

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

FINANCE AND PROPERTY ADVISORY BOARD

Wednesday, 20th July, 2011

Present: Cllr A K Sullivan (Chairman), Cllr A W Allison (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Mrs P Bates, Cllr T Bishop, Cllr T Edmondston-Low, Cllr S R J Jessel, Cllr R D Lancaster, Cllr Mrs S M Murray, Cllr A G Sayer and Cllr R Taylor.

Councillors Mrs Anderson, Ms Atkinson, Baldock, Balfour, Coffin, Parry-Waller, Rhodes, Rogers and Worrall were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Homewood, Mrs Kemp and C Smith.

PART 1 - PUBLIC

**FP
11/028** **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Coffin declared a personal interest in the item relating to Capital Grants Monitoring on the grounds of membership of Wrotham Parish Council and he took no part in the discussion or voting thereon.

**FP
11/029** **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the notes of the meeting of the Finance and Property Advisory Board held on 24 May 2011 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

**FP
11/030** **APPLICATIONS FOR DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF**

Decision Notice D110104MEM

The joint report of the Director of Finance and Cabinet Member for Finance gave details of renewal and new applications for discretionary rate relief which were considered in accordance with the revised guidelines for the grant of such relief. It was noted that further information had recently been submitted by West Kent YMCA in respect of the two new applications for relief.

RECOMMENDED: That

1) with reference to the reapplications for relief set out at Annex 4 to

the report 20% discretionary rate relief be awarded in each case with effect from 1 April 2011, time limited to 31 March 2013;

2) consideration of the applications for discretionary relief in respect of West Kent YMCA Trading Limited workshops, Unit 2A/2B, 9 Cannon Lane, Tonbridge, and shop at 30 High Street, Tonbridge be deferred until a future meeting to take account of the additional information received; and

3) in respect of the renewal application for rural rate relief at the Nevill Bull, 1 Ryarsh Road, Birling, 80% relief be awarded time limited to 31 March 2013.

**FP
11/031**

FINANCIAL PLANNING AND CONTROL

Decision Notice D110105MEM

The report of the Director of Finance provided information on the Council's key budget areas of salaries, major income streams, investment income and the trading position of the Leisure Services Business Unit (LSBU). It also gave an update on the variations agreed in relation to the revenue budget and areas identified through budgetary control. This was summarised to provide an indicative overall budget position. An update was also given on capital expenditure and variations agreed in relation to the capital plan.

Attention was drawn to the fact that a large proportion of the net favourable variance was due to the New Homes Bonus Scheme; the need to closely monitor the ongoing trading position of the LSBU; whether there had been a permanent rather than a temporary reduction in income due to the current economic climate and the implications this had for the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the size of the budget 'funding gap'. It was noted that for this and other reasons, for example inflation remaining high and the expected rise in energy prices, the Director of Finance intended to present an updated MTFS to the October meeting of the Cabinet.

RECOMMENDED: That the contents of the report be noted and endorsed.

**FP
11/032**

CAPITAL GRANTS MONITORING

Decision Notice D110106MEM

The report of the Director of Finance gave details of the current position in respect of capital grants to parish councils and voluntary organisations and historic buildings grants. Consideration was given to the action to be taken in respect of a number of unclaimed grants.

Members were updated on the position regarding the awards to Wrotham Parish Council which had now started work on the new facility and indicated that the grants were crucial to the project.

RECOMMENDED: That

1) the two unclaimed grant awards to Wrotham Parish Council be extended; and

2) the Chief Leisure Officer be requested to meet Rock UK (formerly The Barnabus Trust) to seek an update on their proposals in respect of a new sports and multi-purpose hall at Carroty Wood prior to any formal extension of the grant award.

MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION

**FP
11/033**

BENEFITS UPDATE

Members were advised of current issues arising in the benefits field including performance and workload of the Benefits Service and progress in respect of changes to housing and council tax benefits. A briefing on the Universal Credit had been held prior to the meeting and the Advisory Board received a copy of a letter to Tracey Crouch MP regarding concerns about the potential delivery arrangements for Universal Credit, together with a response from Lord Freud, Minister for Welfare Reform. Details were also given of a bid submitted for Government funding to ease the impact of the changes to the local housing allowance scheme which, Members were advised, had regrettably been unsuccessful.

**FP
11/034**

COUNCIL TAX AND BUSINESS RATES UPDATE REPORT

The report updated the position on the collection of council tax and business rates for the 2011/12 financial year. Reference was made to the impact on the payments service on 30 June when the Council's telephone system had been severely affected by the theft of copper wiring and fibre optic cabling. Details were given of alternative arrangements made for customers although it was anticipated that the disruption could reflect negatively on the collection rates for July.

