

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

FINANCE, INNOVATION AND PROPERTY ADVISORY BOARD

Wednesday, 20th July, 2016

Present: Cllr S M King (Chairman), Cllr T C Walker (Vice-Chairman), Cllr R P Betts, Cllr T Bishop, Cllr J L Botten, Cllr Mrs B A Brown, Cllr T I B Cannon, Cllr D J Cure, Cllr M O Davis, Cllr Miss J L Sergison, Cllr F G Tombolis and Cllr B W Walker

Councillors Mrs J A Anderson, O C Baldock, P F Bolt, M A Coffin and N J Heslop were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs S Bell, S R J Jessel, R D Lancaster and A K Sullivan

PART 1 - PUBLIC

FIP 16/28 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

FIP 16/29 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the notes of the meeting of the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board held on 1 June 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

FIP 16/30 APPLICATIONS FOR DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF

Decision Notice D160052MEM

Further to Decision No D160039MEM (1), the report of the Director of Finance and Transformation gave details of a renewal application for discretionary rural rate relief in respect of Hadlow Post Office which had been deferred to enable more information to be obtained concerning the closure and relocation of the post office. It was noted that the property had been vacated on 27 May 2016 so the award of relief could be considered for the period 1 April 2015 to 26 May 2016.

RECOMMENDED: That the renewal application for discretionary relief be determined as follows:

Hadlow Post Office, Commercial House, High Street, Hadlow - 30% discretionary rural rate relief be awarded for the period 1 April 2015 to 26 May 2016.

FIP 16/31 FINANCIAL PLANNING AND CONTROL

Decision Notice D160053MEM

The report of the Director of Finance and Transformation provided information on the Council's key budget areas of salaries, major income streams and investment income. It also gave an update on the variations agreed in relation to the revenue budget and areas identified through revenue budget monitoring, summarised to provide an indicative overall budget position for the year which showed a net favourable variance of £380,150.

An update was also given on capital expenditure and variations agreed in relation to the capital plan.

RECOMMENDED: That the contents of the report be noted and endorsed.

FIP 16/32 CAPITAL PROGRAMME: POST IMPLEMENTATION REVIEWS MONITORING REPORT AND TWO REVIEWS

Decision Notice D160054MEM

The report of the Director of Finance and Transformation identified post implementation reviews carried out since July 2015 and the capital schemes for which reviews were due. Reviews in respect of Tablet Devices for Members and Senior Officers and Corporate Document Management System Expansion were also presented.

RECOMMENDED: That the post implementation reviews for the capital schemes detailed in the report be endorsed.

FIP 16/33 CONTRACT RENEWALS 2017 - (1) INSURANCE AND (2) CASH COLLECTION

Decision Notice D160055MEM

The report of the Director of Finance and Transformation advised that the Council's existing contracts for the provision of cash collection and insurance arrangements were due to expire in January and June 2017 respectively. It was noted that the cash collection contract was a county wide procurement exercise led by Maidstone Borough Council. However, details were given of the appointment of a broker in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules to assist with the

administration of the insurance tender process and identify where savings might be achieved.

RECOMMENDED: That the current situation regarding renewal of the cash collection contract be noted and the appointment of a broker to administer renewal of the Council's insurance arrangements be endorsed.

MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION

FIP 16/34 BENEFITS UPDATE

Members were advised of current issues arising in the benefits field including performance and workload of the Benefits Service, progress with the rollout of Universal Credit and applications for discretionary housing payment. Reference was made to responses to date to the ongoing consultation on changes to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

FIP 16/35 COUNCIL TAX AND BUSINESS RATES UPDATE

The report gave details of recent developments in respect of council tax and business rates including collection rates to 30 June 2016. Reference was made to a Government consultation on the retention by local government of 100 per cent of business rates which was likely to be reported to the extraordinary meeting of the Cabinet on 6 September.

FIP 16/36 IT SERVICES UPDATE

The report provided an update on the implementation of the new email platform and amendments to the network password policy. Reference was made to feedback from the survey of councillors' use of tablets and other devices. Progress was reported on Members' appointments with IT Services to arrange migration of the individual email accounts to Outlook and installation of a new password which would improve the reliability of their tablets.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE

FIP 16/37 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.

PART 2 - PRIVATE

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

FIP 16/38 DEBTS FOR WRITE OFF

(LGA 1972 Sch 12A Paragraph 2 – Information likely to reveal information about an individual)

Decision Notice D160056MEM

The report of the Director of Finance and Transformation sought approval of the writing-off of debts considered to be irrecoverable. Details were also given of debts under £1,000 which had been written-off in accordance with Financial Procedure Rule 17.2 together with cumulative totals of debts in the current and previous financial years and information on budgeted bad debt provision.

RECOMMENDED: That the 25 items shown in the schedule of amounts over £1,000, totalling £125,050.78 be written-off for the reasons stated within the schedule.

FIP 16/39 HOUSING STOCK TRANSFER AGREEMENT - REQUEST FOR VARIATION OF EXISTING TERMS

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

Decision Notice D160057MEM

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Central Services regarding a request for variation of the existing rules of Russet Homes Limited (included within the original stock transfer agreement with the former Tonbridge and Malling Housing Association) as part of an intended transfer to Circle Thirty Three Housing Trust Limited.

RECOMMENDED: That the Stock Transfer Agreement dated 15 January 1991 be varied by removing the covenant "...not to change the rules of the Association insofar as they relate to its objects and to Board Membership without the Council's consent, which is not to be unreasonably withheld" which is set out in paragraph 8 of the Schedule to the Sixth Schedule on page 118 of the Agreement.

The meeting ended at 8.29 pm