

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES AND HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

Tuesday, 10th November, 2020

Present: Cllr J L Botten (Chairman), Cllr Mrs J A Anderson, Cllr Mrs S Bell, Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr N Foyle, Cllr F A Hoskins, Cllr S A Hudson, Cllr K King, Cllr Mrs R F Lettington, Cllr W E Palmer, Cllr Mrs M Tatton and Cllr Miss G E Thomas

Councillors Mrs P A Bates, R P Betts, V M C Branson, C Brown, A E Clark, M A Coffin, Mrs T Dean, N J Heslop, M A J Hood, D Lettington, P J Montague, Mrs A S Oakley, M R Rhodes, R V Roud, N G Stapleton and K B Tanner were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor L J O'Toole

PART 1 - PUBLIC

CH 20/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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


CH 20/25 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the notes of the meeting of the Communities and Housing Advisory Board held on 21 July 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

CH 20/26 REVIEW OF CHARGES AND FEES 2021/22

The report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health provided an update on existing fees for licensing a house in multiple occupation (HMO) or caravan site together with recommended charges following a review of the costs of processing the respective applications. The proposed fee increases had been benchmarked against neighbouring authorities.

RECOMMENDED: That the following charges be approved with effect from 1 April 2021: 

£545 for processing a new mandatory HMO licence application;
£500 for the processing of a renewal application for a mandatory HMO licence;

£395 for processing a new caravan site licence application where the use of the site is for permanent residential use; and
£190 for the transfer of a caravan site licence for a permanent residential use site.

***Referred to Cabinet**

CH 20/27 REVIEW OF CEMETERY CHARGES 2021/22

Consideration was given to the joint report of the Director of Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services and the Director of Finance and Transformation setting out charging proposals for 2021/22 regarding Tonbridge Cemetery. Details of the proposed charges were set out at Annex 2 to the report. A comparison with other Kent district councils' charges was provided and it was anticipated that the proposals would generate additional net income of approximately £700.

A number of Members expressed concern that the low level of income in comparison to expenditure meant that Tonbridge Cemetery was, effectively, being subsidised and suggested that a strategic and comprehensive review of the charges should be undertaken. It was hoped that, as the facility became more self-sustained, the burden on the general tax-payer could be reduced in the longer term.

RECOMMENDED: That Cabinet be asked to consider whether the Overview and Scrutiny Committee should undertake a broad, strategic review of the charges applied at Tonbridge Cemetery. ◀

***Referred to Cabinet**

CH 20/28 TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION POLICY

Decision Notice D200079MEM

The report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health provided details of a Temporary Accommodation Policy which set out the Council's approach to meeting its Statutory Housing Duties regarding the demand, supply, prioritisation and suitability of temporary accommodation. Particular reference was made to the need to demonstrate a clear and consistent approach to the provision of temporary accommodation.

RECOMMENDED: That the Temporary Accommodation Policy, as set out at Annex 1 to the report, be adopted.

CH 20/29 UPDATE ON DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT BUDGET AND SPEND

Decision Notice D200080MEM

The report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health gave an update on spend against the 2020/21 Disabled Facilities

Grants (DFG) budget and advised how changes in distribution of this money were being built into the Estimates process to provide a degree of certainty regarding funding for the approved social care capital projects in the current financial year as well as an option to fund hospital discharge/handypersons costs in 2021/22.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) the following revisions, which are being incorporated into the 2020/21 Revised Estimates and 2021/22 Estimates due to be presented during the forthcoming budget cycle, be noted:
 1. the amendment of the 2020/21 capital plan provision for mandatory DFGs to £900,000;
 2. the use of £89,000 to fund the hospital discharge/handypersons costs for the current financial year 2020/21;
 3. the use of £16,000 to fund the One You Your Home scheme for the current financial year 2020/21;
 4. the use of £90,000 of underspend this year to enable the funding of hospital discharge/handypersons costs in 2021/22;
 5. the allocation of £77,400 from this year into the 2021/22 mandatory DFG budget to provide a buffer for an unknown allocation from central Government moving forwards; and
- (2) the removal of £125,000 of Council funding for DFGs in 2020/21 during the update of the Capital Plan be noted and viewed as an in-year saving.

