

## TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL

### COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CABINET ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES of the meeting held at the Council Chamber, Town Hall, Royal Tunbridge Wells, TN1 1RS, at 6.30 pm on Wednesday, 8 March 2023

#### Present:

**Councillors Pope (Vice-Chair, in the Chair), Ellis, Everitt, Fairweather, Funnell, Hill, March, Neville, Ms Palmer and White**

**Officers in Attendance:** Rebecca Bowers (Health Improvement Team Leader), Nicky Carter (Head of HR, Customer Services and Culture), Stuart Clifton (Housing Services Manager), Dawn Gabriel (Operations and Events Manager), Terry Hughes (Community Safety Manager), Stuart Maxwell (Senior Scientific 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 Chapelard, Pound and Warne

#### CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION

COM41/22 The Chair opened the meeting and outlined procedural matters of the meeting.

#### APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

COM42/22 Apologies were received from Councillor Fitzsimmons.

#### DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

COM43/22 There were no declarations of interests made.

#### NOTIFICATION OF PERSONS WISHING TO SPEAK

COM44/22 There were no members of the public, or visiting Members registered to speak.

#### MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED WEDNESDAY 25 JANUARY 2023

COM45/22 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting dated Wednesday 25 January 2023 were a true record of the proceedings.

#### FORWARD PLAN AS AT 15 FEBRUARY 2023

COM46/22 **RESOLVED:** That the Forward Plan as at 15 February 2023, be noted.

#### COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP 2023/24

COM47/22 Councillor Nancy Warne, Cabinet Member for Rural Communities gave an overview and introduced Terry Hughes, Community Safety Manager who presented the report as per the agenda.

#### Questions from Members and Officer clarification included:

- i. It was accepted that the Police were in a position where

public confidence, was not what it could be, and the Police were working constantly and consistently to bring that back and try and get people feeling confident that they can talk and report matters.

- ii. Kent County Council (KCC) cross-referencing near miss information with their crash data was discussed.
- iii. Members had previously attended presentations on violence against women and it was confirmed that there were follow up presentations planned.
- iv. Officers considered that the removal of people from the town would not impact more on rural areas as the demand meant that someone else would come in and take their place. The audience and demand was in the town because it was more densely populated so the Police continued their work there.
- v. Members highlighted Southborough and High Brooms station with regard to antisocial behaviour from younger people, drugs and graffiti.
- vi. Members were encouraged to report all matters to the Police and that access to CCTV enabled them to create a gallery of young people in places such as Southborough, Tunbridge Wells, Paddock Wood and Cranbrook.
- vii. Graffiti cleaning kits were given to businesses to clean and Graffiti was removed as quickly as possible.
- viii. Funding had just been secured for March from the Police and Crime Commissioner for some security industry standard badged operatives to do 12 evenings during March, 4 hours per evening around our open spaces, including around the hub in Southborough, around Holden Park, around the town centre and Paddock Wood.
- ix. Over the past 12 months a considerable number of PCSOs had been let go which impacted on resourcing.
- x. The Government had provided funding to recruit Police Officers. It was advised that from June there would be 12 police officers as part of a beat team, which covered the district. It was also confirmed that there was a neighbourhood task force which included 4 police officers and 4 PCSOs, used to troubleshoot and problem-solve.
- xi. Fly tipping in rural areas was highlighted as an issue and major priority for residents and was discussed in detail. It was agreed that it was possible to capture actions related to those offences and put them under the anti-social behaviour action plan and the Police were happy to discuss with the Council further ways to problem solve because as the offenders were all using vehicles that sat well within the remit of the Police. Members of the public were encouraged to keep reporting issues.
- xii. In regards to CCTV it was advised that from a policing perspective, active monitoring was the preferred approach because there was someone there in the control room to point the cameras in the right direction. Facial recognition was also a tool used which identified criminals that were

- coming into Tunbridge Wells and travelling into Tunbridge Wells that would not normally be identified.
- xiii. Violence on buses which involved school children was raised as a concern and the Police advised that they had planned to engage with the bus companies and get some form of security on the buses and engage with the schools that the various children went to.
  - xiv. From March there was further funding expected to support GRIP which was explained as overtime to patrol areas with a particular focus upon violent behaviour. This increased officers shifts and covered night time hours.
  - xv. It was advised that part of the new policing set-up was an increase of numbers of the bespoke rural teams which allowed the Police to tap into more resources in relation to Policing rural crime.
  - xvi. A task and finish group was due to be set up as part of the domestic abuse action plan this year to try and have a one stop shop in Cranbrook as up until now the previous facility there had not been well attended.
  - xvii. It was agreed that events such as 'all out evenings' that had been successful in the past could come back on a smaller scale. That was a task that could be completed by new Community Safety Officer who was due to start in late March 2023.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the recommendations to Cabinet are supported by the Board.

#### **DRAFT AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN FOR HAWKHURST AQMA**

COM48/22 Councillor Everitt, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Carbon Reduction introduced Stuart Maxwell, Senior Scientific Officer who presented the report as per the agenda.

#### **Questions from Members and Officer clarification included:**

- i. The actions that were not included in the final action plan were confirmed and an explanation as to why they were not included was given.
- ii. Members were advised that since the deadline for publication of the report passed, Environmental Health had been made aware that DEFRA had awarded the Mid Kent Environmental Health Service in partnership with Canterbury City Council, with Tunbridge Wells Council as lead authority, a grant of £170,000 to develop an air quality resource which would be aimed at GPs and health professionals to educate them about how to protect the vulnerable patients from the dangers of air pollution. Therefore it was felt that there was scope for another action in the action plan which prioritised GP surgeries in or near AQMA example

Hawkhurst.

