

Business Rates Retention (Pilot) – Update (31/12/19)

Final Decision-Maker	Policy & Resources Committee
Lead Head of Service	Mark Green, Director of Finance and Business Improvement
Lead Officer and Report Author	Chris Hartgrove, Interim Head of Finance
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

Income generated from Business Rates growth and retained locally as part of the Business Rates Retention (BRR) pilot in 2018/19 exceeded original expectations with the "Financial Sustainability Fund" (FSF) eventually accumulating total funding of £1,130,000 compared to the £640,000 initially anticipated.

The Policy and Resources Committee (the Committee) opted to fund 13 (one-off) projects aimed at enhancing the Council's strategic objectives from the originally assumed FSF funding of £640,000.

The surplus in the FSF – supplemented by a 2018/19 budget surplus – has subsequently allowed the Committee (at its June 2019 meeting) to approve an additional 16 (one-off) projects aimed at further enhancing the Council's strategic objectives.

The Committee has received a series of updates on the original 13 projects and the purpose of this report is to provide a further update on the original ("2018/19") projects as well as informing the Committee of progress on the additional ("2019/20") projects.

Paragraph 2.5 shows that positive progress continues with the 2018/19 projects. As at 31st December 2019, spending of £417,500 had been incurred against the original budget of £640,000. Final expenditure of £621,000 is forecast, resulting in a surplus of £19,000 (anticipated in funding the 2019/20 projects). Updated detail is included at **Appendix 1**.

Paragraph 2.14 shows that – as expected (with projects receiving approval 26th June 2019) – as at 31st December 2019, spending on the 2019/20 projects has been relatively limited (at £75,300). Nevertheless positive progress is being made across all 16 projects (which is summarised in **Appendix 2**).

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

1. That the Committee notes the further progress with the 2018/19 BRR pilot projects (Paragraph 2.5, including **Appendix 1**).
2. That the Committee notes the progress with the 2019/20 BRR pilot projects (Paragraph 2.14, including **Appendix 2**).

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Policy & Resources Committee	24 January 2018
Policy & Resources Committee	28 March 2018 (approval of 2018/19 projects)
Policy & Resources Committee	24 July 2018 (update)
Policy & Resources Committee	23 January 2019 (update)
Policy & Resources Committee	24 April 2019 (update)
Member Briefing	13 June 2019
Policy & Resources Committee	26 June 2019 (approval of 2019/20 additional projects)
Policy & Resources Committee	23 July 2019 (update)
Policy & Resources Committee	23 October 2019
Policy & Resources Committee	22 January 2020

Business Rates Retention (Pilot) – Update (31/12/19)

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	Accepting the recommendations will continue to improve the Council’s ability to achieve its corporate priorities (with each individual project tailored and focussed on a minimum of at least one of the Strategic Plan’s four objectives).	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
Cross Cutting Objectives	The projects in the report support the achievement of the Council’s cross-cutting objectives (e.g. the “Go Green, Go Wild” project will help to ensure that “Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected”).	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
Risk Management	See Section 5 below.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
Financial	The subject of the report.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
Staffing	The delivery of some of the projects in the report requires the recruitment or procurement of additional staff resources. In recognising that the funding source does not form part of the Council’s core funding and is ‘one-off’ in nature, the financial risk is being balanced through the recruitment of temporary posts and/or alternative ways of procuring additional staff resources (e.g. through flexible working by existing members of staff).	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
Legal	The Council has a statutory obligation to set a balanced budget. Allocation of resources in the way set out in this report supports achievement of a balanced budget.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Privacy and Data Protection	None.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
Equalities	Where appropriate, Equalities Impact Assessments (EIAs) have been carried out.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
Public Health	A number of Business Rates Retention Pilot projects are having a positive impact on the population's health or that of individuals.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
Crime and Disorder	A range of projects could have an indirect impact on crime and disorder (e.g. community and development-related initiatives often include 'in-built' positive crime and disorder 'spin offs'). More directly, the Domestic Abuse Awareness project is directly aimed at reducing a specific area of crime.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement
Procurement	The procurement of services in the course of delivering the projects will continue to be undertaken in accordance with the Council's Procurement Procedure Rules.	Director of Finance & Business Improvement

2. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Members of the Committee will recall that the Kent Business Rates Pool (joined by Medway, Dover and Sevenoaks) was successful in a bid to become a 100% Business Rate Retention (BRR) pilot for 2018/19, meaning that 100% of Business Rates growth could be retained in the area, with the Government Levy requirement removed completely.
- 2.2 Locally it was decided that additional income generated from Business Rates growth was to be split 70:30 between a "Financial Sustainability Fund" (FSF) and a "Housing and Commercial Growth Fund" (HCGF). This report covers the FSF.

Financial Sustainability Fund (FSF): Original Allocation

- 2.3 The overall FSF is shared between Pool/Pilot members (to spend as they wish) comprising a basic allocation, enhanced by relative population and historic Business Rates growth.

- 2.4 The original Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) share of the FSF assumed for 2018/19 was £640,000. Consequently – in March 2018 – the Policy and Resources Committee agreed to fund 13 (one-off) projects aimed at enhancing the Council’s strategic objectives.
- 2.5 The projects were divided into tranches and funding for each tranche was released as soon as it was considered prudent to do so (as the level of Business Rates retained met or exceeded original forecasts) with regular updates provided to this Committee throughout 2018/19. The table below summarises the latest (financial) position (as at 31st December 2019) on those original projects (further detail is provided at Appendix 1).

MBC Business Rates Retention/FSF Projects 2018/19 (@ 31st December 2019)					
Ref.	Project	Budget	Spend	Forecast	Variance
		£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
1	Housing First and Rough Sleepers	80	5.7	80	0
2	Regeneration Opportunity Areas	80	80	80	0
3	Property Asset Review	55	55	55	0
4	Members' Community Grant	60	46	46	14
5	Predictive Analytics and Preventing Homelessness	80	80	80	0
6	Housing Delivery Partnership	40	23.5	40	0
7	Go Green, Go Wild	90	40	90	0
8	Maidstone Business Capital of Kent – marketing strategy	35	35	35	0
9	Staplehurst Village Centre Masterplan	15	0.4	15	0
10	Maidstone Housing Design Guide	40	18.3	40	0
11	Electric Vehicle Charging Points	20	20	20	0
12	Bus Station Improvement – feasibility study	10	10	10	0
13	Data analytics for Inclusive Growth	35	3.6	30	5
Totals		640	417.5	621	19

- 2.6 The table shows continued progress in delivering the initial (2018/19) projects, with a projected saving of £19,000 against the original budget of £640,000. Further detail on progress is summarised in **Appendix 1**.

Financial Sustainability Fund (FSF): Additional Projects

- 2.7 As previously reported to this Committee, the level of Business Rates retained in 2018/19 consistently exceeded expectations throughout the year, with the MBC share of the FSF eventually reaching £1,130,000 by year end, rather than the original assumption of £640,000. The FSF shares for all Pool members was bolstered by the savings realised as a consequence of the 'nil Levy' requirement for 100% Pilot schemes.

- 2.8 The enhanced FSF allocation for MBC provided an opportunity to fund additional (one-off) projects in further support of the Council's strategic priorities, including potentially new priorities contained within the updated Strategic Plan (2019-2045) adopted in February 2019.
- 2.9 Based on April 2019 projections, net additional resources of £509,000 were made available from the FSF to fund additional projects and senior officers considered up to 30 different projects, with a shortlist of 15 projects (total value of circa £700,000) eventually drawn up by the Corporate Leadership Team (CLT) and considered by councillors at a Briefing held on 13th June 2019.
- 2.10 A positive consensus emerged from the Briefing with all projects receiving at least some support from councillors. Consequently it was agreed that officers would further develop and prioritise the short-listed proposals, including giving consideration as to how the potential funding gap (due to a resource requirement in excess of £509,000) might be bridged.
- 2.11 The project list was reviewed and re-prioritised as requested by councillors with 'inward facing' projects removed from the FSF proposals and funded from other sources.
- 2.12 The Policy and Resources Committee – at its meeting on 26th June 2019 – subsequently considered proposals to fund up to 13 projects (total value £667,950), including the option to draw on additional funds to meet any potential shortfall in resources in the FSF (e.g. from the anticipated budget surplus for 2018/19). The Committee approved funding for all 13 projects (subject to reduced funding for one project – "Arterial Route Improvements/A20"), along with three further projects, that were proposed and debated during the meeting.
- 2.13 The 16 finally approved projects entailed a total budget requirement of £676,700 (£167,700 in excess of the FSF surplus); as reported to the Policy and Resources Committee on 23rd July 2019, the necessary additional funding was identified by the Director of Finance and Business Improvement from the 2018/19 Budget Surplus and the unused Business Rates Pool Safety Net.

