

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 14th June, 2016

Present: Cllr A K Sullivan (Chairman), Cllr Mrs A S Oakley (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Mrs J A Anderson, Cllr M C Base, Cllr P F Bolt, Cllr J L Botten, Cllr T I B Cannon, Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr Mrs S M Hall, Cllr Mrs F A Kemp, Cllr Mrs S L Luck, Cllr P J Montague, Cllr M Taylor, Cllr F G Tombolis, Cllr T C Walker and Mr D Still (co-opted Member)

Councillors O C Baldock, N J Heslop, D Lettington and S C Perry were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ms S V Spence, Ms J A Atkinson, S R J Jessel and Mr P J Drury (co-opted Member)

PART 1 - PUBLIC

OS 16/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

OS 16/11 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 26 January 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

OS 16/12 APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED MEMBERS

RESOLVED: That pursuant to Article 6.05 of the Council's Constitution Mr P Drury and Mr D Still be co-opted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the current municipal year.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE COUNCIL

OS 16/13 EQUALITY POLICY STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVES

The report of the Director of Central Services set out for consideration the Equality Policy Statement and Objectives 2016-2020.

It was reported that the three West Kent authorities, Sevenoaks District Council, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, would in future determine their own objectives to replace the West Kent Equality Aims and commitments.

The Equality Objectives would be subject to regular reviews during the next four years to ensure they remained appropriate in the context of local priorities and demographics. The objectives for Tonbridge and Malling were set out at paragraphs 1.3.4 – 1.3.15 of the report.

Members felt that Equality Objective 1 did not accurately reflect the Borough Council's role as a community leader for the whole borough and asked for a slight change of emphasis as follows:

'As a community leader, we will advance equality of opportunity across the whole borough, particularly for those living within Snodland, East Malling and Trench, to achieve better outcomes in relation to health, employment and education.'

RECOMMENDED: That the Equality Policy Statement and Objectives, as attached at Annex 1 to the report, be recommended to Council for approval; subject to the minor change to Equality Objective 1 set out above. ◀

***Referred to Council**

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

OS 16/14 REVIEW OF CONCESSIONARY PARKING PERMITS

Members considered the recommendations arising from the Scrutiny Panel review of the Council's current concessionary car parking permits. The review had been undertaken to assess whether any possible changes or improvements could be identified to make the system either more efficient and/or cost effective.

A schedule setting out a list of those currently in receipt of a concessionary car parking permit was assessed by the Panel at the meeting held on 26 May 2016. A number of recommendations for change were discussed. A copy of the schedule together with the Panel's agreed recommendations was attached as Annex 1 to the report.

Particular reference was made to the concessionary permits granted to local schools to allow parents to safely drop off and collect children and whether this represented value for money and equity across the borough. However, on balance Members felt that the priorities of the Borough Council around residents' health and wellbeing and looking after people were important values that outweighed any cost implications. In addition, these arrangements ensured a better flow of traffic around dangerous and restricted junctions which was beneficial to the community. Finally, it was noted that schools at both ends of the borough, in Tonbridge and West Malling, benefitted from this type of arrangement.

RECOMMENDED: That the recommendations of the Scrutiny Review Panel (Parking Concessions), as set out at Annex 1 of the report and summarised below, be endorsed:

- (1) An internal review should be undertaken to consider whether the current list of Borough Council staff receiving permits was correct;
- (2) An internal review should be undertaken to consider whether the current list of Leisure Trust staff receiving permits was correct;
- (3) That permits no longer continue for Tonbridge Junior Football Club but an adjustment to hire fees be made to reflect the parking arrangements;
- (4) That the parking concession permit for St Stephens Church, Tonbridge be removed when the current permit expired;
- (5) An audit of current users and Country Park volunteers be undertaken to ensure the current list was accurate;
- (6) That permits for Riverside Bowls Club, Tonbridge no longer continue but an adjustment to the hire fee be made to reflect the parking arrangements; and
- (7) That permits for Alderman and Freeman be discontinued in the future. However, one-off permits for Civic events could be offered to attendees as appropriate

DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE COMMITTEE

OS 16/15 REVIEW OF MAYORALTY FUNCTION

The report of the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer proposed a review of the Mayoralty function to ensure that the role was modern and fit for purpose, whilst respecting the traditions of the historic office of mayor; to consider whether the role should be redesigned so that it linked to the Council's Corporate Strategy and to review the expenditure supporting the function.

The scope of the review was set out at paragraph 1.3 of the report. In addition, given the range of possible consultees to the proposals, it was suggested that the review should be taken forward by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee itself rather than via a Scrutiny Review Group.

Members supported the need for a debate around the civic function as long as the emphasis was on the quality of the role, improving it and providing value for money and not just a cost cutting exercise.

Concern was also expressed that linking the mayor too closely to a political agenda could diminish the role and using the position for

political gain was to be avoided. The primary role should be to promote Tonbridge and Malling and its values.

In addition, it was suggested that the role of mayor's chaplain be included in the review to challenge whether it remained appropriate for faith to be brought into Council meetings where many Members might not share the same beliefs.

RESOLVED: That:

- (1) the proposed scope of the review of the mayoral and civic function be endorsed; and
- (2) a detailed report be brought forward to the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for further consideration

MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION

OS 16/16 SCRUTINY REVIEW PROGRAMME

Members were advised of the planned programme of reviews for the current municipal year and were invited to make further suggestions.

It was proposed that following completion of the Mayoral and Civic Function review a re-assessment of the Council's Constitution be undertaken. There was a need for a full update to be undertaken to take on board changes which had occurred since the previous review, and also to reflect the need to review and further streamline Council procedures and practices where appropriate.

One potential future review area into 'concessionary charges for room hire at Tonbridge Castle' was identified. Further suggestions could be sent to the Chief Corporate Policy Officer (Mark Raymond) for consideration.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE

OS 16/17 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items considered in private.

The meeting ended at 8.15 pm

