

# TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL



## EXECUTIVE SERVICES

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### 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](mailto:committee.services@tmbc.gov.uk)

7 February 2018

To: MEMBERS OF THE PARISH PARTNERSHIP PANEL  
(Copies to all Members of the Council)

Dear Sir/Madam

Your attendance is requested at a meeting of the Parish Partnership Panel to be held in the Civic Suite, Gibson Building, Kings Hill, West Malling on Thursday, 15th February, 2018 commencing at 7.30 pm

Yours faithfully

JULIE BEILBY

Chief Executive

## A G E N D A

### Part 1 - Public

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes

5 - 12

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Parish Partnership Panel held on 16 November 2017

3. Update on action identified in the last Minutes
4. Kent Police and Crime Commissioner (Mr Matthew Scott)
  - To set out future aspirations and priorities for Kent Police
  - Opportunity to have dialogue with parish councils around policing issues
5. Kent Police Services Update

Representatives of Kent Police to be present to address crime prevention issues, including those raised by the Panel.
6. Public Space Protection Orders
  - The current situation in respect of Public Space Protection Orders and the consequent position of parish councils with their Dog Control Orders

(Requested by the Kent Association of Local Councils)
7. Borough Council Budget 2018/19 13 - 18
  - Information on the Borough Council's budget preparations for 2018/19
8. Kent County Council Services Update 19 - 26
9. Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council Services Update

## DISTRIBUTION

### Borough Council Representatives

Cllr N J Heslop (Chairman)  
Cllr M A Coffin (Vice-Chairman)  
Cllr Mrs J A Anderson  
Cllr Mrs S M Barker  
Cllr R P Betts  
Cllr T I B Cannon  
Cllr R W Dalton  
Cllr D Lettington  
Cllr B J Luker  
Cllr D Markham  
Cllr R V Roud  
Cllr T B Shaw  
Cllr B W Walker

### Parish and Town Council Representatives

Addington  
Aylesford  
Birling  
Borough Green  
Burham  
Ditton  
East Malling and Larkfield  
East Peckham  
Hadlow  
Hildenborough  
Ightham  
Kings Hill  
Leybourne  
Mereworth  
Offham  
Platt  
Plaxtol  
Ryarsh  
Shipbourne  
Snodland  
Stansted  
Trottiscliffe  
Wateringbury  
West Malling  
West Peckham  
Wouldham  
Wrotham

### County Councillors

Trudy Dean, Malling Central  
Matthew Balfour, Malling Rural East  
Sarah Hohler, Malling North  
Peter Homewood, Malling Rural North East  
Harry Rayner, Malling West

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## TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### PARISH PARTNERSHIP PANEL

Thursday, 16th November, 2017

**Present:** Cllr N J Heslop (Chairman), Cllr M A Coffin (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Mrs J A Anderson, Cllr Mrs S M Barker, Cllr R P Betts, Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr D Lettington, Cllr B J Luker, Cllr R V Roud and Cllr T B Shaw.

Together with Addington, Aylesford, Birling, Borough Green, Burham, East Malling and Larkfield, East Peckham, Hadlow, Ightham, Kings Hill, Leybourne, Offham, Platt, Plaxtol, Shipbourne, Wateringbury, and Wrotham Parish Councils and County Councillors Mrs S Hohler and Mr H Rayner

Councillors H S Rogers and O C Baldock were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Trottiscliffe Parish Council and the Chairman of the Kent Association of Local Councils (Tonbridge and Malling).

### PART 1 - PUBLIC

#### **PPP 17/16 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **PPP 17/17 UPDATE ON ACTION IDENTIFIED IN THE LAST MINUTES - PARISH CHARTER**

The Chairman referred to Minute Number PPP 17/12 (Parish Charter) and advised that following further discussion with the Kent Association of Local Councils (Tonbridge and Malling) a revised draft had been circulated to all Parish and Town Councils in advance of the meeting. Copies of the revised draft were also tabled for the Borough and County Council Members.

It was hoped that the Parish Charter was now ready to be adopted, subject to informal agreement of the Parish Partnership Panel. The next step would be for the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) (Tonbridge and Malling) and the Borough Council to formally adopt the Parish Charter via their own processes. In the case of the Borough Council, it would be up to Cabinet to give final approval.

