

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL



EXECUTIVE SERVICES

Chief Executive

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NB - This agenda contains proposals, recommendations and options. These do not represent Council policy or decisions until they have received proper consideration through the full decision making process.

Contact: Committee Services
committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk

2 September 2016

To: MEMBERS OF THE TONBRIDGE FORUM
(Copies to all Members of the Council)

Dear Sir/Madam

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the Tonbridge Forum to be held in the Riverside Lounge, Angel Centre, Tonbridge on Monday, 12th September, 2016 commencing at 7.30 pm

Yours faithfully

JULIE BEILBY

Chief Executive

AGENDA

- | | | |
|----|---|---------|
| 1. | Apologies for absence | 5 - 6 |
| 2. | Minutes | 7 - 10 |
| | To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of Tonbridge Forum held on 12 My 2016 | |
| 3. | Update on any action identified in the last Minutes | 11 - 12 |

4.	Fairer Charging in Tonbridge and Malling - Update following Public Consultation	13 - 14
5.	Flooding Update: Tonbridge, Hildenborough and East Peckham	15 - 16
6.	Local Plan update	17 - 18
7.	Kent Police Update	19 - 20
8.	Kent Fire and Rescue Services Update	21 - 22
9.	Kent County Council Services Update	23 - 26
10.	Tonbridge and Malling Services Update	27 - 28

MEMBERSHIP

Borough Council Representatives:

Cllr N J Heslop (Chairman)
Cllr C P Smith (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Mrs J A Anderson
Cllr O C Baldock
Cllr Mrs P A Bates
Cllr P F Bolt
Cllr J L Botten
Cllr V M C Branson
Cllr D J Cure
Cllr T Edmondston-Low
Cllr R D Lancaster
Cllr Ms S V Spence
Cllr F G Tombolis

Members of Forum:

Mr R Long (County Councillor)
The Bridge Trust
Kent Fire and Rescue Service
Kent Police (Tonbridge)
St John's Ambulance
Society of Friends
Tonbridge Allotments and Gardens
Tonbridge and Malling Seniors
Tonbridge Art Group
Tonbridge Area Churches Together
Tonbridge Citizens' Advice Bureau
Tonbridge Civic Society
Tonbridge District Scout Council
Tonbridge Historical Society
Tonbridge Line Commuters
Tonbridge Lions Club
Tonbridge Music Club
Tonbridge Philharmonic Society
Tonbridge Rotary Club
Tonbridge Sports Association
Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club
Tonbridge Town Team
Women's Institute

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Apologies for absence

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TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

TONBRIDGE FORUM

Thursday, 12th May, 2016

Present: Cllr N J Heslop (Chairman), Cllr C P Smith (Vice-Chairman), Cllr P F Bolt, Cllr D J Cure, Cllr V M C Branson, Cllr F G Tombolis and County Councillor Mr R Long.

Together with representatives from:

Kent Fire and Rescue Service, Kent Police (Tonbridge), St John's Ambulance, Tonbridge Area Churches Together, Tonbridge Civic Society, Tonbridge District Scout Council, Tonbridge Music Club, Tonbridge Rotary Club, Tonbridge Sports Association, Tonbridge Theatre and Arts Club, University of the Third Age and Women's Institute

Councillors H S Rogers, S C Perry and Mrs A S Oakley were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs J A Anderson, Ms J A Atkinson, Mrs P A Bates, The Bridge Trust and Society of Friends

TF 16/11 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 February 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

TF 16/12 UPDATE ON ANY ACTION IDENTIFIED IN THE LAST MINUTES

Reference was made to Minute Number TF 16/4 – Tonbridge High Street Improvement Scheme and the quoted completion date for the works of April 2016. Serious disappointment and concern was expressed regarding the delay to the completion of works and the ongoing traffic congestion along the High Street and the Bordyke.

The Chairman and the Director of Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services appreciated the concerns raised, particularly around communication, and assured Members that the Borough Council was in regular contact with the County Council and seeking an early resolution of works.

It was also recognised that, whilst the continued delay was a frustration for residents and visitors to the town, the Scheme was a great improvement to the area and represented a commitment to investment and regeneration of the High Street. Local retailers appeared supportive

of the measures being implemented and had reported an increase in footfall to their businesses.

Tonbridge Music Club made reference to the Holmes report on 'shared space' in the United Kingdom (Accidents by Design), which aimed to establish a greater understanding of these type of schemes on the public. The Borough Council was asked to comment on the report's conclusion that many respondents did not enjoy using shared spaces and did not feel safe. The report highlighted many 'shared space' schemes that the public did not like using and where local authorities had repeatedly changed their minds and installed/reinstalled pedestrian crossings at costs not yet known. It was queried whether these schemes were fit for purpose and what were the financial implications to the Borough Council of having to revert back to a more traditional layout.

