 2.4 The Cash Collection contract was discussed and tendered by the Kent Buyers Consortium (an informal group of finance/procurement officers from each Kent authority) and started in January 2017. There is an overarching agreement (signed by Maidstone BC as lead authority) entering into a 5-year contract ending 8th January 2022 with the possibility of two further annual extensions.
- 2.5 The Cash Collection service supports two SBC departments. Principally the largest part of the contract value is the collection of cash from our 37 pay and display machines around the Borough at a cost of £50,716 per annum (plus indexation) over a 5-year contract. This equates to approx. 2% of pay and display income. The second element of the contract provides a regular collection of cash and cheques from Swale House for the finance section at a cost of £6,370 per annum (plus indexation) over the 5 years.
- 2.6 The second contract is that of the alternative payment supplier for our car parks. Cobalt Telephone Technologies Ltd offer a cashless payment option for car parking charges via their RingGo app and telephone payments. Maidstone procurement team tendered the opportunity for this in May 2017 and as per public procurement legislation, Cobalt provided the most economically advantageous tender from the five submitted.
- 2.7 The RingGo solution scored highest on price and quality and was awarded the contract for three years ending in July 2020 plus a possible one-year extension subject to satisfactory performance.
- 2.8 This contract is different to most as there is no actual cost to the Council. The industry standard for cashless payments normally include a convenience charge just for using the service to customers, however the Swale agreement with RingGo removes this charge and our customers only pay the standard tariff applied to each car park. RingGo then make their income from charging add-on fees to the Council's standard hourly parking fee such as text message reminders and extension periods to save them returning to their car to put another ticket on.

Customers can opt out of these if they wish. Payment all goes through to SBC accounts and we then pay the add-on amounts to Cobalt monthly.

- 2.10 The use of cashless payments has been well received by customers and is on the rise now accounting for 20% of all car parking payments. One of the key advantages of this solution is that the vast majority of public car parks in the county use RingGo meaning residents can travel outside the Borough and still use the same cashless parking solution.

3 Proposals

- 3.1 Given that the two contracts are already being delivered and this was a historic administrative error, it is proposed that authority is given to the Head of Commissioning, Environment and Leisure and Head of legal Services to complete the contract documentation.

4 Alternative Options

- 4.1 Members could decide to not provide authority. This will mean that the Council would need to terminate the current arrangements and have no way of emptying parking machines or removing cash/cheques from Swale House and no alternative method of payment for parking fees. There may be legal challenge from the companies as they entered into the arrangements in good faith, following the correct national procurement procedures and have been providing the service in return for payment. The error was in our local CSOs procedures. A tender exercise would need to be undertaken for both services immediately which will take additional officer resource. Both contracts are up for renewal in the next few years.
- 4.2 Continue as currently with no formal contract in place. This is not recommended as if there was to be a dispute with the contractor it would be more difficult to hold them to account and likely end up in a lengthy legal case.

5 Consultation Undertaken or Proposed

- 5.1 Consultation has been held with other authorities who confirm they are also happy with the services being delivered.
- 5.2 The issue has been discussed with the new administration members.

6 Implications

Issue	Implications
Corporate Plan	The decision to award these two contracts support plan objectives.
Financial, Resource and Property	The cost of the cash collection contract is already covered within the base budget and represents a small part of the overall parking budget. The cashless parking payment contract has no cost to the Council. Payments are made to the contractor to 'reimburse' the fees

	collected on their behalf.
Legal, Statutory and Procurement	<p>Councils are required to procure their services utilising the Public Procurement Regulations 2015. Both tender processes followed these regulations.</p> <p>The Council's constitution requires all contracts over £100,000 in value to obtain Cabinet authority, this report aims to resolve the error in local procedures.</p>
Crime and Disorder	Not applicable
Environment and Sustainability	Not applicable
Health and Wellbeing	Not applicable
Risk Management and Health and Safety	Not applicable
Equality and Diversity	All of the traditional methods of payment are available in our pay and display car parks. The cashless parking solution purely provides an alternative method of payment.
Privacy and Data Protection	<p>Both contracts are covered by our standard terms and conditions.</p> <p>RingGo users are bound by the company's data protection terms and not Swale Borough Council's.</p>

Recommendation for approval

Local Plan Panel – 6 June 2019

Minute No. 38 - Local Plan Review - Open session for Councillors to make suggestions and to put forward ideas to be taken into account in the Local Plan review

(1) That officers take note of the comments made by the Local Plan Panel in bringing forward evidence base work and in the preparation of the Local Plan review.

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Recommendations for approval

Swale Joint Transportation Board – 24 June 2019

Minute No. 77 – Formal Objection to Traffic Regulation Order – Swale Amendment 1

- (a) That the proposed double yellow lines in Bell Road, Sittingbourne be progressed and that the parking situation outside of Spicer Homes be monitored.
- (b) That the proposed double yellow lines in Ridham Avenue, Sittingbourne be abandoned and the issues reported by residents be referred to the bus operator for comment.
- (c) That the proposed double yellow lines opposite Kestrel Close and Highsted Road, Sittingbourne be progressed.
- (d) That the proposed loading/unloading ban on the junction of The Mall/Nelson Street, Faversham be progressed but with the installation of a loading bay in The Mall or double yellow lines across the side entrance to the business in Nelson Street, depending on the preferred option from the nearby business.
- (e) That the proposed double yellow lines on the private land off Orchard Place, Faversham be progressed and the comments received from the residents be passed to the land owners for possible liaison with residents.

Minute No. 78 Proposed Amendments to Waiting Restrictions– Conyer Road, Teynham

- (1) That the results of the recent information consultation on the proposed removal of the single yellow line on the east side of Conyer Road, Teynham and extension of the existing double yellow lines on the west of the road be noted and the proposed amendments be progressed through a Traffic Regulation Order.

Minute No. 79 – Proposed Single Yellow Line – Lyndhurst Grove, Sittingbourne

- (1) That the results of the recent information consultation on a proposed yellow line in Lyndhurst Grove, Sittingbourne be noted and that Officers abandon the proposals.

Minute No. 80 – Capel Road, Sittingbourne

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted and that, considering the previous high number of consultations undertaken in Capel Road, no further action be taken at the present time.

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