- iii. Members were advised that if they were minded to approve the action plan it would then be sent to DEFRA and there was the possibility that they would make some change to it albeit minor.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the recommendations to Cabinet are supported by the Board.

**LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING FUND APPLICATION**

COM49/22 Councillor Pound Cabinet Member for Housing and Planning gave an overview of the agenda item and introduced Stuart Clifton, Housing Services Manager who presented the report as per the agenda.

**Questions from Members and Officer clarification included:**

- i. Sustainability was a consideration as part of the refurbishment to the properties which ensured they had decent home standards and provided energy efficiency. This was subject to the acquisition method in terms of what refurbishments were needed to the properties to bring them into use.
- ii. The expectation of the programme was that the properties were available for the initial cohort of Ukrainian and Afghan refugees. When that cohort was no longer required, the properties were expected to remain for the local use for local residents which addressed the ongoing housing need within the borough.
- iii. It was confirmed that properties were would be acquired within the borders of the Tunbridge Wells Borough.
- iv. In terms of the size of the properties, the properties were expected to be family homes, rather than one or two bedroom flats.
- v. If the Council did not acquire the properties and advised Government that they were unable to deliver that number of units it would mean that the funding would be proportionately reduced.
- vi. This was a purely capital funded programme.
- vii. The application had gone through the Housing Advisory Panel and was agreed and it was considered to be a very good idea.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the recommendations to Cabinet are supported by the Board.

**HEALTH INEQUALITIES ACTION PLAN 2023-2025**

COM50/22 Councillor Ben Chapelard, Leader of the Council introduced Rebecca Bowers, Health Improvement Team Leader who presented the report as per the agenda.

**Questions from Members and Officer clarification included:**

- i. Officers confirmed that the old action plan had priority areas around excess winter deaths and falls prevention. The indicators around excess winter deaths and falls prevention showed it had worsened since the 2015 data, and so that was one of the indicators that was really taken into consideration when setting

that priority area and partners on the group such as Age UK who were able to contribute to those actions.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the recommendations to Cabinet are supported by the Board.

**RE-TENDER TUNBRIDGE WELLS CAR CLUB**

COM51/22 Councillor Everitt, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Carbon Reduction introduced Gary Stevenson, Head of Housing Health and Environment who presented the report as per the agenda on behalf of Karin Grey, Sustainability Manager.

**Questions from Members and Officer clarification included:**

- i. One of the reasons the report was written in that level of detail was because
- ii. the decision got called in and following research and debate it showed that although there were still car journeys, people had replaced their second car all those journeys that you might just make because you've got a car disappear and those journeys that you really need to make are the ones that used by the Car Club.
- iii. A lot of work went on behind the scenes in terms of looking for locations, with analysis car ownership, density of population, and accessibility as well as practical things such as road space.
- iv. It was confirmed that there was the opportunity to expand with further section 106 funding.
- v. The Car Club was welcomed and it was great to see it continued.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the recommendations to Cabinet are supported by the Board.

**GROUNDS MAINTENANCE CONTRACT EXTENSION**

COM52/22 Councillor Ben Chapelard, Leader of the Council gave an overview of the agenda item and introduced Gary Stevenson, Head of Housing, Health and Environment who presented the report as per the report.

**Questions from Members and Officer clarification included:**

- i. Officers were happy to look into having companies sponsor dog waste bags in the parks.
- ii. Tunbridge Wells was now classified as a city in terms of Britain in Bloom's classification and we put forward into the 2023 category of small city in the national competition next year. Officers confirmed the change in bedding was not expected to affect the gold awards previously gained, it was about the beneficial impact rather than detracting from the

- quality of the bedding.
- iii. Members raised concerns about the potential removal of dog waste bags from the parks and whether that had the potential to create a larger problem. Officers addressed this and advised that they would ensure there was a lot of education and awareness for responsible dog owners before that happened.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the recommendations to Cabinet are supported by the Board.

**THE ICE RINK**

COM53/22 Councillor Chapelard, Leader of the Council gave an overview of the agenda item and introduced Dawn Gabriel who presented the report as per the agenda.

**Questions from Members and Officer clarification included:**

- i. The top hat style marquee was addressed and Members considered that it did not make sense for the Council to buy it as it was not in good condition.
- ii. Officers advised that a different shape of marquee may detract from the visual amenity and the style chosen depended on cost however they confirmed that there was availability of other types of marquees.
- iii. Members felt it was important to note for Cabinet that a planning application in 2015 which proposed to install a Fairground at the Ice Rink came up against approximately 50 objections.
- iv. Members raised concerns about noise, lights that could cause an issue for residents if the Ferris wheel was installed.
- v. Officers advised that the Ferris wheel and Christmas rides proposed were on a smaller scale than previous proposals.
- vi. The shorter time period was welcomed.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the recommendations to Cabinet would be supported subject to a particular issue being addressed:
  - a. That there was availability for different types of marquees.
  - b. That the previous objections to a planning application in 2015 which proposed to install a Fairground at the Ice Rink, be noted.

**URGENT BUSINESS**

COM54/22 There was no urgent business for consideration.

**DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING**

COM55/22 The next meeting was scheduled for Wednesday 7 June 2023.

**EXEMPT APPENDIX A - ICE RINK**

COM56/22

NOTES:

The meeting concluded at 8.41 pm.