The Leader indicated that as the County Council was the responsible authority for the improvement works this question would be passed to the relevant contact within that authority for a response.

Finally, the Leader advised that it was expected that the junction with Medway Wharf road would open tomorrow (Friday 13 May) and the 'two way' on the High Street the following week. This position would be closely monitored by the Borough Council.

TF 16/13 PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON 'FAIRER CHARGING' IN TONBRIDGE AND MALLING (PRESENTATION)

The Director of Finance and Transformation advised that the Borough Council was considering changing the way it charged for the Tonbridge and Malling Borough element of the council tax bill from 2017/18 onwards. The introduction of a local charge (technically called 'special expenses') to pay for the local facilities and services provided by the Borough Council, such as local parks, playgrounds, allotments, flower displays, events, cemeteries and churchyards, was being considered. This would promote fairness for all residents in different parts of the borough when paying towards the cost of these services, generate savings to offset ongoing reduction in Government funding and protect services.

Members were shown a short video, followed by a presentation focusing on issues relevant to Tonbridge, to explain the proposal regarding fairer charging. It was explained that residents living anywhere within the Borough, other than the town of Tonbridge, paid an extra parish precept for local services such as playgrounds and open spaces provided by the parish/town council. As Tonbridge was not parished services to these residents were provided and funded by the Borough Council. However, to provide some equity, the Borough Council paid grants, totalling just over £225,000 to parish councils to help them with the costs of the local services they provided.

Tonbridge and Malling continued to face significant financial challenges due to cuts in Government funding and needed to make savings of £1.8 million over the next four years, whilst protecting the services that the authority provided. The Council had adopted a Savings and Transformation Strategy to assist with the focusing and delivering of savings from a range of areas. It was noted that the areas being reviewed as part of this process were the grants made to the parish councils. The Director of Finance and Transformation explained that it would be unfair to simply remove the grants to the parish councils without considering the cost of the local services that the Borough Council provided in Tonbridge. Members were advised that the local services provided by the Borough Council in Tonbridge totalled some £800,000 and this could be converted into a local charge which, just like a parish precept, could be charged directly to Tonbridge households.

As part of this proposal, the Borough Council was inviting borough residents, parish councils and other key stakeholders to take part in a Public Consultation. Information could be found on the Borough Council's website, including the questionnaire, the short video shown at the meeting and other supporting information. All Members and organisations were asked to spread the word and encourage residents to participate as all opinions were welcome.

The deadline for responses was **noon on Monday 20 June 2016**. Further information and a questionnaire to complete was available via: www.tmbc.gov.uk/localcharge

Reference was made to business rates being retained by local authorities and whether this would improve the Borough Council's financial pressures. The Chief Executive explained that the move to full business rate retention was not expected until 2020 and that the final detail was not yet known or understood. The proposals around business rates continued to change which made it difficult to predict and model financial implications. It was noted that grant (Revenue Support Grant) from central government was being reduced further; and, in addition to that, the Council had been expecting earlier in the year to have to pay back to Government some of the rates it currently retained over a four year period. The Chairman advised that the Borough Council had successfully argued for a 'clawback' holiday ensuring that Tonbridge and Malling did not have to pay back rates in years 2-3 of the scheme. However, this was a temporary reprieve as £1M 'clawback' was still required in year 4.

The Chairman also advised that from next year the Borough Council would no longer receive any direct Government grant funding in the form of Revenue Support Grant. This meant that the authority was reliant on business rates retention, New Homes Bonus and fees and charges. All of these issues represented a significant and complex financial challenge for Tonbridge and Malling.

Whilst Members supported the principle being proposed and welcomed the opportunity to comment, it was suggested that communication could be improved as it was difficult to understand the detail. It was commented that the video viewed earlier was a good way to get the message across. The Chief Executive welcomed this feedback and consideration would be given on how to improve the promotion of the video already on the Borough Council's website.

To promote the public consultation there would be significant media coverage in the local press, a BBC Radio Kent interview on Monday morning and leaflets/posters distributed to local libraries and other public places for displaying. Parish councils would be invited to comment at a special meeting of the Parish Partnership Panel on Wednesday 18 May 2016. The use of social media (Twitter and Facebook) was also confirmed, although it was recognised that regular posts and updates would be beneficial to keep the consultation at the top of 'news feeds'.