The Chairman suggested that KALC seek final approval from the Parish/Town Councils in advance of the Borough Council's meeting of

Cabinet on 30 January 2018. It was hoped that an agreed Parish Charter would be formally signed by the Leader of the Borough Council and the Chairman of KALC at the meeting of the Parish Partnership Panel in February 2018.

The Deputy Chairman of KALC expressed appreciation for the work undertaken so far and supported the next steps as set out above.

### **PPP 17/18 WASTE SERVICES CONTRACT**

The Head of Waste Services outlined proposals for the Waste Services Contract for refuse, recycling and street cleansing as the current contract was due to end in February 2019.

Partnership opportunities for the future delivery of these services were currently being developed with neighbouring West Kent authorities and Kent County Council, although the final details were still to be defined and agreed. However, the main aim was to deliver service improvements and efficiencies, greater consistency across the County, increased recycling performance and an operation that represented value for money.

The current proposals being considered included a weekly food waste, fortnightly residual waste, fortnightly dry recycling of paper and card and glass, cans, plastics and cartons kerbside collection model. Proposals also included the introduction of a fortnightly garden waste 'opt in' charged service. It was reported that charges were necessary in underpinning the proposed service improvements.

It was indicated that Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council was in the minority of local authorities across Kent that did not currently charge for the collection of garden waste.

The County Councillor representing Malling North welcomed the opportunity of partnership working with a number of borough/district councils as it offered a more uniform approach across Kent. In addition, the Borough Council were congratulated on the excellent service they currently offered residents.

The Panel supported the introduction of kerbside collection for glass and plastic, whilst recognising the challenge around co-mingling of materials. Members were assured that Kent County Council, as the authority with responsibility for disposal of waste, were actively involved in all discussions regarding co-mingling and their input was greatly appreciated.

There was also some concern expressed that charging for garden waste collection could potentially increase the levels of fly tipping. In response, Members were advised that where charges for green waste had been introduced by other local authorities there was no evidence to show that

levels of fly tipping had increased. It was expected that households already producing significant garden waste would choose to opt in.

Details relating to some services and the introduction of charges for garden waste were yet to be finalised by the Borough Council as some decisions were dependent upon the tender. However, it was noted that the national average charge for garden waste collection was approximately £42 per annum.

The Cabinet Member for Street Scene and Environment Services indicated that the Borough Council had agreed the principle of charging for garden waste but not the final detail. This was a positive opportunity to improve and increase services for residents and represented value for money.

Other areas discussed included the lack of a KCC Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) in the Borough, which meant that some residents were forced to visit other areas; the upgraded facility at Blaise Farm which would accept co-mingled and separated green waste materials, home composting and whether the Saturday bulky collection service would continue to take garden waste. With regard to the latter, options would be reviewed in due course.

If kerbside collection increased it was anticipated that the need to travel to recycling points would reduce and offered a more convenient service to residents. In addition the number of recycling sites across the Borough would reduce although a number would be retained at strategic core sites for those properties not able to receive the new kerbside collection service, such as flats.

Finally, it was noted that good communication, publicity and marketing would be key to resident participation and the success of the new services. The service delivery options around the Waste Services Contract continued and further detail would be forthcoming as the process developed.

### **PPP 17/19 LOCAL PLAN**

The Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) (Tonbridge and Malling) asked about the potential impacts on the Borough Council's Local Plan arising from the latest consultation on proposed recalculation of housing building requirements.

In reply, the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health advised that a robust and comprehensive response had been submitted setting out the Borough Council's concerns. This response had been shared with the Parish/Town Councils and the local Members of Parliament.

It was reported that Government proposals to introduce a standard methodology for estimating future housing needs, to reduce the number of challenges at the Local Plan Inquiry stage, were unwelcome and could have adverse implications on the Borough Councils' Local Plan programme.

The implications for each Local Planning Authority were published alongside the consultation document. For Tonbridge and Malling the result was an increase of 163 dwellings per year on top of the current estimate of 696, making a total of 859 new homes every year. Over the 20 year plan this equated to an additional 3,260 homes and represented a significant challenge if those figures were confirmed.

The Planning Policy Manager advised that the Borough Council had expressed concerns around deliverability, affordability and consistency of approach. It was noted that as most housing was delivered by the private sector and due to the proximity of London, increasing supply was unlikely to bring prices down. Unfortunately, the Borough Council was not in a position to submit its Local Plan before 31 March 2018, when the new methodology was expected to come into force, and would have to take account of the new housing need proposed.