CH 20/30 RENT GUARANTEE PILOT FOR PRIVATE LANDLORDS

Decision Notice D200081MEM

The report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health outlined a proposal to pilot rent guarantee and incentive payments for tenancies in the private rented sector. Under the proposal rent would be guaranteed through a financial commitment to pay any rent arrears during a tenancy to give financial reassurance to private landlords. Incentives would be through one off payments to private landlords.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) a pilot offer for incentive payments and rent guarantee, using both Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) and the homelessness reduction initiatives budget, be approved to access tenancies in

the private rented sector. This to continue until 31 March 2021 initially with scope to continue beyond this date, dependent on the number of tenancies secured and associated staff resources. Incentive payments will be one off payments to a landlord and rent guarantee will be in place for 6 - 12 months;

- (2) in view of the pressure on the Temporary Accommodation budget and the difficulty in finding good quality private rented accommodation that can be used to discharge the duties of the Borough Council, the decision be taken by the Cabinet Member for Housing, in liaison with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Innovation and Property, and not held over to the next meeting of Cabinet in order to expedite this opportunity as quickly as possible; and
- (3) the pilot offer be monitored and a progress report provided to the Communities and Housing Advisory Board at regular intervals for review and consideration of extending the pilot offer. Monitoring of the pilot will include tenancy sustainment success, administration options, homelessness prevention and landlord and tenant feedback.

CH 20/31 REVISED SAFEGUARDING POLICY

Decision Notice D200082MEM

The report of the Chief Executive sought endorsement of an updated Safeguarding Policy and Reporting Procedure for Children, Young People and Adults at Risk. Attention was drawn to the different reporting arrangements and responsibilities arising from the change of the Kent Safeguarding Children Board to become the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership (KSCMP) and to the reporting of concerns about adult safeguarding.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) the revised version of the Safeguarding Policy and Reporting Procedure for Children, Young People and Adults at Risk be endorsed; and
- (2) Councillor M Rhodes be the Member Champion for Safeguarding.

CH 20/32 LEYBOURNE LAKES COUNTRY PARK- FUTURE MANAGEMENT AND FACILITY DEVELOPMENT

Decision Notice D200083MEM

The report of the Director of Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services provided an update on the proposed transfer of the site

management of Leybourne Lakes Country Park (LLCP) to the Tonbridge and Malling Leisure Trust (Leisure Trust) and on the Capital Plan scheme for the provision of additional lakeside facilities. Members were reminded that the proposed transfer had been identified in the Council's First Year Addendum to the Corporate Strategy.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) subject to the Monitoring Officer being satisfied about the legality of the actions in relation to the potential transfer:
 1. the potential transfer of the site management continues to be addressed in liaison with the Leisure Trust in accordance with the principles of the existing Management Agreement;
 2. consultation continues with the relevant on site staff at LLCP in liaison with HR regarding their potential TUPE transfer to the Leisure Trust;
 3. a report be presented to the next meeting of this Board on the financial implications/viability of a future transfer; and
 4. the transfer only be progressed if it achieves a saving to the Council and an income stream to the Leisure Trust; and
- (2) in regard to the potential development of a new Lakeside Facility at LLCP
 1. Alliance Leisure Services Ltd be appointed through the UK Leisure Framework to progress the project up to the Cost Confidence stage outlined in its Development Proposal;
 2. the project only be progressed to the Cost Certainty stage by Alliance Leisure Services Ltd if there is confidence that the project can be funded from within the available budget; and
 3. approval be granted for a Planning Application to be submitted for the proposed facility development.

MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION

CH 20/33 COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

The report of the Director of Central Services provided an update on the recent work of the Community Safety Partnership. Particular reference was made to the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on crime levels and incidence of domestic abuse, the support of the White Ribbon campaign and the development of the national 'Friends Against Scams' initiative.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE**CH 20/34 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Chairman moved, it was seconded and

RESOLVED: That, as public discussion would disclose exempt information, the following matters be considered in private.

CH 20/35 LEISURE TRUST UPDATE

(Reasons: LGA 1972 Sch 12A Paragraph 3 – Financial or business affairs of any particular person)

Decision Notice D200084MEM

The report of the Director of Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services provided updates on the reopening and operation of the Council's leisure facilities operated by the Leisure Trust and to potential changes to the Management Agreement and the Service Management Fee as a result of the Covid-19 virus.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) the Service areas identified in sub-section 1.4 of the report be reviewed further in liaison with the Leisure Trust and updates be reported to future meetings of this Board;
- (2) the management fee (provisional) for the year 2020/21 be set at £300,000 and the cash advance remaining at the year-end be rolled forward and that the assumed level of support required in 2021/22 be part of the forthcoming budget setting process subject to the Monitoring Officer being satisfied as to the legality of the action to be taken; and
- (3) an update on the Government's recent funding announcement to support council leisure centres most in need be provided to the Communities and Housing Advisory Board.

The meeting ended at 9.17 pm