[Subsequent to the meeting the Borough Council was advised that the BBC Radio Kent interview would be aired on the morning of Tuesday 17 May 2016]

The meeting ended at 8.40 pm

Agenda Item 3

Update on action identified in the last Minutes

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Fairer Charging in Tonbridge and Malling - Update following Public Consultation

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River Medway Flood Storage Areas

Newsletter 3 - July 2016

Welcome to the River Medway Flood Storage Area newsletter. This newsletter will update you on our activities since December 2015.

Background

Over 3,000 homes and businesses in Tonbridge, Hildenborough, Yalding and Collier Street are at risk of flooding from the River Medway, the River Beult, and the River Teise. 2,060 of these properties are at significant risk of flooding. Communities in these areas have been affected by flooding in 1960, 1963, 1968, 1974, 1979, 2000/01 and Winter 2013/14.

The Environment Agency is working with Kent County Council (KCC), Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council (TMBC) and Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) to develop options to reduce the risk of flooding to communities. The scheme is known as the River Medway Flood Storage Areas (FSAs) project.

What have we done?

Since the last newsletter we have completed the Initial Assessment for the Medway Flood Storage Areas (FSA) project. It considered the costs and benefits of:

- increasing the capacity of the Leigh FSA
- flood storage in two locations on the River Teise
- flood storage on the River Beult
- walls around Yalding
- increasing the channel capacity by dredging the River Medway between Yalding and Maidstone

We presented the findings to the partnership in February 2016, describing the options their costs and benefits and the government funding available.

What are the findings?

Increasing the capacity of the Leigh FSA

This appears to be feasible and will improve the level of protection to Tonbridge and to a lesser extent other communities downstream. Improvements to benefit Hildenborough will be included in this project, works in Hildenborough will need to occur at the same time as those at Leigh.

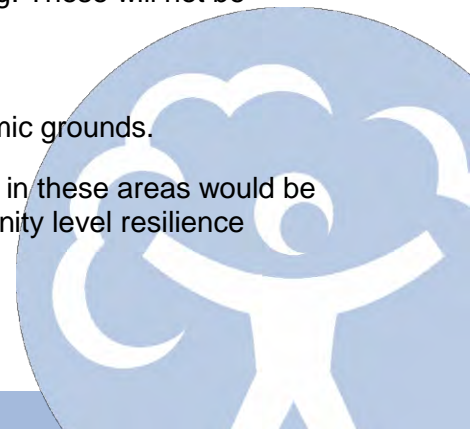
Flood storage on the Rivers Beult and Teise

Although the flood storage options for the Rivers Beult and Teise will help to reduce flood levels in communities around the Yalding, Collier Street and Laddingford area, unfortunately these schemes would cost a great deal but would not provide the benefits that were originally envisaged. They would only protect some of the properties currently at a low risk of flooding. These will not be promoted.

Walls around Yalding and dredging

Yalding walls and dredging were both eliminated on technical and economic grounds.

The Environment Agency and KCC consider that the communities at risk in these areas would be better served by more localised flood defences and property and community level resilience measures which can be targeted to the properties at greater risk.



What will we do?

The Environment Agency will lead work with the communities around Yalding, Collier Street and Laddingford on community and property resilience options for these areas. They will be able to bid for government contributions when they have developed a feasible scheme. The partners have also agreed to contribute to this, with KCC contributing £1.5million.

A bid for funding to improve the Leigh FSA and defences for Hildenborough will be prepared. Assuming this is approved this will be funded by government, KCC and TMBC together with private sector contributions. There is also a bid to the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) for £4.5 million, which, if successful, will contribute to this scheme and a separate flood alleviation scheme for East Peckham.

We aim to brief communities at three poster exhibitions to be held in:

- Collier Street on 6 - 8 October at the church between 14.00 and 20.00 on weekdays, and 10.00 and 16.00 on Saturday.
- Yalding on 13 - 15 October at the church between 14.00 and 20.00 on weekdays and 10.00 and 16.00 on Saturday.
- Tonbridge on 20 - 22 October at the Angel Centre between 14.00 and 20.00 on weekdays and 1000 and 1600 on Saturday. Note the start time on Friday will be slightly later at 1500.

This will be followed by whole day community workshops in Yalding and Collier Street. The aim of these workshops will be to explain what property and community resilience are and to ask the communities to help identify the specific steps to make homes and communities more resilient to flooding. The dates for these workshops will be advertised soon.

Timescales

The approval process requires the business case to be worked up in increasing levels of detail. Having completed the initial assessment we are now working on the outline business case which will lead to the full business case being submitted to Defra in 2018. Once approved, we will then move to the detailed design phase in 2018-2019. Currently, our indicative funding programme shows construction between 2019 and 2022.