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council would continue with its Local Plan as previously set out and remained optimistic that an adoption date in 2019 was still achievable. Further information would be provided to the Planning and Transportation Advisory Board on 5 December 2017.

The Planning Policy Manager advised of the importance of completing the current work and assessments to place the Borough Council in a reasonable position if the proposals proceeded. At the present time it remained unclear how the Government would resolve the key messages arising from the consultation.

The Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health indicated that should the proposed figures be adopted it would be inevitable that the density and capacity of identified sites would have to be revisited. In addition, it was likely that previously identified and discounted proposals would have to be re-examined.

Finally, the Chairman, in his capacity as Leader of the Borough Council, reiterated that Tonbridge and Malling was extremely disappointed with the Government's latest consultation.

#### **PPP 17/20 AIR QUALITY - PROPOSED ACTION PLAN FOR REDUCTION OF AIR POLLUTION**

The Environmental Protection Team Manager presented an update on air quality matters of relevance to Tonbridge and Malling.



In July 2017, the Government had published a UK Air Quality Plan focused on reducing nitrogen dioxide. As a result, 29 local authorities which were forecast to have the greatest exceedance problem over the next 3-4 years were identified to produce action plans. Whilst the Borough Council was not one of the local authorities identified, the opportunity was being taken to update the Tonbridge and Malling Air Quality Action Plan in line with DEFRA targets.

In updating its Air Quality Action Plan, the Borough Council would explore opportunities to deliver practical change, such as bus retrofitting, provision of cycle routes and provision of electric vehicle charging points, and worked closely with schools and businesses to raise awareness of air quality issues. There would also be a focus on borough wide mitigation, including an infrastructure to support electric vehicles, and an opportunity to work with developers, planners and Kent County Council highways.

Currently within the Borough there were 7 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in:

- Aylesford
- Borough Green
- Ditton
- Larkfield
- Tonbridge High Street
- Wateringbury
- M20

Monitoring of nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) was being carried out at 52 sites across the Borough and so far there was no exceedance of NO<sub>2</sub> limit levels identified outside of those areas already declared as AQMAs. If Parish Councils wanted further information on these monitoring points Environmental Protection would be pleased to assist.

Borough Green Parish Council made particular reference to particulates, which were a major concern due to the level of traffic movements and other environmental factors in the area, and asked whether the Borough Council would give consideration to any evidence collected by individual parish/town councils if they purchased their own monitoring devices. In response, the Environmental Protection Manager indicated that any results generated in this way would be looked at.

Members encouraged more emphasis on particulate monitoring. The Chief Environmental Health Officer advised that particulate monitoring equipment was a significant investment, although options were being explored with neighbouring authorities. Members were also reminded that although the Borough Council had a duty regarding monitoring of air quality, district authorities had little power to affect and/or implement change. The biggest opportunity to affect change was liaison with planners, developers and the Highway Authority. In addition, it was

noted that Public Health England could put pressure on traffic planners to take account of air quality.

In response to a question related to the M20 slip road at Junction 5, the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health advised that the Borough Council were fully supportive of these proposals. It was also hoped that the introduction of a 'smart' motorway along a stretch of the M20 would have a positive effect on the AQMAs in that vicinity.

A number of significant concerns were raised and noted. These included monitoring air quality at schools; risks to children as a result of NO<sub>2</sub> and particulates; impacts on local schools and communities, especially where concerns had already been expressed; the explanation around 'receptors' (housing) and the requirement for these to trigger an AQMA; the clarification that the M20 AQMA related to the area from the bridge at New Hythe Lane to Hall Road in Aylesford and the need for environmental permits and Local Planning Authority consent before crushing of aggregates.

The Chairman suggested that further questions related to particular sites should be raised out of meeting for Officers to advise further.

#### **PPP 17/21 KENT POLICE SERVICES UPDATE**

Inspector Martin provided a verbal update on the achievements made in performance and the neighbourhood policing agenda.

A number of minor staff changes were reported and it was noted that Inspector Martin was Acting Chief Inspector for both Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells, whilst Andy Gallon was Acting Inspector. In addition, the Community Safety Unit had recently recruited Vulnerable Adult and Vulnerable Youth Officers.

In response to a question from Kings Hill Parish Council, it was confirmed that an active campaign to recruit voluntary Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) was ongoing.