**FP
11/035**

CAPITAL PROGRAMME: POST IMPLEMENTATION REVIEWS MONITORING REPORT

The report identified the post implementation reviews carried out since the meeting of the Advisory Board in July 2010 together with the capital plan schemes for which reviews were due.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE

**FP
11/036**

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chairman moved, it was seconded and

RESOLVED: That as public discussion would disclose exempt information, the following matters be considered in private.

PART 2 - PRIVATE

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

**FP
11/037** **DEBTS FOR WRITE OFF**
(Reason: LGA 1972 Sch 12A Para 2 - Information likely to reveal information about an individual)

Decision Notice D110107MEM

Consideration was given to the writing-off of debts considered to be irrecoverable. Details were also given of debts under £1,000 which had been written-off in accordance with Financial Procedure Rule 17.2 together with cumulative totals of debts in the current and previous financial years and information on budgeted bad debt provision.

RECOMMENDED: That the 11 items shown in the schedule totalling £50,407.01 be written-off for the reasons stated.

**FP
11/038** **PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF AMENITY LAND FOR EXTENSION OF EXISTING FOOTWAY, DITTON**
(Reason: LGA 1972 Sch 12A Para 3 - Financial or business affairs of any particular person)

Decision Notice D110108MEM

The report of the Central Services Director gave details of a proposal to dispose of a piece of Council owned amenity land to Kent County Council for an extension of an existing footway in Cherry Orchard, Ditton.

RECOMMENDED: That should Kent Highway Services undertake the proposed footway extension, approval be given to the proposed transfer of land to Kent County Council on the basis set out in the report and subject to receipt of confirmation that the three lighting columns will remain in place.

The meeting ended at 2057 hours
having commenced at 2010 hours

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION

Decision Taken By: **CABINET MEMBER FOR
Finance**

Decision No: **D110104MEM**

Date: **20th July 2011**

Decision(s) and Reason(s)

Applications for Discretionary Rate Relief

**(Joint report of Director of Finance and Cabinet Member for
Finance)**

(Annex 1)

(Annex 2)

(Annex 3)

(Annex 4)

(Annex 5)

**Details were given of renewal and new applications for
discretionary rate relief which were considered in accordance with
the revised guidelines for the grant of such relief.**

**It was noted that further information had recently been submitted
by West Kent YMCA in respect of the two new applications for
relief.**

Following consideration by the Finance and Property Advisory Board,
the Cabinet Member for Finance resolved that:

- 1) with reference to the reapplications for relief set out at Annex 4 to the report 20% discretionary rate relief be awarded in each case with effect from 1 April 2011, time limited to 31 March 2013;
- 2) consideration of the applications for discretionary relief in respect of West Kent YMCA Trading Limited workshops, Unit 2A/2B, 9 Cannon Lane, Tonbridge, and shop at 30 High Street, Tonbridge be deferred until a future meeting to take account of the additional information received; and
- 3) in respect of the renewal application for rural rate relief at the Nevill Bull, 1 Ryarsh Road, Birling, 80% relief be awarded time limited to 31 March 2013.

Reasons: As set out in the report submitted to the Finance and Property Advisory Board of 20 July 2011.

Signed Cabinet Member for M Coffin
Finance:

Signed Leader: M Worrall

Signed Chief Executive: D Hughes

Date of publication: 22 July 2011

This decision will come into force and may then be implemented on the expiry of 5 working days after publication unless it is called in.

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION

Decision Taken By: **CABINET MEMBER FOR
Finance**

Decision No: **D110105MEM**

Date: **20th July 2011**

Decision(s) and Reason(s)

Financial Planning and Control

(Report of Director of Finance)

(Annex 1)

(Annex 2)

(Annex 3)

The report provided information on the Council's key budget areas of salaries, major income streams, investment income and the trading position of the Leisure Services Business Unit (LSBU). It also gave an update on the variations agreed in relation to the revenue budget and areas identified through budgetary control. This was summarised to provide an indicative overall budget position. An update was also given on capital expenditure and variations agreed in relation to the capital plan.

Attention was drawn to the fact that a large proportion of the net favourable variance was due to the New Homes Bonus Scheme; the need to closely monitor the ongoing trading position of the LSBU; whether there had been a permanent rather than a temporary reduction in income due to the current economic climate and the implications this had for the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the size of the budget 'funding gap'. It was noted that for this and other reasons, for example inflation remaining high and the expected rise in energy prices, the Director of Finance intended to present an updated MTFS to the October meeting of the Cabinet.