Time	Activity
July 2016	Environment Agency submit Stage 1 of the business case to Defra
July 2016	Start Outline Business Case (Stage 2)
October 2016	Poster exhibitions
November 2016	Community resilience workshops in Yalding and Collier Street
October 2017	Present the Outline Business Case to the project board to decide next steps
November 2017	Approval to spend money on and start Full Business Case (Stage 3)
March 2018	Submit Full Business Case to Defra to obtain approval to spend money on the scheme
November 2018	Start detailed design process
2020 - 2022	Construction

Find out more

If you want any more information on the project or have any questions, please call Neil Gunn on 03708 506 506 or email us at: MedwayFSA@environment-agency.gov.uk

Local Plan update

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Agenda Item 7

Police Liaison

Representatives of the Police to be present to address crime prevention issues, including any raised by Members of the Forum.

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Kent Fire and Rescue Services

Representatives of the KFRS to be present to provide an update on recent activities and to answer questions raised by Members.

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Tonbridge Forum **Monday, 12 September 2016**

Kent County Council Services Update

Key points from Report by Leader of the Council – Full Council May 2016

- In relation to the proposed road repair blitz, Mr Carter announced works would start in mid-June. The vast majority of these works would be carried out by small and medium sized civil engineering companies on a district by district basis.
- Mr Carter referred to the White Paper, 'Education Excellence Everywhere' and the small victory in the removal of the enforced academisation from the potential education bill referred to in the Queen's Speech. He stated that it was now necessary to find a way forward that made sure there was not a two-tier educational and financial system which favoured multi-academy trusts but penalised community schools. There was a need to ensure the Education Support Grant allowed KCC to continue to provide school improvement and support services to the nearly 400 schools that still remained in the community schools category.
- In relation to next year's budgetary problems, Mr Carter referred to the unidentified savings of some £50m. Good progress was being made and he suggested that, with the agreement of opposition leaders, there could be a mini budget session at the September County Council meeting (please note September's Full Council meeting has been cancelled and the next meeting will be held in October). If these savings are agreed they could potentially start to be taken in year rather than waiting until February 2017 to identify the savings.
- Mr Carter referred to a very good facilitated discussion on devolution with all district leaders and Medway which suggest there was agreement to progress what hopefully will be an ambitious devolution submission to government. He explained there was an acceptance by district leaders that in Kent and Medway, we did not want the imposition of a directly elected major. This view accorded with the vast majority of County Councils.
- Mr Carter talked about the Apprenticeship Levy. The County Council would have to contribute £4.5m into the levy and the Personnel Committee would consider how this could be used to ensure that there was a significant increase in the number of Kent County Council apprenticeships, including those in KCC's supply chain. This year Kent would have 3000 16-18 year olds in modern apprenticeships, which was one of the highest in the country.
- Mr Carter stated that it was important for health partners and social care to work closely together on community health and preventative services that reduce hospitalisation and get people out of hospital into step-down care and back behind their own front door as fast as possible. This could also save money.
- In response to a reference made to the Young Person's Travel Pass, Mr Carter stated that his was the most generously supported school transport system in this country outside of London. KCC has chosen to fund an additional £8m to help parents get their young people to and from school. Despite the state of the public finances of this country and the

considerable part local government had to play to restore those public finances, he was still hoping to maintain the Young Person's Travel Pass at an affordable cost to parents.

Sign up to KCC's new mailing list and receive the latest council news in your mailbox

By subscribing to KCC's free emailing service residents can receive important Kent County Council information and news as it becomes available. A valid email address is required and will be used only to provide information on topic preferences subscribed to. For more information visit: www.kent.gov.uk

KCC Highways – report a problem on the road or pavement

KCC Highways, Transportation and Waste welcomes feedback from its customers and has designed a fault reporting tool so that residents can quickly and easily let us know about any problems on the roads and footways or about any equipment such as streetlights, that may not be working.

If you wish to report a fault visit: www.kent.gov.uk/highwayfaults

From here can be viewed all known issues, any planned works, report multiple issues, upload photos as well as track any existing enquiries. KCC no longer offers a generic email service as the improved online fault reporting tool has been designed to ensure all of the information is captured so that faults are responded to quickly. Residents can still call to report any complex or urgent matters on 03000 418181 and speak to one of KCC's trained highway specialists.

Potholes – KCC is busy repairing potholes across Kent this summer

KCC is spending an extra £3 million on pothole repairs this year, which includes £1.4 million from the Government.