Recent initiatives and operations included attendance at Remembrance Parades in Snodland, Tonbridge and West Malling; increased patrols over Halloween, especially in East Malling and Kings Hill, had resulted in a reduced number of anti-social behaviour incidents on the previous year; and the use of Dispersal Orders and Anti-social Behaviour Orders in the Borough continued.

Particular reference was made to the increased number of thefts from motor vehicles in Aylesford, Larkfield and Snodland and these continued to be an active investigation.

In addition, Inspector Martin referred to the HMIC (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary) annual inspection of police effectiveness,

efficiency and legitimacy which assessed how effective police forces were at keeping people safe and reducing crime. Kent Police had received good results in the first two (effectiveness and efficiency) and the interim feedback suggested a positive result for legitimacy.

Finally, it was noted that contact information and details relevant to individual parishes were available on the Kent Police website. This could be used to identify local PCSOs.

## **PPP 17/22 KENT COUNTY COUNCIL SERVICES UPDATE**

The Kent County Council Community Liaison Officer (Anne Charman) reported on a number of County initiatives and consultations. Further detail was set out in the Kent County Council Services update report attached to the agenda.

Particular reference was made to a number of initiatives and these included:

- Lorry Watch and details on how to set up a scheme were available by emailing [freight@kent.gov.uk](mailto:freight@kent.gov.uk)
- Apprenticeships: KCC had recently launched the 1000 interview campaign and required more employers to register vacancies
- Member Grant Scheme 2017/18 was now opened with £22,000 available to fund both community and highway projects. Tonbridge and Malling County Councillors had a total of £154,000 to allocate in 2017/18. Further information was available from local County Councillors or the Community Liaison Officer

Current consultations included the Draft Budget Strategy 2018/19 and the Community Infant Feeding Support, both of which ended on 3 December 2017. A consultation related to Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Allocations, setting out proposals related to the introduction of service charges, deposit scheme and changes to the application process, had a deadline for responses of 20 December 2017. In addition, the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment consultation sought views from health and social care professionals, organisations and local communities on the level of pharmacy services. The deadline for responses was 22 January 2018.

All Kent County Council consultations could be viewed online at:

<http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti>

Comments from the Panel related to enforcement on HGV parking in light of the recent decision not to progress plans for a lorry park in Kent were noted. The Chairman anticipated that the Joint Transportation

Board would review the potential consequences arising from this decision and the implications for parked HGVs.

### **PPP 17/23 TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL SERVICES UPDATE**

The Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health provided an update on key points relevant to Tonbridge and Malling. The headline messages included:

- Larkfield Leisure Centre:

Works had commenced to extend the fitness suite and included construction of new dance studios to meet growing demand. The project was anticipated to cost £750,000 and these would be met in full by the Leisure Trust. These facilities could revert to Borough Council ownership at the end of the agreement with the Leisure Trust.

- Leybourne Lakes Country Park:

The Borough Council was looking at options to make the Country Park more financially self-sufficient. There was a focus on income generation linked to capital investment in the facilities, with the potential for a lakeside visitor centre incorporating catering and water sports.

It was reported that the Borough Council had £700,000 of developer contribution funds to invest in the project and was looking to work in partnership with a third party operator. The Panel was pleased to note that there had been strong interest from a number of operations.

The intention was to advertise the opportunity in Spring 2018 after a period of consultation, in which Parish councils were encouraged to participate.

- Financial Planning for Parish Councils

The Chairman advised that the Borough Council was aware that Parish and Town Councils would be preparing their budgets for the next financial year and assured that they would be updated as soon as possible.

The meeting ended at 9.40 pm

## TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### PARISH PARTNERSHIP PANEL

15 February 2018

#### Report of the Director of Finance and Transformation

#### Part 1- Public

#### Matters for Information

#### **1 BOROUGH COUNCIL BUDGET 2018/19**

**Information on the Borough Council's budget preparations for 2018/19.**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

1.1.1 The Cabinet is due to meet on 8 February 2018 to discuss the Budget for 2018/19, and the level of Council Tax. The report can be found at item 8 on the Cabinet agenda published online [here](#) .

1.1.2 The report not only looks at the 2018/19 Budget, but sets it within a 10 year context of our Medium Term Financial Strategy. Aligned to this is the Council's Savings and Transformation Strategy which sets a framework for delivering savings.

