

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PARISH PARTNERSHIP PANEL

Thursday, 10th September, 2015

Present: Cllr N J Heslop (Chairman), Cllr M A Coffin (Vice-Chairman),
Cllr Mrs J A Anderson, Cllr Mrs S M Barker, Cllr R P Betts,
Cllr T I B Cannon, Cllr Mrs S M Hall, Cllr S M Hammond,
Cllr R V Roud and Cllr T B Shaw.

Together with Borough Green, Burham, East Malling and Larkfield, Hildenborough, Kings Hill, Leybourne, Platt, Plaxtol, Snodland, Trottiscliffe, Wateringbury, West Malling, Wouldham and Wrotham Parish and Town Councils.

Councillors O C Baldock, M C Base and B J Luker were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R W Dalton, D Lettington, D Markham; Addington, East Peckham and Ightham Parish Councils; Kent County Councillor Mrs S Hohler and Kent Association of Local Councils (Tonbridge and Malling)

PART 1 - PUBLIC

PPP 15/8 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 February 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

PPP 15/9 UPDATE ON ACTION IDENTIFIED IN THE LAST MINUTES

There were no actions identified.

PPP 15/10 REVIEW OF THE PARISH PARTNERSHIP PANEL

The report of the Chief Executive provided an update on the current Overview and Scrutiny Committee review into how the Borough Council engaged with parish councils and local community groups.

All parish councils had been invited to complete a short questionnaire about how the Parish Partnership Panel operated and whether improvements could be made. However, at the request of the Tonbridge and Malling area Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) the consultation period had been extended until 25 September 2015 to allow more time for responses to be made.

Other issues identified for consideration by KALC were highlighted in paragraph 1.1.4 of the report and related to agenda setting and identifying items of business relevant to parish councils.

The Chairman encouraged parish councils to complete a questionnaire if they had not already done so. This would enable the Member Panel undertaking the review to be fully informed of local views on this issue.

PPP 15/11 KENT POLICE SERVICES UPDATE

Chief Inspector Gill Ellis, Borough Commander for Tonbridge and Malling, provided a verbal update on the achievements made in performance and the neighbourhood policing agenda.

It was reported that the overall position in the Borough remained good despite a slight increase of 5% in victim based crime and was the second lowest in Kent. Violence against the person had increased by 10% whilst house burglary had decreased by 20%.

Any increase in domestic abuse was likely the result of improved reporting as people gained more confidence in the system and this was to be welcomed.

As a result of issues raised at the last meeting of the Panel, Chief Inspector Ellis was pleased to report that 31 speed enforcement initiatives had taken place between February and September. The majority of these had resulted in verbal warnings although some tickets had been issued. It was reiterated that if any parish or town councils identified a speeding problem within their villages they could contact Chief Inspector Ellis directly on Gillian.Ellis@kent.pnn.police.uk requesting speeding initiatives be undertaken.

In response to a question raised regarding 'community speed watch', the Panel was advised that these were a useful tool in identifying and demonstrating potential 'hot spots'. However, there was no need for a prolonged period of monitoring and there was also no requirement to undertake 'community speed watch' to request a speeding initiative.

With regard to comments raised about moving enforcement cameras around to monitor 'hot spot' areas, Chief Inspector Ellis offered to clarify the rules of engagement of speed enforcement vehicles.

Particular reference was made to the anticipated reduction in public sector funding and the need for Kent Police to make further budget savings. The Force remained committed to minimising disruption to front line delivery as a result of any further restructuring. In addition, it was expected that districts would remain co-terminus with local authorities. Further detail would emerge in due course.

Finally, Chief Inspector Ellis referred to a recruiting opportunity for Police Special Constables within Tonbridge and Malling. An event would be held at the Angel Centre on Thursday 22 October from 1900 to 2100 hours and would consist of the following:

- A presentation for anyone interested in joining the Special Constabulary
- Opportunities to speak with serving Specials
- Find out more about a new, interactive training package which meant that 75% of the preparation could be done online.

Parishes were encouraged to promote this event locally and further information was available at:

http://www.kent.police.uk/join_us/specials/specials_events.html

Leybourne Parish Council thanked both Kent Police and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council for their quick action in addressing a recent traveller incursion.

PPP 15/12 FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS WITH PARISH COUNCILS

The Director of Finance and Transformation advised of the Borough Council's intention to continue with the methodology currently in place to determine the Scheme of Financial Arrangements with Parish Councils for one further year, subject to Cabinet agreement. This represented a 0.4% increase in overall parish council funding for 2016/17.

In the current economic climate this was good news and the main contributory factor was the inclusion of New Homes Bonus within the calculation methodology. In response to a question, the Director of Finance and Transformation indicated that the future of New Homes Bonus funding was uncertain.

However, parish councils were advised that the Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee intended to launch a review into funding arrangements with external and third party groups. It was anticipated that any new arrangement would be in place with effect from 2017/18 and therefore parish councils were advised that 2016/17 was likely to be the last year for which the current methodology would apply.

Details of financial arrangements for 2016/17 would be confirmed in writing. Parish councils would also be kept up to date with the progress and findings of the review process.

