

PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION CABINET ADVISORY BOARD

Monday, 9 November 2020

**Present: Councillor Alan McDermott (Chairman)
Councillors Bland (Vice-Chairman), Bailey, Backhouse, Hamilton, Lewis, Lidstone,
Rutland and Willis**

Officers in Attendance: William Benson (Chief Executive) and Emer Moran (Democratic Services Officer)

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Atkins and Scott

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

PT1/20 The chairman opened the meeting and outlined procedural matters of the meeting.

APOLOGIES

PT2/20 There were no apologies received. Councillors Neve and Soyke were not in attendance.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

PT3/20 No declarations of interest were made.

NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS WISHING TO SPEAK

PT4/20 Mr Jeremy Thompson Chairman of the Memorial Playing Field and Councillor David Scott registered to speak on agenda item PT7/19 Five Year Plan Update.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED 13 JANUARY 2020

PT5/20 Members had the opportunity to review the minutes.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting dated 13 January 2020 be approved as a correct record.

FORWARD PLAN AS AT 26 OCTOBER 2020

PT6/20 Members had the opportunity to review the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED – That the Forward Plan as at 26 October 2020 be noted.

FIVE YEAR PLAN UPDATE

PT7/20 Mr William Benson, Chief Executive 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 Benson.

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 were given to the Economic department for the work they had done in preparing this document during the Council’s response to Covid-19 and all that entailed.
- Consideration of the changes to the population profile of Tunbridge Wells was critical.
- Tunbridge Wells housing growth over 20 years at 6.7% had been slower than national average at 7.5% and the prices had risen faster than in England generally but also in relation to the surrounding towns.
- The reference to Light Electric Vehicles in section 4.16 of the report was welcome.
- Electric Vehicles did not require significant expenditure by the Council and a system should be trialled as soon as possible and include it in the design of our streets following Covid-19.
- Councillor Scott recommended that the Committee approve this report to proceed with the proviso that the points raised were fully noted and included in the next stage of work required on this report.

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

- i. The public realm had been completed and concerns raised had been acknowledged.
- ii. It was suggested that there should have been more mention of social and affordable housing in the report due to national shortage. This was addressed and it was confirmed that affordable housing was included in both the recovery plan paragraph 216 of the report and in paragraph 4.13 where it stated that through the Local Plan there would be an increase in housing provision with the emphasis on affordable housing.
- iii. It was advised that there was dedicated plan for the regenerating

- of high streets.
- iv. Members attention was brought to section 4 of the report which dealt with proposed future priorities and the intention was to go out for consultation with those.
 - v. Members were reassured that the Council was focused on the recovery action plans to deal with the current unprecedented times and under intensive consultation set out action plan for the longer term.
 - vi. The Government had made funding streams available to tackle homelessness in the form of revenue grants and capital applications, through this the Council had been granted £330,000 to help convert properties on Crescent Road.
 - vii. It was confirmed that within the Council's financial procedure rules it was set out how the Council could apply for funding.
 - viii. In light of the current pandemic some Members felt that caution should be exercised in terms of ambitious future plans.
 - ix. Members acknowledged that there had been a shift in what the public wanted such as more emphasis on environmental and sustainable travel issues.
 - x. It was requested that when the Council consultation was rolled out to the public that it was made as user friendly as possible.
 - xi. Members were reminded that the final movement on the Five Year Plan would be at Full Council.

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 section 3.10 of the report which stated "on the Memorial Field" be removed.
2. That the concerns raised about the public realm be considered.
3. The importance of social and affordable housing be considered.
4. Reduction of diesel and petrol vehicles.
5. Improvement of highstreets.
6. That the public's Council consultation was made as user friendly as possible.

URGENT BUSINESS

PT8/20 There was no urgent business for consideration.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

PT9/20 The next meeting was scheduled for Monday 11 January 2021.

NOTE: The meeting concluded at 7.29 pm.