#### **1.2 2018/19 Budget and Council Tax**

1.2.1 In terms of 2018/19, the Council is due to see a further reduction in its Settlement Funding Assessment (the core funding from Government) cumulating into a decrease, by 2018/19, of some 23% since the start of the 4 year settlement. Fortunately, the Council's New Homes Bonus Allocation for the year will be better than expected due to exceptional delivery of new homes, so the additional funding over expectation will negate some of the loss in the Settlement Funding Assessment.

1.2.2 The Secretary of State announced that for shire district councils, a referendum will be triggered when council tax is increased by 3%, or more than 3% and more than £5. The Secretary of State advised that he was increasing the threshold in 2018/19 in order to recognise the current levels of inflation.

1.2.3 The Budget papers prepared for Cabinet assume that the option to levy a council tax with an increase of up to 3% will be taken up. If this is the case and Cabinet agree to recommend this to Full Council, the Borough Council's published (notional) level of council tax will be £203.42 at Band D; an increase of £5.91 per annum on last year's council tax (which is actually a 2.99% increase).

- 1.2.4 It should be noted that the published council tax figure is made up of both general expenses and special expenses, and as previously explained at the Panel meetings, the special expenses will vary from area to area (see table at **Annex 1**).
- 1.2.5 Some parished areas have no special expenses levy at all. The 'average' special expenses figure at Band D is £15.69, but this is heavily skewed towards the Tonbridge area.
- 1.2.6 Every resident in the borough will pay the **general expenses levy**, which at Band D will be **£187.73** (assuming that this amount is recommended by Cabinet and then adopted by Council). The Borough Council's council tax levy would (if approved) therefore look like this:

General Expenses at Band D	£187.73
Special Expenses at Band D (average)	<u>£15.69</u>
Total published (notional) Band D	<u>£203.42</u>

### 1.3 Continued Need to deliver Savings

- 1.3.1 The Budget for 2018/19 is set in the context of a 10 year plan, and in order to deliver the objectives of that plan we calculate that savings of circa £1.0m are still required to be found. Since the Savings and Transformation Strategy was adopted in 2016 we have already found £1.8m (details are in the budget report referenced earlier).
- 1.3.2 The plan assumes that we will break the target of £1.0m down into three parts ('tranches') of broadly £350k in each of the next 3 years.
- 1.3.3 The Savings and Transformation Strategy sets out the broad areas where the Council anticipates savings might be found. The Strategy is structured around themes which are:
- Income Generation & Cost Recovery
  - In-Service Efficiencies
  - Service Change & Reduction
  - Contracts
  - Organisation Structure Change
  - Partnership Funding
  - Asset Management

1.3.4 Looking ahead, and reflecting on where the bulk of savings have been made so far, the Cabinet is now being recommended to focus more heavily on the themes of 'Contracts' and 'Service Change and Reduction' as we move forward.

**1.4 2018/19 Council Tax Bills**

1.4.1 Full Council is due to meet on 20 February to set the Borough Council's budget and council tax.

1.4.2 It is intended to start the despatch of bills around 14<sup>th</sup> March. Bills are posted in batches so residents can receive them at different times.

Background papers:

contact: Sharon Shelton

Nil

Sharon Shelton  
Director of Finance & Transformation

5 February 2018

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## Special Expenses 2018/19 at Band D (Recommendations)

	Band D £
Tonbridge	50.98
Addington	4.19
Aylesford	2.04
Birling	4.78
Borough Green	0.72
Burham	0.00
Ditton	0.29
E Malling & Larkfield	4.52
East Peckham	0.46
Hadlow	0.00
Hildenborough	0.00
Ightham	0.00
Kings Hill	0.00
Leybourne	14.91
Mereworth	0.07
Offham	0.00
Platt	1.36
Plaxtol	0.00
Ryarsh	0.00
Shipbourne	0.00
Snodland	5.20
Stansted	0.00
Trottscliffe	0.00
Wateringbury	2.11
West Malling	2.50
West Peckham	0.00
Wouldham	5.79
Wrotham	2.03
BOROUGH AVERAGE :	15.69

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## Tonbridge and Malling Parish Partnership Panel

Thursday, 15 February 2018

### Kent County Council Services Update

**Key points taken from the Report by Paul Carter, Leader of the Council to Full Council on 7 December 2017** (minutes not yet published).