KCC's highways crews are working hard to improve the quality of road surfaces and make road travel safer and are doing this alongside KCC's [planned work](#) to repair roads.

In **Tonbridge and Malling** 422 miles of road has had £183,962 spent on repairs since 1 June 2016. To view the latest figures for your local area visit <http://www.kent.gov.uk/roads-and-travel/what-we-look-after/roads/potholes>

KCC Combined Member Grant Scheme 2016/17

KCC's Combined Member Grant scheme will open on 1 April 2016 with £20,000 available to every County Councillor to fund both community and highway projects in their electoral division. Tonbridge & Malling County Councillors have a total of £140,000 to allocate in 2016/17.

The County Councillors have used their grant allocations in past years to support a wide range of organisations and projects, from sports clubs and arts groups to charities and social enterprises to

Parish and District Council projects. The feedback from applicants and local people has been universally positive and has helped a number of projects receive additional or match funding as a result.

For more information on the Combined Member Grant scheme, please contact your local County Councillor or Anne Charman, KCC Community Liaison Officer.

KCC also produces a monthly publication 'Inside Track' which provides information on funding opportunities at a county and national level. For a copy of Inside Track or information on other funding opportunities visit: <http://www.kent.gov.uk/leisure-and-community/community-grants-and-funding>.

Consultations - have your say, your views count

You can view all KCC consultations online at: <http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti>

Signed up to the KCC Consultation Directory yet? It only takes a few minutes to register and gives a full list of past, current and planned consultations and provides an opportunity to feedback on local services and policies. It enables KCC to contact residents when an activity is due to take place or to receive feedback for a particular consultation or involvement activity when it is published on KCC's website.

(Please note there are separate lists for **Traffic Regulation Orders** and **Start of Works Notices** and for **Public Rights of Way Notices**.)

Local Transport Plan 4 – Delivering Growth without Gridlock: 8th August to 30th October 2016

Kent County Council (KCC) has a legal duty to produce a Local Transport Plan. This document demonstrates to Kent's residents and local businesses our strategies and priorities to make sure transport is playing its part in making Kent a great place to live, work and do business.

The Plan highlights our priority schemes that are nationally important, such as a new Lower Thames Crossing and a solution to Operation Stack, as well as priority local schemes across Kent. Investment in our infrastructure is vital to boost Kent's economy and support a growing population.

To find out more and to take part visit website www.kent.gov.uk/localtransportplan or visit KCC's County Hall, district council offices, Gateways and libraries which will have a reference copy of the LTP4 draft and consultation questionnaires.

KCC Equality and Human Rights Policy & Objectives: 2016 – 2020: extended until 30 September

Kent County Council (KCC) would like to hear your views on its proposed draft Equality and Human Rights Policy and Objectives document which will help it to tackle discrimination and promote fairness and equality for our service users, staff and local residents.

To find out more visit: www.kent.gov.uk/diversity. You can respond to the consultation via an [online questionnaire](#) or print off the consultation document and questions and return it to us free of charge using the following address: Equality Objectives Consultation, Freepost LRA Consultation.

KCC will publish the final version of its Equality and Human Rights Policy and its Equality Objectives after this consultation.

KCC news

To view the latest news and releases from KCC visit KCC's Media Hub at <https://kccmediahub.net/>

Recent media releases

Your County Matters

From investing £4.2bn into key infrastructure, to safeguarding more than 150,000 vulnerable young children, or covering 86% of England's landmass, counties matter.

County Council's Network (CCN) new campaign, Your County Matters, will ensure county authorities are at the forefront of the debate on devolution and public sector reform.

Launched as part of CCN's Future of County Public Services programme, the campaign will put forward a positive, solution-based case for our members, showcasing their ability to drive forward county devolution and public sector reform at size and scale.

It will emphasise how important the delivery of county services are economically and socially to our local communities, seeking in particular to demonstrate to the new Government, MPs, and national stakeholders that upper-tier authorities are the critical bodies for delivering devolution and service transformation in non-metropolitan areas.

Drawing on research commissioned as part of the future of county public services programme, CCN will produce a Your County Matters report later this summer ahead of the Party Conferences.

For more information on any of these subjects please contact:

Anne Charman, KCC Community Liaison Officer

anne.charman@kent.gov.uk or 07717 665893

*KCC's **Community Liaison Team** covers all 12 district council areas in Kent supporting local County Councillors in their role as community leaders and administering their grants. The team works closely with partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors, to help ensure Kent's residents and local community groups are kept well informed about KCC's services and are given the opportunity to influence decisions.*



Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Services Update

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