

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

21 April 2009

Report of Chief Executive

Part 1- Public

Matters For Decision

1 PROPOSED MINOR CHANGES TO CYCLE OF MEETINGS AND ADVISORY BOARDS AND PANELS

Summary

A report to propose modest changes to the Council's arrangements for discharging its functions.

- 1.1 As Members know, the Council is facing very difficult financial circumstances in consequence of the economic downturn. There is still a considerable amount of work needed in order to bring expenditure in line with the available resources.
- 1.2 Against this background, in conjunction with the Leader and Cabinet, I have reviewed the present system of meeting cycles and the various Advisory Boards, Member Panels and Groups to ascertain whether these remain appropriate to the new circumstances the Council finds itself in.
- 1.3 The outcome of this review is a modest number of suggested changes which will make a small but important contribution towards releasing officer capacity for service delivery and provide better opportunities to address certain specific issues. I set out the suggested changes below, together with a brief commentary in each case:-

Change from a 5 meeting cycle of meetings to a 4 meeting cycle.	With fewer resources available it should be possible to deal with the Council's business with fewer meetings than under the present arrangements
Establish a Rural Affairs Advisory Board that would not be programmed but would meet twice per year. The current Medway Valley Countryside Partnership Panel's remit would be subsumed	There is increasing evidence that rural areas have particular problems that are not always fully recognised or addressed. The role of this Advisory Board would be to take a broad view of rural affairs, whether these be related to housing, economic development, deprivation, community

within this new Board.	safety or other issues, and make recommendations for action by the Borough Council or other agencies.
Subsume the functions of the LDF Steering Panel within the Planning and Transportation Advisory Board.	There is no longer a need for a separate Panel to oversee the LDF as the majority of the key documents have been completed.
Subsume the functions of the Youth and Children's Advisory Board within the Leisure and Arts Advisory Board.	With the development of Local Children's Services Partnerships for both the Tonbridge and Malling clusters, there is a danger of duplicating their work. The Council is a key partner in the LCSPs and continuance of the Youth and Children's Advisory Board cannot be justified.
Establish an Older Persons Issues Advisory Board that would not be programmed but would meet twice per year.	The population in Tonbridge and Malling is ageing and the Council needs to be planning its own service delivery and working with other agencies to ensure the needs this creates are met. This new Advisory Board will take a broad view of the range of issues that affect older people.
Discontinue the Joint Local Board.	KCC has had internal discussions about how best to take forward its localism agenda and reflected upon the success or otherwise of the Joint Local Boards. These were followed up by discussions between KCC and the Leader and myself. It has been concluded that the most appropriate approach is to use the existing structure of the Parish Partnership Panel and Tonbridge Forum to generate discussions on issues of interest to both parties as well as a broader range of partners and organisations. A more proactive role for KCC is envisaged as is the creation of two vice chairs, one of which would be held by a KCC Member.

- 1.4 The above changes are relatively modest but they do achieve a number of objectives:-

- realigning the meetings cycle to the level of business needing to be transacted
- releasing officer capacity to focus on service development and delivery
- providing vehicles for the Council to focus on emerging issues of significance; rural and older people's issues
- removing the potential for duplication of effort where other forums or mechanisms already exist

1.5 The Management Team is fully supportive of the proposals for change set out in this report.

1.6 I have set out draft terms of reference for the two new Advisory Boards at Annex 1 for the Council's consideration.

1.7 **Legal Implications**

If the Council is minded to accept my proposals for change, it will also need to approve the consequential changes to the Council's Constitution, which form a separate report on the agenda from the Monitoring Officer.

1.8 **Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

The changes proposed will release officer capacity to focus on service development and delivery.

1.9 **Risk Assessment**

There are no identified risks associated with the proposals.

1.10 **Policy Considerations**

Creation of the two additional Advisory Boards will facilitate a more co-ordinated approach to policy development. I confirm the proposals are within the Council's Policy and Budgetary Framework.

1.11 **Recommendation**

I **recommend** that the proposed changes to the cycle of meetings and Advisory Boards and Panels **be approved**.

Background papers:

contact: David Hughes

Nil

David Hughes
Chief Executive