Following consideration by the Finance and Property Advisory Board, the Cabinet Member for Finance resolved that the contents of the report be noted and endorsed.

Reasons: As set out in the report submitted to the Finance and Property Advisory Board of 20 July 2011.

Signed Cabinet Member for M Coffin
Finance:

Signed Leader: M Worrall

Signed Chief Executive: D Hughes

Date of publication: 22 July 2011

This decision will come into force and may then be implemented on the expiry of 5 working days after publication unless it is called in.

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION

Decision Taken By: **CABINET MEMBER FOR
Communities**

Decision No: **D110106MEM**

Date: **20th July 2011**

Decision(s) and Reason(s)

Capital Grants Monitoring

(Report of Director of Finance)

(Annex 1)

(Annex 2)

The report gave details of the current position in respect of capital grants to parish councils and voluntary organisations and historic buildings grants. Consideration was given to the action to be taken in respect of a number of unclaimed grants.

The Director of Finance updated the position regarding the awards to Wrotham Parish Council which had now started work on the new facility and indicated that the grants were crucial to the project.

Following consideration by the Finance and Property Advisory Board, the Cabinet Member for Communities resolved that:

- 1) the two unclaimed grant awards to Wrotham Parish Council be extended; and
- 2) the Chief Leisure Officer be requested to meet Rock UK (formerly The Barnabus Trust) to seek an update on their proposals in respect of a new sports and multi-purpose hall at Carroty Wood prior to any formal extension of the grant award.

Reasons: As set out in the report submitted to the Finance and Property Advisory Board of 20 July 2011.

[Councillor Coffin declared a personal interest in item (1) on the grounds of membership of Wrotham Parish Council and took no part in the discussion or decision thereon.]

Signed Cabinet Member for O Baldock
Communities:

Signed Leader: M Worrall

Signed Chief Executive: D Hughes

Date of publication: 22 July 2011

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In accordance with Paragraph 2, Annex 1 of the Executive Procedure Rules, the Leader nominated the Cabinet Member for Communities to take this decision in the absence of the Cabinet Member for Finance.

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION

**Decision Taken By: CABINET MEMBER FOR
Finance**

Decision No: D110107MEM

Date: 20th July 2011

Decision(s) and Reason(s)

Debts for Write Off

(Reason: LGA 1972 Sch 12A Para 2 - Information likely to reveal information about an individual)

(Report of Director of Finance)

(Annex)

Approval of the writing-off of debts considered to be irrecoverable. Details were also given of debts under £1,000 which had been written-off in accordance with Financial Procedure Rule 17.2 together with cumulative totals of debts written-off in the current and previous financial years and information on budgeted bad debt provision.

Following consideration by the Finance and Property Advisory Board, the Cabinet Member for Finance resolved that the eleven items shown in the schedule totalling £50,407.01 be written-off for the reasons stated.

Reasons: As set out in the report submitted to the Finance and Property Advisory Board of 20 July 2011 (contains exempt information).

Signed Cabinet Member for M Coffin
Finance:

Signed Leader: M Worrall

Signed Chief Executive: D Hughes

Date of publication: 22 July 2011

This decision will come into force and may then be implemented on the expiry of 5 working days after publication unless it is called in.

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

RECORD OF DECISION

**Decision Taken By: CABINET MEMBER FOR
Finance**

Decision No: D110108MEM

Date: 20th July 2011

Decision(s) and Reason(s)

**Proposed Disposal of Amenity Land for Extension of Existing
Footway, Ditton**

**(Reason: LGA 1972 Sch 12A Para 3 - Financial or business affairs
of any particular person)**

**(Report of Central Services Director)
(Annex)**

**The report gave details of a proposal to dispose of a piece of
Council owned amenity land to Kent County Council for an
extension of an existing footway in Cherry Orchard, Ditton.**

Following consideration by the Finance and Property Advisory Board,
the Cabinet Member for Finance resolved that should Kent Highway
Services undertake the proposed footway extension, approval be given
to the proposed transfer of land to Kent County Council on the basis set
out in the report and subject to receipt of confirmation that the three
lighting columns will remain in place.

Reasons: As set out in the report submitted to the Finance and Property
Advisory Board of 20 July 2011 (contains exempt information).

Signed Cabinet Member for M Coffin
Finance:

Signed Leader: M Worrall

Signed Chief Executive: D Hughes

Date of publication: 22 July 2011

This decision will come into force and may then be implemented on the expiry of 5
working days after publication unless it is called in.