PPP 15/13 LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

The Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health provided an update on the important progress made towards the preparation of the Local Plan. Particular reference was made to the initial outcome of the Call for Sites exercise which closed on 1 September 2015.

A short presentation highlighting the key issues and setting the context for the Panel was also provided. At the request of the Chairman this would be circulated with the Minutes for information.

Proposed revisions to the timetable to reflect the next stages of the Local Plan preparation were also set out and included a full assessment of potential sites to inform options for the development strategy and land allocations in the Plan. Due to the number and scale of sites being assessed the original timetable had been revised to allow sufficient time for evidence gathering and proper technical evaluation around suitability, affordability, deliverability and/or constraints.

It was emphasised that this was an important milestone in preparation of the Local Plan and significant public interest was anticipated.

Locations and outlines of all the submissions were set out in the Call for Sites map, attached as Annex 1 and tabled at the meeting. It was noted that the map was for illustrative purposes only in order to inform and advise the Panel of the number, general scale and distribution of the sites coming forward for assessment. In addition, Members were reminded that the identified sites had no status and at this stage were merely submissions of interest.

On the basis of the revised timetable it was anticipated that the November meeting of the Borough Council's Planning and Transportation Advisory Board would receive a report that would begin to scope out the next stage of the process (Issues and Options) in more detail. Approval of the documentation and community engagement arrangements would then be sought at the following meeting enabling consultations to take place in Spring 2016 and would build on the positive engagement exercise with the Parish and Town Councils that took place between November 2013 and March 2014. Although the Issues and Options stage next year would be the first formal opportunity for public consultations an ongoing dialogue with local councils throughout the Local Plan process was anticipated.

Members asked questions and raised a number of issues around implications for the Green Belt, the duty to co-operate with neighbouring authorities, infrastructure deliverability, air quality and pollution, traffic pressures and the difficult challenge of meeting housing demand bearing in mind the extent of planning constraints in the Borough, including Green Belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Officers responded and noted the comments expressed for further consideration as part of the assessment process.

Particular reference was made to the Aylesford Newsprint site as a potentially important site for addressing employment needs.

A list describing the sites identified and the organisations putting forward submissions would be prepared for information. It was noted that individuals would not be identified due to data protection.

The Chairman thanked Members for an excellent debate which had recognised the significant challenges that the Local Plan represented to the Borough.

PPP 15/14 KENT COUNTY COUNCIL SERVICES UPDATE

The Kent County Council Community Liaison Officer (Anne Charman) reported on a number of County initiatives and consultations. A Kent County Council Services Update report setting out more detail was tabled at the meeting for information.

Members were advised that by subscribing to Kent County Council's free emailing service residents could receive important information and news as it became available. A valid email address was required and would be used only to provide information on topic preferences subscribed to. For more information visit: www.kent.gov.uk

Reference was made to the Care Act which came into force on 1 April 2015 bringing changes to the way people could plan and pay for their care and support. Phase 1 introduced a new legal framework from 1 April to include deferred payments, support for carers and national minimum eligibility criteria. Further changes were planned to come into effect from April 2020 as part of phase 2.

The KCC Combined Member Grant scheme was open until 31 March 2016 with £25,000 available to every County Councillor to fund both community and highway projects in their electoral division. It was reported that Tonbridge and Malling County Councillors had a total of £175,000 to allocate in 2015/16. Further information was available by contacting the local County Councillors or the Community Liaison Officer (Anne Charman).

All KCC consultations could be found online at:

<http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti>

Particular reference was made to the revised Kent Environment Strategy consultation, which would run until 25 September 2015. There was an online questionnaire for residents to give feedback although hard copies were available on request from climate.change@kent.gov.uk

Anyone requiring further information on any of the subjects in the Update report could contact the Kent County Community Liaison Officer on anne.charman@kent.gov.uk

The Community Liaison Officer noted comments made regarding changes to the Kent Test and assessment for grammar schools and offered to pass these to Kent Education.

Snodland Town Council asked if the Kent Highways Work Programme which identified schemes/projects for the year could once again be shared with parish councils for information. The Community Liaison Officer offered to supply a list of schemes and dates in future updates although it was noted that the Work Programme was a standing item on Joint Transportation Board agendas.

PPP 15/15 TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL SERVICES UPDATE

The Director of Finance and Transformation provided an update on key points relevant to Tonbridge and Malling. The headline messages included:

- Larkfield Leisure Centre Health Suite Refurbishment

Work on improving the health suite had started this month and was expected to be completed by December. This represented a significant investment but would improve the quality of the leisure facilities offered. It was noted that the project was being progressed in partnership with the Leisure Trust.

- Heritage Open Days: 12-13 September 2015

The Open Days celebrated architecture and culture by offering free access to properties usually closed to the public or normally charging for admission. Further details of the places participating in the Open Days were available on www.tmbc.gov.uk

- Music at Malling

This event was taking place during 20 – 27 September 2015 with concerts, workshops and masterclasses with leading international artists in venues in and around West Malling.

Further information was available at: www.musicatmalling.com

- Street Monitor Guidance

The Guidance booklet had recently been updated and copies were available on request from Waste Services. Comments and feedback were invited as these would be noted for future revisions.

The meeting ended at 9.25 pm