2.14 The table below summarises the latest (financial) position (as at 31st December 2019) on the additional (2019/20) projects.

MBC Business Rates Retention/FSF Projects 2019/20 (@ 31st December 2019)					
Ref.	Project	Budget	Spend	Forecast	Variance
		£000's	£000's	£000's	£000's
1	Arterial Route Improvements (A20)	74	40	74	0
2	CCTV Live Monitoring (Waste Collection)	30	0	30	0
3	Go Green Go Wild (Community Fund)	20	0	20	0
4	Lower High Street Master Plan	80	0	80	0
5	Archbishop's Palace Options Appraisal	60	10	60	0
6	Phoenix Park Regeneration	75	0	75	0
7	Invicta Park Planning Guidance	15	0	15	0
8	Inclusion Through Enterprise	67.5	10.5	67.5	0
9	Cycle Parking Infrastructure	60	4	60	0
10	Floodlighting for Jubilee Field, Staplehurst	36	0	36	0
11	Domestic Abuse Awareness	6.2	1.6	6.2	0
12	Climate Change Commission	40	6.2	40	0
13	Urban Trees	50	0	50	0
14	St Philips Community Centre	17	0	17	0
15	Conservation Area Plans	24	3	24	0
16	'A Sense of Place'	22	0	22	0
Totals		676.7	75.3	676.7	0

2.15 The table above shows that project expenditure to date has been relatively limited, which reflects that approval to proceed was given by the Policy and Resources on 26th June 2019. Nevertheless there has been significant progress in developing the approved projects, which is summarised in **Appendix 2**.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 This report is for noting only.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 This report is for noting only.

5. RISK

5.1 As with any projects, those described in this report could fail to be delivered, or could be delivered but exceed their budget allocations. This risk is mitigated in several ways:

- There is a strong project management culture in the Council
- Monitoring arrangements will be put in place for all the projects, to ensure that they deliver within budget and to the agreed timetable; and
- Post project reviews will be carried out to evaluate the outcomes and to derive any lessons learned from the projects.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

6.1 Following the conclusion of a member consultation exercise – on 28th March 2018 – the Policy and Resources Committee approved the original funding of 13 (one-off) BRR projects with a total value of £640,000 from the Financial Sustainability Fund.

6.2 The Policy and Resources Committee received an update report on progress on the BRR initiative on 24th April 2019, which indicated that Business Rates growth had exceeded expectations and that additional resources would be available to fund additional projects in 2019/20.

6.3 All councillors were invited to attend a Briefing on 13th June 2019 to consider a short-list of project bids for additional resources of £509,000. Feedback from that Briefing was used to inform the content of a further report (recommending a further 13 projects) to the Policy and Resources Committee on 26th June 2019.

6.4 The Policy & Resources Committee held on 26th June 2019, approved funding for all 13 projects (subject to reduced funding for one project – “Arterial Route Improvements/A20”), along with three further projects, that were proposed and debated during the meeting.

