

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, 18th February, 2020

At the meeting of the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council held at Civic Suite, Gibson Building, Kings Hill, West Malling on Tuesday, 18th February, 2020

Present: Her Worship the Mayor (Councillor Mrs J A Anderson), the Deputy Mayor (Councillor R V Roud), Cllr M C Base, Cllr Mrs P A Bates, Cllr R P Betts, Cllr T Bishop, Cllr J L Botten, Cllr M D Boughton, Cllr V M C Branson, Cllr G C Bridge, Cllr C Brown, Cllr R I B Cannon, Cllr A E Clark, Cllr M A Coffin, Cllr D J Cooper, Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr N Foyle, Cllr N J Heslop, Cllr P M Hickmott, Cllr M A J Hood, Cllr F A Hoskins, Cllr S A Hudson, Cllr A P J Keeley, Cllr D Keers, Cllr Mrs F A Kemp, Cllr A Kennedy, Cllr D W King, Cllr K King, Cllr J R S Lark, Cllr D Lettington, Cllr Mrs R F Lettington, Cllr B J Luker, Cllr P J Montague, Cllr Mrs A S Oakley, Cllr W E Palmer, Cllr M R Rhodes, Cllr H S Rogers, Cllr J L Sergison, Cllr T B Shaw, Cllr N G Stapleton, Cllr K B Tanner, Cllr Mrs M Tatton, Cllr M Taylor, Cllr Miss G E Thomas, Cllr D Thornevell, Cllr F G Tombolis and Cllr C J Williams

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs S Bell, D A S Davis, M O Davis, Mrs T Dean, S M Hammond, Mrs C B Langridge and L J O'Toole

PART 1 - PUBLIC

C 20/1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

C 20/2 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Council held on 29 October 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

C 20/3 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported that since October she had visited many school nativities, Christmas fayres and award presentations. She highlighted a number of memorable events including Her Majesty The Queen's visit to RBLI, Aylesford, the Kent International Piano Courses Concert, the Armistice Day Service at RBLI's Garden of Honour in Aylesford, a Nikolausabend Dinner, the East Peckham Dementia Community's

opening of a New Information Hub and Sensory Planter at East Peckham Library, The Diocese of Rochester's International White Ribbon Campaign, Tonbridge Rotary Club's Christmas Festival and the Mayor of Margate's Blessing of the Seas.

Past Mayoral events included hosting local primary schools' debates, Remembrance Sunday Services and Parades on 10 November and the Charity Evening at the Oast Theatre on 21 January. The Mayor was pleased to announce that the Charity Event at the Old Juddians Rugby Club on 25 January had raised £1,000 in aid of her charity CRY. The Mayor encouraged Members to buy tickets for the forthcoming Charity Event at the Old Fire Station on 15 April and advised that there were some spaces available for the Charity Quiz to be held at the Devonshire Rooms, Snodland on 21 February.

C 20/4 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 5.6

No questions were received from members of the public pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 5.6.

C 20/5 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 5.5

No questions were received from Members pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 5.5.

C 20/6 NOTICES OF MOTION SUBMITTED PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 5.27

Consideration was given to a Notice of Motion pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 5.7 submitted by Councillor F Hoskins on behalf of the Tonbridge and Malling Liberal Democrat Group in the following terms:

This council notes:

- *the motion declaring a climate emergency which was passed on 9th July 2019;*
- *that the biggest single contributor to climate change is the emission of carbon from fossil fuels;*
- *that trees have the ability to soak up carbon emissions and therefore tree planting can offset some of the carbon dioxide which is contributing to climate change.*

This council therefore calls on the Chief Executive to prepare a tree planting strategy which:

- *aims to increase considerably the tree cover within the borough by identifying council owned land that could be used for tree planting;*
- *sets out to create community orchards to help improve the supply of fresh, local produce and boost the health of residents;*
- *works with the voluntary sector and local parish councils to deliver tree planting plans;*
- *involves schools, colleges and Kent university and their pupils and students in carrying out tree planting and woodland maintenance;*
- *identifies sources of funding available to the council, parishes and voluntary organisations to pay for tree planting.*

Councillor N Heslop proposed, seconded by Councillor R Betts an amendment to the motion as follows:

This council notes:

- *the motion declaring a recognition of global climate change and biodiversity emergencies which was passed on 9th July 2019;*
- *the commitment to review services and operations to ensure Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council has policies that support climate change mitigation;*
- *that the biggest single contributor to climate change is the emission of carbon from fossil fuels;*
- *that trees play an important role in terms of CO₂ capture and storage. Therefore tree planting can offset some of the carbon dioxide which is contributing to climate change.*

The council welcomes the emerging Climate Change Strategy and commits to:

- *a Tree Charter for the Borough, working in partnership with organisations such as the Woodland Trust;*
- *the aim of retaining a planting budget to re-plant native trees where appropriate and ensure that trees on Borough Council owned land are well cared for;*
- *working with partners such as local landowners, developers, Kent County Council, parish councils and community groups amongst others, to encourage tree planting and explore suitable opportunities for planting within boundaries and hedgerows;*
- *inviting the Street Scene and Environment Services Advisory Board to consider the establishment of community orchards; and*
- *notes that the revenue estimates for tree maintenance on Borough Council owned land in 2020/21 is £30,000.*

