

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday, 20th May, 2026

Present: Cllr K S Tunstall (Chair), Cllr L Athwal (substitute), Cllr G C Bridge (substitute), Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr M A J Hood (substitute), Cllr F A Hoskins, Cllr D W King (substitute), Cllr A McDermott, Cllr W E Palmer, Cllr M R Rhodes and Cllr Mrs M Tatton

In attendance: Cllrs R P Betts, M D Boughton*, M A Coffin*, D Keers* and Mrs A S Oakley* were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

(*participated via MS Teams)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J R S Lark (Vice-Chair), S A Hudson, A G Bennison, S Crisp, Mrs T Dean and S Pilgrim.

CE 26/11 NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Notification of substitute members were recorded as set out below:

- Cllr Athwal substituted for Cllr Pilgrim
- Cllr Bridge substituted for Cllr Dean
- Cllr Hood substituted for Cllr Crisp
- Cllr King substituted for Cllr Lark

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 26/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr Tunstall declared an Other Significant Interest in respect of the Haysden Country Park matter on the grounds that he was a trustee of the Tonbridge and Malling Leisure Trust. He withdrew from the meeting at the appropriate time and did not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter.

CE 26/13 MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE - ELECTION OF CHAIR

As a consequence of the Chair declaring an other significant interest in the Haysden Country Park matter (agenda item 9) and in the absence of the Vice-Chair, Cllr Tunstall proposed that, in accordance with

Committee Procedure Rule 14.7, Cllr Rhodes be elected to preside over this business of the Scrutiny Select Committee. This was seconded by Cllr McDermot and

RESOLVED: That Cllr Rhodes be elected to preside as Chair for the Haysden Country Park matter

CE 26/14 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the notes of the meeting of the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee held on 4 March 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CE 26/15 PRESENTATION - SNODLAND HUB

Members received a presentation from volunteers associated with the Snodland Hub, which was a community space run by volunteers from the community for the community.

The background and operation of the Hub, its refurbishment from former public conveniences, funding sources and the services provided were outlined. Funding and support included contributions from the Borough Council, Clarion Housing, the Henry Peters Trust and Snodland Town Council.

Multiple services and surgeries, including Citizens Advice, Clarion Housing, and occasional Kent Police surgeries were hosted at the Hub and several food bank sessions were offered each week.

The presentation also referred to safeguarding awareness, volunteer training and DBS checks and recent grant successes from Tesco and Co-op. However, funding opportunities continued to be explored as the Hub was keen to expand the support it could provide.

There was a cultivation of strong partnerships with local businesses and the wider community, including Snodland Medical Practice and Communigrow, as well as other food banks.

Members welcomed the valuable contribution of the Snodland Hub to the community, commended the well-managed operation, recognised the effective use of limited space and acknowledged the Hubs progress and success to date.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

CE 26/16 WASTE MARKETING PLAN 2026/27

(Decision Notice D260053MEM)

Members reviewed the draft Waste Marketing Plan 2026/27 (attached at Annex 1) which outlined a structured, well-resourced programme of communications, engagement activities and behaviour change initiatives designed to improve recycling performance, increase correct material capture, reduce contamination and support statutory waste service objectives for the upcoming financial year.

The draft Plan demonstrated strong alignment with corporate environmental goals, Kent Resource Partnership priorities and national policy changes such as Simpler Recycling and enhanced food waste capture.

Particular reference was made to the food waste campaign which had positively contributed to an increase in food waste collected. There would be a continued focus on food waste activity during 2026/27.

The importance of engaging with schools, young people and community groups to establish long-term behaviours and promoting recycling and waste minimisation in organisations operating from council owned premises was recognised and would be delivered through partnership working and liaison arrangements.

Members also recognised the value of repair and reuse activity, including Repair Cafes, as part of the wider waste minimisation agenda.

In recognition that improving levels of waste reduction and recycling was a Corporate Strategy priority area, it was proposed by Cllr Tunstall, seconded by Cllr Rhodes and

RESOLVED: That the draft Waste Marketing Plan 2026/27, attached at Annex 1, be approved.

***Decision taken by Cabinet Member**

CE 26/17 CLIMATE CHANGE MONITORING AND REPORTING

(Decision Notice D260054MEM)

Member approval was sought for the publication of the Climate Change Action Plan Year 6 2025/26 Progress Report and the proposed Climate Change Action Plan Year 7 for 2026/27 (attached at Annexes 1 and 2 respectively).

The report highlighted continued focus on tackling the most significant sources of emissions, particularly within the leisure facilities; and the continued implementation of projects delivering low-carbon infrastructure improvements. Detailed monitoring of progress against the full Action Plan was provided in Annex 1. Members noted that the action related to the environmental standards of licensed taxis would be taken forward during 2026/27.

The Climate Change Action Plan 2026/27 detailed ongoing, short-term and multi-year projects, including delivery of decarbonisation initiatives across the estate, embedding sustainability within corporate processes and house-related energy efficiency schemes.

All measures set out within the Action Plan (Annex 2) contributed positively towards the longer-term ambition of achieving carbon-neutrality and represented practical steps to reduce emissions and improve environmental performance.