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

7.1 The projects described in this report will continue to be delivered during 2019/20 with regular reports back to the Committee on progress.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

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

- **Appendix 1:** *Business Rates Retention (BRR) Pilot Projects 2018/19: Progress Commentary (@ 31st December 2019)*
 - **Appendix 2:** *Business Rates Retention (BRR) Pilot Projects 2019/20: Progress Commentary (projects approved 26th June 2019)*
-

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

9.1 There are no background papers.

**Business Rates Retention (BRR) Pilot Projects 2018/19
Progress Commentary (@ 31st December 2019)**

Ref.	Project	Commentary
1	Housing First and Rough Sleepers	<p>The project successfully delivered eight tenancies providing a Housing First approach during 2019/20 with Golding Homes and MHS.</p> <p>The project was the winner for this year's 'Excellence in Partnership Award' by Kent Housing Group.</p> <p>The project is looking to expand over the coming year by taking on more rough sleepers into social and private rented tenancies – including looking</p> <p>Project effectively completed (residual funding available to cover potential landlord losses at the end of current tenancies).</p> <p>PROJECT COMPLETED</p>
2	Regeneration Opportunity Areas	<p>Draft planning briefs have been drawn up for the five opportunity area sites identified as having potential for regeneration. The briefs were considered by the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee (SPI) at its meeting in September 2019 and a further report was brought to SPI in November 2019, addressing points raised and were agreed subject to modifications. The finished documents will be published by the end of January 2020.</p>
3	Property Asset Review	<p>The Gen2 Property Asset Review was carried out last year, with progress regularly reported to members on the implementation of the recommendations. The balance of the funding has been used to implement the findings and to develop an Asset Management Strategy (AMS) that will guide the management of the Council's asset portfolio going forwards and will be brought to Policy and Resources Committee in February / March 2020.</p> <p>PROJECT COMPLETED</p>
4	Members' Community Grant	<p>2018/19 initiative concluded. Underspend (£14,000) utilised to fund additional FSF projects.</p> <p>2019/20 allocation (£60,000) funded from base budget.</p> <p>PROJECT COMPLETED</p>

Ref.	Project	Commentary
5	Predictive Analytics and Preventing Homelessness	<p>The project delivered on the targets, with the predictive analytics module becoming live during 2019/20.</p> <p>The toolkit is now providing information to the Housing Team to enhance their ability to assist homeless clients and to enable contact to be made with those most at risk of becoming homeless.</p> <p>PROJECT COMPLETED</p>
6	Housing Partnership Delivery	<p>The exploratory phase of this work stream ended when the Communities, Housing and Environment (CHE) Committee on 17th September 2019, opted to stall the creation of the HDP for the time being, but instead seek a Secretary of State direction to develop / acquire up to 200 new social rented homes on smaller developments (at a value of not more than £30m over the 5-year MTFS period). This financial commitment is now being formally proposed in the revised MBC Capital Programme, and the Regeneration and Economic Development department are mobilising to roll out the delivery of the programme. As such, no further exploratory work will be undertaken on this element of the project.</p> <p>However, the second element of the project remains ongoing, that of the production and adoption of the Affordable Housing and Local Needs Supplementary Planning Guidance document, that is now approximately 75% complete, and being undertaken by Adams Integra. This work stream should reach its conclusion during Q2 (June – September 2019) of the next financial year.</p>
7	Go Green, Go Wild	<p>Wide ranging activity has already taken place across the borough at sites including Mangravet Recreation Ground, Senacre Wood and Weaving Heath, in partnership with a number of community groups.</p> <p>The Community Partnership Officer has supported and enabled tree planting events including 600 trees in Mangravet & 600 trees in South Park. The first community group networking event was held at Maidstone Museum.</p> <p>Ten local groups have been supported with funding.</p> <p>The wildflower meadow project won the DEFRA Award for Pollinator Project – ‘Bees Needs’.</p>