Members signified consent to this alteration and it was

RESOLVED: that the Notice of Motion (as amended) be agreed as follows:

1. The Council notes:
 - the motion declaring a recognition of global climate change and biodiversity emergencies which was passed on 9th July 2019;
 - the commitment to review services and operations to ensure Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council has policies that support climate change mitigation;
 - that the biggest single contributor to climate change is the emission of carbon from fossil fuels; and
 - that trees play an important role in terms of CO₂ capture and storage. Therefore tree planting can offset some of the carbon dioxide which is contributing to climate change.
2. The Council welcomes the emerging Climate Change Strategy and commits to:
 - a Tree Charter for the Borough, working in partnership with organisations such as the Woodland Trust;
 - the aim of retaining a planting budget to re-plant native trees where appropriate and ensure that trees on Borough Council owned land are well cared for;
 - working with partners such as local landowners, developers, Kent County Council, parish councils and community groups amongst others, to encourage tree planting and explore suitable opportunities for planting within boundaries and hedgerows;
 - inviting the Street Scene and Environment Services Advisory Board to consider the establishment of community orchards; and
 - notes the revenue estimates in 2020/21 of £30,000 for tree maintenance on Borough Council owned land.

C 20/7 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Waste Services Contract

The Leader began his announcements by making reference to the poor bin collection service received by residents either side of Christmas and the New Year, stating that he was aware of the significant workload created for Members.

He advised Members that, early in the New Year, the Council escalated the situation with the contractor at the most senior level. The Chief Executive personally wrote to Urbaser's Managing Director, which had been followed by a senior level meeting with the contractor involving the Leader, Councillors Coffin and Betts and senior officers.

He indicated that, since this intervention, service delivery had improved significantly, with Urbaser regularly reporting that all rounds were being completed on their scheduled day and resources had been deployed to progress the clearance of the back log of missed collections. The Council had also seen a notable reduction in calls, email traffic and complaints.

The early days of the new arrangements had seen an increase in recycling rates. The Leader stated that, for a number of years, annual recycling rates had remained relatively static at around 42%. Based on data received to date recycling rates for October and November 2019 were at 55% and 54% respectively which compared with 44% and 40% respectively in the same months in 2018.

He advised that, overall, during this period and compared with October and November 2018, the amount of material collected for recycling and composting had increased by 27%, the amount of waste sent for disposal had dropped by 24%, and overall waste had dropped by 2.5%.

The new arrangements had introduced a subscription garden waste service. He reported that 47% of all households in the Borough had signed up and that this represented by far the highest take-up in Kent and was significantly greater than the original target of 30%.

Local Plan

The Leader announced the provisional dates for the first three days of the Local Plan Hearing and advised that, subject to confirmation from the Inspectorate, the Hearing was due to open during the week commencing 18 May for three consecutive days (Tuesday 19 to Thursday 21 May) and would be held at the Orchard Suite, East Malling Research Centre.

Larkfield Leisure Centre

The Leader provided an update on the capital plan scheme at Larkfield Leisure Centre. He reported that the work in the plant room was progressing well, with the old boilers being removed, the new boilers moved into place and final connections being made. A temporary boiler had been providing heating and hot water during the course of the work. Works to the air handling unit would commence in the coming weeks.

He advised that, as the old roof was being removed, the contractors discovered some corrosion of the steelwork which had to be treated with a specialist product before any further work could take place. This had resulted in a delay to the programme of approximately 3-4 weeks,

meaning the overall scheme was currently due to be completed in mid-June. The recent inclement weather had also not helped progress although the contractors on site had continued to work in the conditions, where safe to do so.

It was reported that three out of the thirteen new polycarbonate roof bays had been installed and painting of the internal steel roof framework would begin during the week commencing 24 February.

Members were advised that Officers would continue to work closely with the contractor and the Leisure Trust to try and minimise the impact on customers.

Tonbridge Medical Group

After many years of seeking opportunities to bring a new medical centre in Tonbridge, the Leader expressed his delight that the Tonbridge Medical Group would soon achieve its aspiration for a high quality, state of the art medical facility in the town centre.

He was especially pleased that the Borough Council had been able to play its part by releasing the land that had helped realise this ambition. He congratulated the Tonbridge Medical Group and all involved for their hard work in getting to a point when the new centre would be opening its doors to patients for the first time in just a few months.

Recent Bad weather

The Leader referred to the consecutive weekends of storms and significant amounts of rain and wind which had resulted in a number of fallen trees and localised flooding, given that water levels were already at a high level. He reported that Officers were not aware of any flooding to a significant number of properties but, nevertheless, the Borough Council had had staff on duty, working with local flood warden teams and he thanked all the services that had worked over both weekends.

C 20/8 LOCALISM ACT - PAY POLICY

Item GP 20/3 referred from the General Purposes Committee minutes of 27 January 2020

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute GP 20/3 be approved.