- Mr Carter spoke of his concern over the **future of three Kent hospitals**, Canterbury, QEQM and William Harvey and the two options currently being proposed for a public consultation by East Kent Hospital Trust; he believes a third option should be developed. The third option would deliver a newly constructed hospital for Canterbury to serve its existing catchment area, currently serving a population of 240,000. The population is projected to rise to 280,000 by 2030. Under the KEOGH published guidance for hospital reconfigurations, particularly relating to the guidance for 'urgent and emergency care', populations in the range of 250,000 to 300,000 would support what is referred to as a medical emergency centre which would provide the following services:
  - consultant led A&E
  - acute medicine and critical care/HDU
  - access to surgical opinion via network
  - possibly paediatrics assessment unit and possibly midwife-led obstetrics.
- Mr Carter urged Health colleagues to include this option prior to any public consultation. KEOGH guidance recommends the total population should be considered rather than look at a situation in a piecemeal way, which in Kent and Medway's case is 1.5m people. This proposition was discussed with partners at a recent Sustainability and Transformation Plan Programme Board and as a conclusion, a meeting will be arranged with health professionals to discuss the possibility of taking this option forward. The Leader of Canterbury City Council, Simon Cook, is very much in support of the third option and has been invited to the meeting.
- The recent announcement in last week's Autumn Budget, which announced an **additional £3.8bn for the National Health Service** was greatly welcomed.
- Mr Carter referred to the much-publicised letter he received from Kent Conservative MPs expressing concern about the **potential diminution in budget and delivery of subsidised bus routes**. Kent County Council (KCC) has not axed any subsidies for bus routes in the past 12 months and the budget remains at £7.5m for 2017/18, although some bus companies have chosen to alter certain routes.
- Bus subsidies are among potential savings currently being considered by KCC in the next February '18 budget. Mr Carter appreciated the importance of these transport arrangements for Kent residents and is progressing a programme that could reduce the list of routes published in advance of a consultation due to start in January 2018. Mr Carter said the list of routes published was premature and apologised for the understandable concern it has caused.

- Mr Carter made a personal pledge to handle the negotiations with the bus operators. He intended meeting with Arriva and Stagecoach as well as smaller bus companies in advance of the consultation to ask if a significant number of routes can be kept without a subsidy, with a view to reducing the impact.
- KCC always planned to look at more imaginative ways to invest in lower cost transport options. To this end Mr Carter intends meeting with taxi companies to explore the 'clip and ride' taxi share scheme to better support rural communities, alongside expanding community mini buses and the Kent Karrier services. An indicative budget has been set for this purpose to show KCC's commitment to its residents, while always being mindful to spend taxpayer's money wisely.
- Additional pressure has been placed on KCC by Arriva and Stagecoach who have increased their prices by up to 3.5% this year, above inflation for the fifth consecutive year. Serious negotiations are needed to try to reduce KCC's current cost of @£40m for commissioned bus services.

In addition, during the County Council Question & Answer session the following question was answered by the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport which relates specifically to the Tonbridge & Malling area:

- Q.** Please confirm that the Council is taking all possible steps to have the Environment Agency implement the agreed improvements to the River Medway flood protection measures in Hildenborough (Flood Defence Fund) and Tonbridge (Leigh flood Barrier) and further confirm that the above joint works remain on schedule for completion?
- R.** The Environment Agency is progressing the Leigh Expansion and Hildenborough Embankments scheme. It has completed the Outline Business Case and is currently working on the Strategic Business Case which are both requirements of the Treasury to secure the government contribution. KCC is also working with them to prepare the Business Case for the Local Growth fund allocation to the project, which will be submitted in the New Year. KCC has also committed its own contribution of £2.5m to the scheme and is currently finalising the legal agreement for this contribution. The scheme remains on track for completion in 2021/22.

A [webcast](#) of the meeting is available.

## **Lorry Watch**

KCC works to mitigate the impact of freight in Kent and has introduced a scheme called Lorry Watch to tackle the issue of lorries using inappropriate rural routes in Kent. The scheme aims to support and empower local residents in areas where issues persist with the through traffic of Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs).

The Lorry Watch scheme is run by local residents. Community volunteers record details of lorries that are suspected of using unsuitable roads or not sticking to the limits and restrictions. Once the information is collected, it is passed to Kent Police who can find the vehicle's registered keeper. If the vehicle is ignoring the legal limits and restrictions, the police contact the company and warn them that if they continue, it may result in formal action.

If there is no limit or restriction but the road is thought unsuitable, Kent County Council will contact the company and advise them to use the [Kent Freight Gateway journey planner](#).

