

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES AND HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

MINUTES

Tuesday, 15th February, 2022

Present: Cllr Miss G E Thomas (Chairman), Cllr Mrs J A Anderson (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Mrs P A Bates, Cllr Mrs S Bell, Cllr N Foyle, Cllr P M Hickmott, Cllr F A Hoskins, Cllr S A Hudson, Cllr A Kennedy, Cllr W E Palmer, Cllr M R Rhodes and Cllr Mrs M Tatton

Councillor K B Tanner was also present in the Chamber pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Councillors R P Betts, M D Boughton, V M C Branson, M A Coffin, A Cope, D Harman, M A J Hood, D Keers, B J Luker, P J Montague, Mrs A S Oakley and J L Sergison participated via MS Teams and joined the discussion when invited to do so by the Chairman in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors N J Heslop and N G Stapleton

PART 1 - PUBLIC

CH 22/1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs Tatton declared an Other Significant Interest in the item on Community Development Work in East Malling on the grounds that she was a trustee of the East Malling Centre. She withdrew from the meeting during consideration of this item.

CH 22/2 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the notes of the meeting of the Communities and Housing Advisory Board held on 9 November 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

CH 22/3 TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

(Decision Notice D220021MEM)

The outcomes of consultancy work undertaken in respect of the provision of temporary accommodation were detailed in the report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health. The Temporary Accommodation Consultancy report was attached at

Annex 1. Consideration was given to a number of recommendations relating to the management and procurement of temporary accommodation and attention was drawn to the overview of the Housing Solutions Team, the fundamental importance of triage, casework and outcome management and the need for additional rigor and a revised approach to assessing priority need. Reference was made to the draft Temporary Accommodation Procurement Strategy to be reported to the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board in May 2022, the use of the private rented sector, the draft Landlord Incentive Scheme offer (attached at Annex 2) and the review of the Housing Allocations Scheme. The report highlighted the importance of managing the expectations of residents and stakeholders when communicating the changes to the approach to managing Temporary Accommodation.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) the contents of the Temporary Accommodation Consultancy report and the work to date to commence implementation of the recommendations be noted;
- (2) the target for reduction of households in temporary accommodation to 80 by October 2022 be endorsed, subject to noting that the level would fluctuate and that a range of between 70 and 100 households would be considered acceptable for the purposes of performance management;
- (3) the recruitment of additional temporary staffing resource, as detailed in the report, to support delivery of the recommendations in the Temporary Accommodation Consultancy report be endorsed;
- (4) the presentation of a Temporary Accommodation Procurement Strategy to the meeting of the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board in May 2022 be noted;
- (5) the Landlord Incentive Scheme (as set out at Annex 2 to the report) be approved and authority delegated to the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing to approve any minor changes to the scheme required to deliver a complete Landlord offer;
- (6) the potential requirement to update the Council's Private Rented Sector Discharge Policy, as set out in 1.7 of the report, to ensure it remained fit for purpose be noted and authority delegated to the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Director of Central Services, to make any necessary changes; and

- (7) the actions taken under the existing Housing Allocations Scheme be noted and the proposed revised Housing Allocations Scheme be presented to the meeting of the Communities and Housing Advisory Board in May 2022 for consideration in advance of formal consultation.

CH 22/4 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT POLICY

(Decision Notice D220022MEM)

The report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health recommended an update to the existing Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy (attached at Annex 1) to reflect the latest changes in legislation which apply to private sector housing. The report also recommended some minor changes to the 'Policy for Imposing Financial Penalties under the Housing Act 2004 and the Housing and Planning Act 2016' (attached at Appendix 2 to Annex 1).

RECOMMENDED: That the changes to the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy (attached at Annex 1), including the changes to the 'Policy for Imposing Financial Penalties under the Housing Act 2004 and Housing and Planning Act 2016' be approved.

CH 22/5 ROADSIDE NATURE RESERVES

(Decision Notice D220023MEM)

Further to the item considered on 9 November 2021 (Minute CH 21/36 refers) following the successful trial at Darenth Avenue, Tonbridge, the report of Director of Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services identified potential additional sites across the borough for 'Roadside Nature Reserves' (RNR's). The potential site locations were shown in Annex 1 and included Kings Hill, Borough Green, Platt, East Malling, Leybourne and Tonbridge.

RECOMMENDED: That the sites listed in Annex 1 of the report be managed as Roadside Nature Reserves from the 2022 growing season in accordance with the cutting regime identified at paragraph 1.1.2 of the report.

CH 22/6 VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR GRANTS

(Decision Notice D220024MEM)

The report of the Chief Executive sought agreement of the levels of grant funding to key voluntary and community sector groups for the next financial year.

The organisations had provided summaries of progress achieved against the objectives set out in Service Level Agreements. It was noted

that it had been an extremely difficult and busy year and that the pandemic had continued to increase pressure and caused change to operating methods.

Careful consideration was given to the financial and value for money implications set out in the report and the potential impact on the voluntary and community sector.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) based on the good progress and the support provided to residents from Involve, Imago and the Mediation Schemes, grant funding be continued for year 3 of the 4-year service level agreement;
- (2) based on the good progress and the support provided to residents from Citizens Advice North and West Kent (CANWK), grant funding be maintained at current levels for the financial year 2022/23; and
- (3) based on the good progress and support provided, a 2-year service level agreement be put in place with Age UK Sevenoaks and Tonbridge, at £6,400.

CH 22/7 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT WORK IN EAST MALLING

(Decision Notice D220025MEM)

The report of the Chief Executive provided an update on the proposed Community Development Worker for East Malling.

Reference was made to the way that community work was delivered in Trench, Tonbridge and this approach had already resulted in significant benefits. It was, therefore, recommended to adopt this model for East Malling.

A Service Level Agreement would be put in place between the Borough Council and the East Malling Centre. The Borough Council would provide a grant of £7,500 per year for a 2-year period and this would be match funded by Clarion Housing Group. It was noted that this proposal did not represent growth to the Council budget but would be a commitment for a 2-year period. By adopting this model there would be additional financial contributions of £5,000 per year from East Malling and Larkfield Parish Council.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) the arrangements for the proposed Community Development Worker for East Malling be noted; and

- (2) grant funding of £7,500 per year, for two years, be paid to the East Malling Centre.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE

CH 22/8 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items considered in private.

The meeting ended at 8.56 pm