C 20/9 RISK MANAGEMENT

Item CB 20/7 referred from Cabinet minutes of 13 February 2020

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute CB 20/7 be approved.

C 20/10 TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2020/21

Item CB 20/8 referred from Cabinet minutes of 13 February 2020

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute CB 20/8 be approved.

C 20/11 SETTING THE BUDGET FOR 2020/21

Item CB 20/9 referred from Cabinet minutes of 13 February 2020

It was proposed by Councillor Coffin and seconded by Councillor Heslop that the recommendations at Minute CB 20/9 be adopted. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No 8.5 voting was recorded as follows:

Members voting for the motion:

Cllr Mrs J A Anderson, Cllr M C Base, Cllr Mrs P A Bates, Cllr R P Betts, Cllr T Bishop, Cllr J L Botten, Cllr M D Boughton, Cllr V M C Branson, Cllr G C Bridge, Cllr C Brown, Cllr R I B Cannon, Cllr M A Coffin, Cllr D J Cooper, Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr N Foyle, Cllr N J Heslop, Cllr P M Hickmott, Cllr F A Hoskins, Cllr S A Hudson, Cllr A P J Keeley, Cllr D Keers, Cllr Mrs F A Kemp, Cllr A Kennedy, Cllr D W King, Cllr K King, Cllr J R S Lark, Cllr D Lettington, Cllr Mrs R F Lettington, Cllr B J Luker, Cllr P J Montague, Cllr Mrs A S Oakley, Cllr W E Palmer, Cllr M R Rhodes, Cllr H S Rogers, Cllr R V Roud, Cllr J L Sergison, Cllr T B Shaw, Cllr K B Tanner, Cllr Mrs M Tatton, Cllr M Taylor, Cllr Miss G E Thomas, Cllr D Thornevell, Cllr F G Tombolis and Cllr C J Williams

Total 44

Members voting against the motion:

None

Members abstaining:

Cllr A E Clark, Cllr M A J Hood and Cllr N G Stapleton

Total 3

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute CB 20/9 be approved.

C 20/12 SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX 2020/21

Item CB 20/10 referred from Cabinet minutes of 13 February 2020

It was proposed by Councillor Coffin and seconded by Councillor Heslop that the recommendations at Minute CB 20/10 be adopted. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No 8.5 voting was recorded as follows:

Members voting for the motion:

Cllr Mrs J A Anderson, Cllr M C Base, Cllr Mrs P A Bates, Cllr R P Betts, Cllr T Bishop, Cllr J L Botten, Cllr M D Boughton, Cllr V M C Branson, Cllr G C Bridge, Cllr C Brown, Cllr R I B Cannon, Cllr A E Clark, Cllr M A Coffin, Cllr D J Cooper, Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr N Foyle, Cllr N J Heslop, Cllr P M Hickmott, Cllr M A J Hood, Cllr F A Hoskins, Cllr S A Hudson, Cllr A P J Keeley, Cllr D Keers, Cllr Mrs F A Kemp, Cllr A Kennedy, Cllr D W King, Cllr K King, Cllr J R S Lark, Cllr D Lettington, Cllr Mrs R F Lettington, Cllr B J Luker, Cllr P J Montague, Cllr Mrs A S Oakley, Cllr W E Palmer, Cllr M R Rhodes, Cllr H S Rogers, Cllr R V Roud, Cllr J L Sergison, Cllr N G Stapleton, Cllr K B Tanner, Cllr Mrs M Tatton, Cllr M Taylor, Cllr Miss G E Thomas, Cllr D Thornevell, Cllr F G Tombolis and Cllr C J Williams

Total 46

Members voting against the motion:

None

Members abstaining:

None

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute CB 20/10 be approved and the Council Tax Resolution 2020/21, as set out as an Annex to these Minutes, be adopted.

C 20/13 REVIEW OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Item CB 20/11 referred from Cabinet minutes of 13 February 2020

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute CB 20/11 be approved.

C 20/14 REVIEW OF DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS

Item CB 20/12 referred from Cabinet minutes of 13 February 2020

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute CB 20/12 be approved.

C 20/15 CORPORATE STRATEGY 2020-2023

Item CB 20/13 referred from Cabinet minutes of 13 February 2020

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute CB 20/13 be approved.

C 20/16 CLASS C EMPTY PROPERTY COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNT AND LONG TERM EMPTY HOMES PREMIUM

Item CB 20/14 referred from Cabinet minutes of 13 February 2020

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute CB 20/14 be approved.

C 20/17 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2020/21

Item CB 20/15 referred from Cabinet minutes of 13 February 2020

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute CB 20/15 be approved.

C 20/18 ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

Item CB 20/16 referred from Cabinet minutes of 13 February 2020

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute CB 20/16 be approved.

C 20/19 SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

RESOLVED: That authority be given for the Common Seal of the Council to be affixed to any instrument to give effect to a decision of the Council incorporated into these Minutes and proceedings.

The meeting ended at 9.06 pm