

COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CABINET ADVISORY BOARD

Wednesday, 11 November 2020

**Present: Councillor Jane March (Chairman)
Councillors Mackonochie (Vice-Chairman), Fairweather, Ms Palmer, Simmons,
Thomson, Bruneau, Ellis, Rutland, Hill and Pope**

Officers in Attendance: James Cox, Jane Lang (Housing Services Manager), Sue Oliver (Environmental Health Officer), Gary Stevenson (Head of Housing, Health and Environment), Paul Taylor (Director of Change and Communities) and Emer Moran (Democratic Services Officer)

Other Members in Attendance: Councillors Atkins and Scott

APOLOGIES

COM1/20 There were no apologies received.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

COM2/20 There were no declarations of interest made.

NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS WISHING TO SPEAK

COM3/20 Mr Jeremy Thompson, Chairman of Friends of the Memorial Playing Field Paddock Wood registered to speak on agenda item COM6/20 Five Year Plan Update.

Councillors Hamilton and Scott also registered to speak on agenda item COM6/20 Five Year Plan Update.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED 19 FEBRUARY 2020

COM4/20 Members had the opportunity to review the minutes.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting dated 19 February 2020 be approved as a correct record.

FORWARD PLAN AS AT 26 OCTOBER 2020

COM5/20 **RESOLVED:** That the Forward Plan as at 26 October 2020, be noted.

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT POLICY

COM6/20 Ms Sue Oliver, Environmental Health Officer introduced her report which outlined the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy 2020 – 2025.

Members of the Committee took account of the report and raised a number of questions and issues within their discussions. Points raised included:

- Members considered the report to be clear and were happy with it.
- Members were pleased that Citizens Advice Bureau were involved.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Cabinet Advisory Board supports the recommendations in the report.

FIVE YEAR PLAN UPDATE

COM7/20 Mr Paul Taylor, Director of Change and Communities presented his report which considered the current social and economic context that the Council operated in, and how this affected the Council's ability to strategically plan in the short and medium term. The report set out the thought around how the immediate crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic was dealt with and the plans in place to deal with this in the short to medium term (12-24 months); highlighted the remaining plans for delivering out the viable projects within the existing Five Year Plan; set out new future priorities, and considered how the Council could establish an evidence base to support potential future plans or projects.

Councillor McDermott reminded Members the report had been written by politicians to help and assist Officers with the future plans of the Council and that all political questions should be relayed to Councillor McDermott and specific Five Year Plan questions to Mr Taylor.

Jeremy Thompson, Chairman of Friends of The Memorial Playing Field in Paddock Wood registered to speak and points raised included:

- That the Friends of the Memorial Playing Field fully support a new Community Centre in Paddock Wood.
- The residents of Paddock Wood voted in the Parish Poll held on 15 January 2019 that the Memorial Playing Field was not the right site for a new Community Centre.
- It was asked that the statement 3.10 had the words "on the Memorial Field" removed as that was not correct as no planning application had been submitted to date.
- It was requested that the Committee found out from Paddock Wood Town Council what their plans are should the planning application fail.

Councillor David Scott registered to speak and points raised included:

- Thanks was given to the officers and the cabinet for the work they had done in preparing this document during the Council's response to Covid-19 and all that entailed.
- It was important to Understand and take into account the demographic changes, growth in people, a low share of 19 to 35 year olds, increase of over 65, estimated to reach 25%. Slower growth in house but faster increase in house prices than neighbouring boroughs.
- The inclusion of Light Electric Vehicles in the plan was welcomed as it was important to have more people into our town centres but not in cars.
- There was a need to boost the attractiveness of our town centres.
- The organisation of a Summer festival in Royal Tunbridge Wells and elsewhere in the Borough would help use the broad range of local talent and attract people to local businesses and would lead to a boost in the moral and mood of residents, this could be targeted at 2022 but also 2021 if Covid-19 restrictions permitted.

Members of the Committee took account of the report and raised a number of questions and issues within their discussions. Points raised included:

- i. Members were in support of the wording related to the Paddock Wood Community Centre in section 3.10 of the report which stated “on the Memorial Field” being removed.
- ii. It was suggested that the “value for money” sentence in section 3.24 of the report which referred to the Assembly Hall was unfair given the current pandemic.
- iii. Members were encouraged to note that the Council was interested in a more collaborative approach to consultation.
- iv. Member’s attention was brought to page 53 of the report which outlined short term action plan to support local businesses across the borough.
- v. The current lockdown restrictions mean that the Ice-Rink could not open and environmental health were working hard to ensure that when it did open it was Covid-19 secure to protect residents safety.
- vi. Members spoke at length with regard to social and affordable housing which was addressed in both the recovery plan and through the Local Plan.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet Advisory Board supported the recommendations subject to the issues it has identified shown below being taken into account by the Cabinet.

1. That the wording related to the Paddock Wood Community Centre in paragraph 3.10 of the report which stated “on the Memorial Field”, be removed.
2. That the final sentence of paragraph 3.24 which stated “The key aim of this review will be to ensure that the Assembly Hall Theatre provides value for money for taxpayers.”, be removed.

URGENT BUSINESS

COM8/20 There was no urgent business for consideration.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

COM9/20 The next meeting was scheduled for 14 January 2021.

NOTES:

The meeting concluded at Time Not Specified.

An audio recording of this meeting is available on the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council website.