Ref.	Project	Commentary
8	Maidstone Business Capital of Kent – marketing strategy	<p>The Council sponsored and exhibited at a series of property industry expos in October 2019 – including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kent Construction Expo on the 4th October – where the Council sponsored the events breakfast giving the opportunity to deliver a ‘Welcome to Maidstone: Development opportunities in the business capital of Kent’ presentation to regional property and construction leaders; and • “MIPIM UK” on 13th and 14th October 2019 (the UK’s premier Property Conference) sponsored and delivered a workshop on Maidstone’s development opportunities – including the Innovation Centre – to national and international investors , and property leaders. <p>The Inward Investment video has been completed.</p> <p>A planned Business Forum for the 28th November 2019 has been rescheduled to the 27th January 2020, due to Purdah.</p>
9	Staplehurst Village Centre Masterplan	<p>Sainsbury’s have confirmed that they will be progressing with the development of the identified site. Communication has gone out to village residents.</p> <p>Chancery Gate have confirmed that they are not interested in progressing commercial space development unless the price is very small to make it viable, given the size of the potential market.</p> <p>The EDO is still progressing contacting the land-owners and Network Rail regarding station improvement.</p>
10	Maidstone Housing Design Guide	<p>The Maidstone Design Guide is a collection of documents. The first (“Maidstone Building for Life 12”) was completed and adopted in 2018/19. Work is now set to commence on the other design documents and a member design tour (along with Medway Council) of developments in south London and Ebbsfleet has recently taken place.</p>
11	Electric Vehicle Charging Points	<p>Survey work by UK Power Networks was completed following procurement where PodPoint were identified as the preferred supplier.</p> <p>Electric Vehicle (EV) unit installations commenced in July 2019 and all EV units have now been installed at key car park locations throughout Maidstone Town Centre.</p> <p>PROJECT COMPLETED</p>

Ref.	Project	Commentary
12	Bus Station Improvement – feasibility study	<p>Permission from Capital and Regional to carry out asbestos and M&E surveys received at the end of December 2019. This has to delays as designs cannot be progressed until the surveys are complete. Surveys now anticipated to take place in January 2020.</p> <p>Stakeholder design review is due in February 2020, and is to be presented to the ERL Committee at the end of March 2020. Public information sessions are planned after this, with submission to Planning expected in mid-May, with a decision expected in July 2020.</p> <p>PROJECTED COMPLETED (FEASIBILITY STAGE)</p>
13	Data analytics for Inclusive Growth	<p>This project is part of the “Borough that works for Everyone” initiative which has a Project Plan and Project Board in place.</p> <p>A Data Analytics Officer (DAO) was originally appointed and created a Central Data Repository, as well as compiling detailed thematic reports and case studies to identify particular themes/problems to be addressed in the borough relating to inclusive growth. Findings have been presented to the Project Board and Wider Leadership Team (WLT)</p> <p>The DAO also completed a data mapping exercise as well and has begun the development of metrics to measure project progress.</p> <p>It was reported at the Quarter 2 stage that the DAO was recruited to the role on a permanent basis. However, the new appointee subsequently left the Council at the start of Quarter 3.</p> <p>A new DAO – scheduled to start in January 2020 – has been recruited, and is responsible for continuing to develop the metrics to measure project progress alongside the development of an action plan.</p>

Business Rates Retention (BRR) Pilot Projects 2019/20
Progress Commentary (*projects approved 26th June 2019*)

Ref.	Project	Early Progress
1	Arterial Route Improvements (A20) (renamed "Maidstone Approach Improvements" project).	<p>The project is now called the "Maidstone Approach Improvements".</p> <p>The cleansing and new planting has now been completed. Painting of utility boxes and street-light columns is due to be carried out in dry weather over the next month or two. The Communities, Housing and Environment (CHE) Committee has agreed the installation of heritage features including new welcome signage, a dinosaur sculpture and tree carvings. This work is due to be completed in the next few months with the launch in May / June 2020.</p>
2	CCTV Live Monitoring (Waste Collection)	The commitment has been given to Biffa and they have placed the order for the equipment. There is a 6-8 week lead time on the cameras so the cameras are now due to be installed at the end of January 2020.
3	Go Green Go Wild (Community Fund)	New "Go Wilder" grant scheme launched at an event in November 2019 investing up to £20k in groups to improve biodiversity and community engagement.
4	Lower High Street Master Plan	Specification still under development. Work on the Archbishop's Palace project (see below) and the acquisition of Lockmeadow have highlighted the importance of developing good links between the Town Centre and these locations, so that they can be better integrated with the rest of Maidstone. The Lower High Street area is critical to this, so developing these links will inform the specification for the Master Plan.
5	Archbishop's Palace Options Appraisal	An initial options appraisal has been prepared and market research is underway to gauge market demand and financial viability of each option.
6	Phoenix Park Regeneration	The tender is scheduled to be out by April 2020 and a planning application is being submitted for new signage.
7	Invicta Park Planning Guidance	We plan to use BRR funding to develop a planning brief for this site during the course of 2020. The Ministry of Defence has appointed consultants and we will liaise with them to ensure that their work is in alignment with the evolving planning brief.

