

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday, 17th July, 2024

Present: Cllr S A Hudson (Chair), Cllr A G Bennison, Cllr S Crisp, Cllr F A Hoskins, Cllr J R S Lark, Cllr S Pilgrim, Cllr M R Rhodes, Cllr K S Tunstall, Cllr G C Bridge, Cllr C Brown and Cllr D A S Davis.

Cllrs R P Betts, M A J Hood, D Keers* and Mrs A S Oakley* were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs S Bell, A McDermott, W E Palmer and Mrs M Tatton.

(*participated via MS Teams)

CE 24/22 NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Notification of substitute members were recorded as set out below:

- Cllr C Brown substituted for Cllr A McDermott
- Cllr G Bridge substituted for Cllr M Tatton
- Cllr D Davies substituted for Cllr S Bell

In accordance with Council Procedure Rules 17.5 to 17.9 these councillors had the same rights as the ordinary member of the committee for whom they were substituting

CE 24/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

CE 24/24 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the notes of the meeting of the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee held on 22 May 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

CE 24/25 CLIMATE CHANGE MONITORING AND REPORTING

(Decision Notice D240077MEM)

Member approval was sought for the publication of the Climate Change Action Plan Year 4 Progress Report, the Climate Change Action Plan Year 5 2024/25 and the Carbon Audit 2023/24 (attached as Annexes 1, 2 and 3 respectively).

The report summarised progress achieved to date, the new action plan and trends in emissions from the Borough Council's estate and operations. The most significant sources of emissions across the TMBC estate and operations remained leisure facilities and refuse collection vehicles. Addressing these would make the largest impact towards the 2030 carbon neutral aspiration.

Members sought clarification on a number of issues including the progress being made on installing electric vehicle charging points throughout Tonbridge; the use of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to encourage energy efficient homes; reinstating monitoring of air pollution arising from idling vehicles and improved recycling facilities at public open spaces and events. These were addressed in detail by Officers and the response noted by the Committee. The participation of the Borough Council in the Kent County Council Climate Change Group meant that Tonbridge and Malling were fully aware of upcoming pilot schemes and remained open to involvement in projects. Reference was also made to the recycling opportunities being explored by the Borough Council Events Management Team and the proposed DEFRA deposit return scheme for drinks containers which would be given careful consideration.

***RECOMMENDED:** That

- (1) the Climate Change Action Plan Year 4 Progress Report (attached at Annex 1) be endorsed;
- (2) the Climate Change Action Plan Year 5 2024/25 (attached at Annex 2) be approved; and
- (3) the Carbon Audit for 2023/24 (attached at Annex 3) be approved.

***Decision Taken by Cabinet Member**

CE 24/26 HEALTH PRIORITIES

(Decision Notice D240078MEM)

Consideration was given to a number of health priorities identified by the Borough Council's Health Action Team (HAT) to focus on and develop a TMBC Health Action Plan. These priorities would also inform a Kent and Medway shared delivery plan which underpinned the Kent and Medway Integrated Care Strategy.

It was advised that within the delivery plan for the Strategy, district council priorities were cited which would support the overall shared outcomes. The priorities had been established through discussion, workshops and a survey and a focus on improving mental health, supporting older people and improving children's health was recommended.

Members recognised the importance of identifying what priorities should be focused on and particular reference was made to the high figures for mental health, especially in older people as a result of loneliness. Concern was also expressed at the levels of obesity in children and it was hoped that healthy eating and exercise could be encouraged.

The risk of reduced funding from Kent County Council was recognised given their difficult financial position, although Officers were pleased to report that the County Council had confirmed funding for the next 2 years, until 2026 subject to them receiving the Public Health grant. However, other opportunities for funding would continue to be explored.

***RECOMMENDED:** That

- (1) the following three Health Action Plan priorities be endorsed;
 - improving mental health;
 - supporting older people; and
 - improving children's health
- (2) the positive work of the Health Action Team and the links being made with the Kent and Medway Integrated Care Strategy be noted.

***Decision Taken by Cabinet Member**

CE 24/27 TONBRIDGE RACECOURSE SPORTSGROUND MANAGEMENT PLAN CONSULTATION

The report of the Director of Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services presented comments received as part of the public consultation

exercise on the draft Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground Management Plan.

A summary of the comments received, Officer responses and any proposed changes were detailed in Annex 2 and these were given careful consideration by the Committee. It was noted that the responses covered a variety of topics including active travel, improvements to the children's play area, biodiversity, footpath widening, reuse of the bowling green area, tennis court improvements and flooding.

There was detailed discussion on footpaths which respondents felt needed to be widened to accommodate pedestrians, runners, cyclists, prams and disabled buggies. Whilst the comments were noted, it was explained that as the site was on a flood plain there were restrictions on building so widening the paths all the way around the site was unlikely to be realistic. It was noted that a correction was required in Annex 2 to change 'likely to be realistic' to 'unlikely to be realistic'.

Members hoped that a number of issues could be considered as part of the Management Plan and these included encouraging more volunteers to the site, creating more activities for young people and addressing the issues around the use of the slipway impacting on the Borough Council owned car park. The Borough Council were in the process of reviewing its Sport Strategy which could highlight options for the area and Members would have opportunity to comment on any proposals.

Other points raised for future consideration related to improved security and lighting and cycle paths. With regard to the latter, Members were advised that project 62 in the Action Plan committed to a review of cycling provision on site.

***RECOMMENDED:** That it be commended to Cabinet that

- (1) the proposed amendments to the draft Management plan, as set out in Annex 2, be approved, subject to amending the proposed responses in respect of footpaths and active travel to read 'unlikely to be realistic'.
- (2) the draft Management Plan for Tonbridge Racecourse Sportsground 2024-28 (attached at Annex 3) be approved.

***Recommended to Cabinet**

MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION

CE 24/28 WORK PROGRAMME 2024

The Work Programme setting out matters to be scrutinised during 2024/25 was attached for information. Members were invited to suggest future matters by liaising with the Chair of the Committee.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE

CE 24/29 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no matters considered in private.

The meeting ended at 8.25 pm