There was detailed discussion on a number of issues including the survival rate of newly planted trees, the approach to decarbonisation of the council vehicle fleet, the progress of the Active Travel Strategy and the development of an air quality plan. Whilst there were no specific survival figures for newly planted trees, the overall survival rate was positive.

Reference was also made to opportunities to increase Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) within the Borough and to the feasibility work being undertaken in respect of potential sites; engagement with Kent County Council on 'better bus partnerships'; renewable energy and the need to maximise opportunities associated with leisure facilities.

In recognition that monitoring and reporting progress on climate change actions was a valuable tool to track performance and inform delivery, it was proposed by Cllr Tunstall, seconded by Cllr Rhodes and

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Climate Change Action Plan Year 6 Progress Report be approved and published; and
- (2) the Climate Change Action Plan Year 7 2026/27 be approved and published.

***Decision taken by Cabinet Member**

MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION

CE 26/18 WORK PROGRAMME 2026

The Work Programme setting out matters to be scrutinised during 2026/27 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 26/19 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair moved, it was seconded by Cllr Rhodes and

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

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET

CE 26/20 SOUTH-WEST KENT WASTE SERVICES CONTRACT - OPTIONS REPORT

(Reasons: Part 2 – Private – LGA 1972 Sch 12A Paragraph 3 – Financial or business affairs of any particular person)

Careful consideration was given to the options set out in the recently tendered new Waste Contract related to future frequency of cleansing of specific sections of High-Speed roads (largely dual carriageways), cleaning of specific areas of Parks and Open Spaces and the future financing of new vehicles deployed on the contract.

There was detailed discussion on the merits of Option A versus Option C and the risks around public perception and reputational damage related to any potential changes to frequency of cleansing. Reference was also made to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy and wider inflationary pressures.

Cllr Athwal proposed, Cllr Hoskins seconded that:

- (1) cleansing frequency be set at Option C for the first year to monitor progress.

Following a formal vote, this motion was lost.

In recognition of maintaining a good level of regular cleansing that was comparable with neighbouring authorities and providing more funding certainty, Cllr Dalton proposed, Cllr McDermott seconded and it was

RECOMMENDED*: That

- (1) Option A, as outlined in the report, for the future cleansing of high-speed roads be agreed and implemented from commencement of the new contract from 1 April 2027;
- (2) the Contract Option, as set out in 6.1 – 6.3 of the report, for the cleansing of identified Public Open Spaces be agreed and implemented from commencement of the new contract from 1 April 2027;
- (3) with regard to the financing of the new vehicles deployed on the new contract, details be reported direct to Cabinet for consideration with the decision to progress or not based on financial viability.

***Recommended to Cabinet**

CE 26/21 FLY TIPPING AND LITTERING ENFORCEMENT OPTIONS REPORT

(Reasons: Part 2 Private – LGA 1972 Sch 12A Paragraph 3 – Financial or business affairs of any particular person)

The report presented an overview of recent enforcement activity related to littering and fly tipping offences and set out options for the provision of future activities.

Members noted that operations would have to comply with revised Statutory Guidance on tackling littering which emphasised a 'softer' approach to the zero-tolerance approach previously adopted by the Borough Council. As a consequence, a review of the current Street Scene Enforcement Policy would be required. However, there was now an opportunity to review operational arrangements as result of these changes in legislation.

Due regard was given to the options detailed in the report, the financial and value for money considerations and the legal implications.

In recognition that efficient and appropriate investigation and enforcement of littering and fly tipping offences assisted in maintaining an effective council, Cllr Tunstall proposed, Cllr Rhodes seconded and it was

***RECOMMENDED:** That

- (1) the options for the current contract, as detailed in the report, be progressed as soon as possible;
- (2) the following options be explored further:

- (i) an in-house approach be adopted for both littering and fly tipping enforcement;
 - (ii) a further tendering exercise be undertaken for a third-party to provide both littering and fly tipping enforcement;
 - (iii) a hybrid solution of external third-party provision for littering and an in-house providing for fly tipping and other waste-related offences
- (3) a fully costed report on the options shown above be progressed and reported to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Select Committee.

***Recommended to Cabinet**

CE 26/22 MANAGEMENT OF HAYSDEN COUNTRY PARK

(Reason: Part 2 Private – LGA 1972, Sch 12A Paragraph 3 – Financial or business affairs of any particular person)

Consideration was given to the future management of Haysden Country Park to safeguard the existing service levels for the future and enable site improvements.

It was noted that the Country Park was a valued community asset that provided high quality access to the countryside for all.

Due regard was given to the proposal detailed in the report, the financial and value for money considerations, the assessment of risk and the legal implications.

In recognition, that the proposals could secure current funding arrangements and standards of service delivery, including maintenance specifications, accreditations and support for community activities, Cllr Rhodes proposed, Cllr McDermott seconded and it was

***RECOMMENDED:** That

- (1) a cost benefit analysis of a potential transfer of the management of Haysden Country Park be progressed and findings reported to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Select Committee.

***Recommended to Cabinet**

The meeting ended at 9.23 pm