**Setting up a Lorry Watch.** Anyone can set up a Lorry Watch. To do this, follow these steps:

1. You will need at least two volunteers for your Lorry Watch team. They must be aged 18 or over. Parish Councils or other community groups can be good places to find volunteers.
2. Contact Lorry Watch by emailing [freight@kent.gov.uk](mailto:freight@kent.gov.uk) or on 03000 41 81 81 to discuss the idea, after which the necessary equipment will be delivered to you together with safety information and instructions on how the scheme works.

### **Kent and Medway Business Fund**

KCC is offering 0% loans between £50,000 and £500,000 to small and medium sized businesses in Ashford, Canterbury, Dartford, Dover, Gravesham, Maidstone, Medway, Sevenoaks, Shepway, Swale, Thanet, Tonbridge and Malling and Tunbridge Wells.

The scheme aims to deliver investment to business across Kent and Medway and is funded by loan repayments from our previous Regional Growth Fund schemes (Expansion East Kent, Tiger and Escalate).

Pre-applications are now open for the Kent and Medway Business Fund.

Follow the link to find out more on who can apply and how to apply to the [Kent and Medway Business Fund](#)

### **Kent Fostering - Open your Heart**

KCC urgently needs people to provide children and young people with loving homes. KCC is recruiting 200 new foster carers and urgently needs to fill the remaining 120 vacancies. For more information please contact 03000 420 002 or visit <http://www.kentfostering.co.uk>

### **Kent Public Health Observatory (KPHO) <http://www.kpho.org.uk/>**

KPHO provides public health intelligence through data collection, analysis and interpretation. Its library, based in Sessions House, Maidstone, gives access to knowledge, resources and evidence to support public health and social care.

Non-members are welcome to use the library for reference and study purposes, although there may be a charge for this facility. You can also subscribe to its weekly e-bulletin and receive a weekly summary of what's new with links to new reports, policy and resources organized by topic.

### **Fact and Figures about Kent**

The Kent County Council Strategic Business Development & Intelligence Unit provides regular monthly updates on unemployment in Kent and other facts and figures, including area profiles, economy and employment data, population and census data, equality and

diversity data, children and young people' data, land and property data, energy and environment data and deprivation and poverty data. Visit: [Facts and Figures about Kent](#)

## **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](http://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. Residents can still call to report any complex or urgent matters on 03000 418181 and speak to one of KCC's trained highway specialists.

## **KCC Combined Member Grant Scheme 2017/18**

KCC's Combined Member Grant scheme is open with £22,000 available to every County Councillor to fund both community and highway projects in their electoral division. Tonbridge & Malling County Councillors between them have a total of £154,000 to allocate in 2017/18.

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: [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 closed, 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](#).)
- to view and comment on planning applications that the County Council determines please visit the [planning application site](#).

## Current consultations:

### **Homelessness Support Service for Vulnerable Adults in Kent**

**22 January 2018 to 4 March 2018**

KCC funds homelessness support services for vulnerable young people (16-25), adults who are over 18 and offenders who need additional support. Currently, those services can be categorised as either 'supported housing', 'floating support' or 'rough sleeper outreach'.

KCC would like to hear your views on the proposals contained within the consultation document, which refers to plans for those 18+ and your thoughts on how we might improve the future delivery of homelessness support for vulnerable adults in Kent. Your views will be used to help shape the future of these services after October 2018.

For more information or to respond to this consultation please visit: [Homelessness Support Service Consultation](#)

### **Improving Access to Tonbridge Station - Revised Design**

**16 January to 12 February 2018**

In December 2016 KCC carried out a consultation on a design to improve access to Tonbridge Station. It has used the feedback from this consultation to revise the design on which it is now seeking your views.

Tonbridge Station is the busiest station in Kent with over 4.4 million customers expected to have used the station in 2016/17.

Working with Tonbridge & Malling Borough Council, Network Rail and Southeastern, KCC aims to improve the space available for customers at the station, provide more room for pedestrian movements, encourage further take up of sustainable transport and to link the design to the recently improved High Street.

This scheme will be using funds secured from the Local Growth Fund of £500,000 allocated by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership.

Visit [Improving Access to Tonbridge Station](#) to have your say or participate in the [online forum](#).

## **KCC news**

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

## Recent media releases

### ***Kent County Council calls on government to support highway maintenance***

KCC is calling on the government to make changes to road maintenance budgets warning the current system could lead to a 'rapid spiral of asset deterioration'.