Ref.	Project	Early Progress
8	Inclusion Through Enterprise	<p>Negotiations are progressing well to identify a suitable venue for the project which we hope will be an MBC commercial property. We have also engaged support of Mid-Kent legal to help progress the aspiration of becoming a charity organisation thus being able to apply for grants in the future.</p> <p>Discussions continue to take place with the client group to explore options for the scheme.</p> <p>An officer has been appointed to lead the project and is now in post. This will help to stimulate the initiative and provide the capacity to rapidly make progress.</p>
9	Cycle Infrastructure Parking	<p>A scoping has been arranged “Sustrans” (a sustainable transport charity) to identify the appropriate elements to include within the survey of locations.</p> <p>Alongside this, initial meetings have been held with bike hire companies to understand costs and different approaches, as well as employers such as Maidstone Hospital, to understand the potential uptake of bike hire at these locations.</p> <p>KCC and others due to contribute to the scheme on top of the BRR grant.</p>
10	Floodlighting for Jubilee Field, Staplehurst	<p>The football club’s bid to the Football Foundation was delayed in October 2019 but was submitted in January 2020 and a decision is imminent. Match funding of £13k from a local Section 106 agreement has also been assigned to the project.</p> <p>The £36,000 match funding from MBC has been released to Staplehurst Parish Council to facilitate the smooth payment of invoices. The overall project of floodlights, fencing and standing area involves a number of contractors. To project manage those works and ensure an efficient process the parish council is going to manage the payments to contractors. MBC officers are monitoring these payments to ensure the funding is used in accordance with the Financial Sustainability Fund bid.</p>

Ref.	Project	Early Progress
11	Domestic Abuse Awareness	<p>Despite an intense marketing campaign – including Twitter, Facebook, Parish websites, one to one visits and other methods – for the “Cut It Out” Hairdresser event scheduled for 28th October, it was cancelled due a lack of attendees; it would not have achieved the original aims. Moving forward it has been decided to deliver presentations to Mid Kent Hair and Beauty School, Saks Hair Academy and to visit hairdressers individually and discuss the DA Awareness Campaigns; approximately 300 hairdressers will be reached this way.</p> <p>Research indicates that Community Champions have proven the most effective in other areas, most notably the ‘Dragonfly’ project in Dorset. Training members of the community to recognise the signs of DA and the help available to victims of DA, will be the approach moving forwards.</p>
12	Climate Change Commission	<p>A Councillor Working Group has been set up to lead the project and work is underway. An additional officer (on a one-year fixed-term contract) was appointed in November 2019 to manage the project.</p> <p>An update report on the Climate Change initiative will be presented to the Policy & Resources Committee in February 2020.</p>
13	Urban Trees	<p>The Urban Tree Challenge Fund (UTCF) is available for two years (2019/20 and 2020/21). Year 1 funding is only available for ‘block bids’ for which Maidstone does not qualify. Year 2 applications are aimed at local authority and community group applications.</p> <p>An Expression of Interest form was submitted to the Forestry Commission on 25th July 2019. Confirmation of receipt has been received. The Council is now waiting for further clarification on the fund for individual bids.</p>
14	St Philips Community Centre	<p>Work is under way developing plans for the Community Centre.</p>
15	Conservation Area Plans	<p>Work on the project commenced early October 2019 and is being resourced through extending the working hours of a (temporary) Conservation Officer.</p>

Ref.	Project	Early Progress
16	'A Sense of Place'	<p>The project is a key action in the updated Arts and Cultural Strategy, which was approved by the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee (ERL) in November 2019.</p> <p>A Culture & Arts Officer has been allocated lead responsibility for project delivery and the ('Sense of Place') report is expected to be commissioned circa January 2020.</p> <p>Quotes are currently being obtained from agencies with potential to deliver the project.</p>