

**TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**Thursday, 28 October 2021**

**Present: Councillor Tom Dawlings (Chairman)  
Councillors Scott (Vice-Chairman), Bailey, Fairweather, March and McDermott**

**Officers in Attendance:** Paul Taylor (Director of Change and Communities), Jane Fineman (Head of Finance and Procurement), Gary Stevenson (Head of Housing, Health and Environment), Sue Oliver (Environmental Health Officer), Stuart Maxwell (Senior Scientific Officer), Claudette Valmond (Head of Legal Partnership and Interim Monitoring Officer) and Caroline Britt (Democratic Services Officer)

**Other Members in Attendance:**

**APOLOGIES**

CAB69/21 There were no apologies.

**DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

CAB70/21 There were no disclosable pecuniary or other significant interests declared at the meeting.

**NOTIFICATION OF PERSONS WISHING TO SPEAK**

CAB71/21 There were no Visiting Members who had registered as wishing to speak.

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED 23 SEPTEMBER 2021**

CAB72/21 Members reviewed the minutes. No amendments were proposed.

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting dated 23 September 2021 be approved as a correct record.

**QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

CAB73/21 There were no questions from members of the Council.

**QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

CAB74/21 There were no questions from members of the public.

**CONSIDERATION OF THE FORWARD PLAN AS AT 27 SEPTEMBER 2021**

CAB75/21 Members considered the plan. No amendments were proposed.

**RESOLVED** – That the Forward Plan as at 27 September 2021 be noted.

## BUDGET UPDATE REPORT 2022/23

CAB76/21 Jane Fineman, Head of Finance, Procurement and Parking introduced the report as set out in the agenda.

Discussion and questions from Members included the following:

- Projected income from car parks next year was expected to be down by £0.5m. This was considerably better than during the height of the pandemic and it was hoped it would continue to improve.
- Requests for season ticket permits were also starting to improve.
- The new Pantiles car park was due to open in the next couple of weeks which would be an additional source of income.
- The presentation on benchmarking was very informative and well received.
- The proposed co working opportunity currently being investigated by the Council would offer a new source of income.

**RESOLVED** – That Officers shall continue to work towards reducing the projected budget deficit in line with the Budget Strategy and report back in December with draft proposals prior to public consultation.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To enable Directors and Heads of Service to continue the service planning process and to help develop proposals with their respective Portfolio Holder(s) for savings, changes to service delivery and optimise income.

## DRAFT HOUSING , HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2021-2026

CAB77/21 Sue Oliver, Private Sector Housing Manager introduced the report as set out in the agenda.

Discussion and questions from Members included the following:

- The Housing Advisory Panel (HAP) and Cabinet Advisory Board (CAB) fully supported the document.
- The Housing Team were congratulated for reducing rough sleeping from 20 in 2017 to 0 in 2020. An achievement it was hoped would be repeated in 2021.
- It was hoped the Council would end rough sleeping in the Borough in the next 5 years.
- One property had been identified for an Afghan refugee family and it was understood that a family had now been nominated.
- The Council were continuing to work with private sector landlords to identify more suitable properties. The possibility of using empty (suitable) properties would also be explored.
- It might be possible to extend the consultation period to allow sufficient time for people to respond, especially if the consultation period covered a public holiday (e.g. Christmas).
- It was difficult to predict whether the number of rough sleepers would increase over the coming months but the Council's outreach support would continue to ensure help was available. The Council also now had the properties in Crescent Road (6 units of accommodation).
- Following the Budget the Council would now have to wait to see what allocation it would be given as part of the Rough Sleepers Initiative.
- The longer term future of the remaining properties in Crescent Road

was something the Council would be looking at but it any work would be subject to the availability of Government funding.

- The inclusion of carbon reduction measures in the Strategy was very welcome.

**RESOLVED –** That a six-week period of consultation be arranged for the draft Strategy be approved and the results reported to Cabinet on 17 March 2022 for adoption.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** The consultation would ensure compliance with the requirements of the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy by engaging with partners to help inform the final version of the Strategy.

### **DECLARATION OF AN AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT AREA - HAWKHURST**

CAB78/21 Stuart Maxwell, Senior Scientific Officer introduced the report as set out in the agenda.

Discussion and questions from Members included the following:

- The objective that applied was mainly for residences, but also included schools and hospitals. It did not include businesses. A higher objective would be applied to other categories e.g. pedestrians, cyclists etc.
- The objective was based on the time spent at the particular property/place. The time spent in a residence would be considerably more than walking, shopping etc. As such the objective for residences was much lower.
- The junction suffered from a lot of congestion (exacerbated by on street parking). Switching off engines while idling would help improve air quality in the area.
- Junction improvement work would also help improve air quality.
- Details of what would be included in the Action Plan were not yet known but the responsibility of many of them were likely to rest with Kent County Council. It was therefore difficult to know the extent of any potential benefits.

#### **RESOLVED –**

1. That an Air Quality Management Area in Hawkhurst be declared and an Air Quality Management Area Order be issued, signed and sealed.

2. That over the next 12 months the Sustainability and Environmental Protection Teams develop an Air Quality Action Plan to include measures to tackle exceedance be approved and that this will primarily be done within existing budgets, but that specific actions within the plan may have additional associated costs.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** Local Authorities are required to review and assess air quality within their areas and under those requirements have a duty to designate those areas where the air quality objectives are either not being met or are likely to be shown to be at risk of not being met.

**URGENT BUSINESS**

CAB79/21 There was no urgent business.

**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

CAB80/21 The next meeting would be held on Thursday 18 November 2021 commencing at 12:00pm in the Council Chamber at the Town Hall, Tunbridge Wells.

**NOTES:**

The meeting concluded at 11.25 am.

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