KCC is on course to secure its highways maintenance budget in the face of diminishing government funding by receiving a 'band three' in funding. The rating, from the Department for Transport (DfT), means KCC will receive £26.6m this year rather than £25.2m in its current band two rating.

As government funding in general continues to dwindle and KCC faces extra pressures on its finances, the current condition of the road network equates to a maintenance backlog in the region of £630m.

The amount given to Kent from the DfT's Incentive Fund, if it remained at band two, would reduce by £2.3m in 2019/20 and £1.4m in 2020/21.

Kent County Council has a highways network valued at around £25bn with 5,400 miles of roads, 3,900 miles of pavement, 250,000 drains, 1,595 bridges, 125,000 streetlights and 500,000 trees.

The issue was discussed at the Environment & Transport Cabinet Committee on Wednesday, 31 January and a [webcast](#) of this meeting is now available.

### ***Kent County Council continues to protect frontline services***

KCC is approaching the start of another financial year facing an immense challenge in setting the council's budget. In the coming financial year, KCC has a budget gap of £113m out of the council's net budget of approximately £1bn.

Savings of £53m are needed as government funding reduces by £45m, coupled with the rising demand for services, particularly for children's and adult social care and linked to inflation costs currently rising at more than 3% per year.

To date, unlike many other councils, KCC has avoided making significant cuts in frontline services. It continues to make savings through efficiencies and service transformation but is fast reaching the point where frontline services are now threatened.

However, since it announced its budget consultation in September 2017 for the coming financial year 2018/19, there have been two significant announcements made by the government.

Firstly, that the government has accepted the Kent and Medway bid to become a Business Rate Retention pilot scheme in 2018/19. Working with the 12 district councils, Medway Council and the Kent Fire and Rescue Authority, the innovative bid will potentially deliver £5.6m of additional resource for the county council for the coming financial year.

Secondly, the provisional local government settlement for 2018/19 announced by the Secretary of State in the House of Commons included an increase in the amount authorities can raise in council tax by 1% without a referendum (worth £6m to KCC).

However, this announcement must be balanced against the disappointment that the provisional local government settlement did not include an extension of the Transitional Grant worth £5.3m.



KCC is therefore joining county councils across the country in proposing to raise council tax to protect and deliver the services it believes its community deserves.

In 2018/19 it is proposed council tax will be raised by just under 5%, adding £52.30 to the annual charge of the average band C household in Kent.

As a result, KCC is proposing to:

- Substantially reduce the saving proposed on subsidised bus travel from £2.25m to £0.45m by looking at smarter, more responsive ways to deliver these services. There will be conversations with parish councils and communities on how this can be delivered and an additional investment of £500k to fulfil these ambitions.
- Continue the £8.7m subsidy provided through the Young Persons Travel Pass
- An additional £7.5m capital investment in maintaining Kent's roads, including pothole repairs
- Protect Kent's most vulnerable children and adults with a total increase in the budget of £16m.

The budget will be finalised at the County Council meeting on Tuesday, 20 February 2018.

### ***KCC 'disappointed' at delay of planned Thameslink service to Maidstone East***

Kent County Council is extremely disappointed at the recent announcement by Govia Thameslink Railway of their decision to delay even further the start of the planned new Thameslink service to Maidstone East.

Once again Maidstone has been put to the back of the queue, with a delay of a further year from December 2018 to December 2019.

Kent County Council has been determined to have a branch of Thameslink services terminating at Maidstone East, and has campaigned over several years, with other councils and rail travellers' associations, to get the planned terminus for Thameslink services transferred from Tunbridge Wells to Maidstone East.

Kent County Council has always regarded this new service as a critical enhancement in the overall capacity in Kent's rail network, with the stops at West Malling (for Kings Hill), Borough Green & Wrotham, and Otford (for passengers from the wider Sevenoaks area) being essential to re-balance the travel flows between mid-Kent and the City of London. Furthermore, even the existing Thameslink service from Sevenoaks via Bat & Ball will now be truncated at Blackfriars for the period May 2018 to May 2019, further reducing the availability of through rail services between Kent and areas north of London.

Kent County Council will be writing to the rail minister to express its frustration at these further delays by the Department for Transport.

For more information on any of these subjects please contact:

**Anne Charman**, KCC Community Liaison Officer  
[anne.charman@kent.gov.uk](mailto: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.*



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