

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PARISH PARTNERSHIP PANEL

Thursday, 16th November, 2017

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 R W Dalton, Cllr D Lettington, Cllr B J Luker, Cllr R V Roud and Cllr T B Shaw.

Together with Addington, Aylesford, Birling, Borough Green, Burham, East Malling and Larkfield, East Peckham, Hadlow, Ightham, Kings Hill, Leybourne, Offham, Platt, Plaxtol, Shipbourne, Wateringbury, and Wrotham Parish Councils and County Councillors Mrs S Hohler and Mr H Rayner

Councillors H S Rogers and O C Baldock were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Trottiscliffe Parish Council and the Chairman of the Kent Association of Local Councils (Tonbridge and Malling).

PART 1 - PUBLIC

PPP 17/16 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

PPP 17/17 UPDATE ON ACTION IDENTIFIED IN THE LAST MINUTES - PARISH CHARTER

The Chairman referred to Minute Number PPP 17/12 (Parish Charter) and advised that following further discussion with the Kent Association of Local Councils (Tonbridge and Malling) a revised draft had been circulated to all Parish and Town Councils in advance of the meeting. Copies of the revised draft were also tabled for the Borough and County Council Members.

It was hoped that the Parish Charter was now ready to be adopted, subject to informal agreement of the Parish Partnership Panel. The next step would be for the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) (Tonbridge and Malling) and the Borough Council to formally adopt the Parish Charter via their own processes. In the case of the Borough Council, it would be up to Cabinet to give final approval.

The Chairman suggested that KALC seek final approval from the Parish/Town Councils in advance of the Borough Council's meeting of

Cabinet on 30 January 2018. It was hoped that an agreed Parish Charter would be formally signed by the Leader of the Borough Council and the Chairman of KALC at the meeting of the Parish Partnership Panel in February 2018.

The Deputy Chairman of KALC expressed appreciation for the work undertaken so far and supported the next steps as set out above.

PPP 17/18 WASTE SERVICES CONTRACT

The Head of Waste Services outlined proposals for the Waste Services Contract for refuse, recycling and street cleansing as the current contract was due to end in February 2019.

Partnership opportunities for the future delivery of these services were currently being developed with neighbouring West Kent authorities and Kent County Council, although the final details were still to be defined and agreed. However, the main aim was to deliver service improvements and efficiencies, greater consistency across the County, increased recycling performance and an operation that represented value for money.

The current proposals being considered included a weekly food waste, fortnightly residual waste, fortnightly dry recycling of paper and card and glass, cans, plastics and cartons kerbside collection model. Proposals also included the introduction of a fortnightly garden waste 'opt in' charged service. It was reported that charges were necessary in underpinning the proposed service improvements.

It was indicated that Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council was in the minority of local authorities across Kent that did not currently charge for the collection of garden waste.

The County Councillor representing Malling North welcomed the opportunity of partnership working with a number of borough/district councils as it offered a more uniform approach across Kent. In addition, the Borough Council were congratulated on the excellent service they currently offered residents.

The Panel supported the introduction of kerbside collection for glass and plastic, whilst recognising the challenge around co-mingling of materials. Members were assured that Kent County Council, as the authority with responsibility for disposal of waste, were actively involved in all discussions regarding co-mingling and their input was greatly appreciated.

There was also some concern expressed that charging for garden waste collection could potentially increase the levels of fly tipping. In response, Members were advised that where charges for green waste had been introduced by other local authorities there was no evidence to show that

levels of fly tipping had increased. It was expected that households already producing significant garden waste would choose to opt in.

Details relating to some services and the introduction of charges for garden waste were yet to be finalised by the Borough Council as some decisions were dependent upon the tender. However, it was noted that the national average charge for garden waste collection was approximately £42 per annum.

The Cabinet Member for Street Scene and Environment Services indicated that the Borough Council had agreed the principle of charging for garden waste but not the final detail. This was a positive opportunity to improve and increase services for residents and represented value for money.

Other areas discussed included the lack of a KCC Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) in the Borough, which meant that some residents were forced to visit other areas; the upgraded facility at Blaise Farm which would accept co-mingled and separated green waste materials, home composting and whether the Saturday bulky collection service would continue to take garden waste. With regard to the latter, options would be reviewed in due course.

If kerbside collection increased it was anticipated that the need to travel to recycling points would reduce and offered a more convenient service to residents. In addition the number of recycling sites across the Borough would reduce although a number would be retained at strategic core sites for those properties not able to receive the new kerbside collection service, such as flats.

Finally, it was noted that good communication, publicity and marketing would be key to resident participation and the success of the new services. The service delivery options around the Waste Services Contract continued and further detail would be forthcoming as the process developed.

PPP 17/19 LOCAL PLAN

The Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC) (Tonbridge and Malling) asked about the potential impacts on the Borough Council's Local Plan arising from the latest consultation on proposed recalculation of housing building requirements.

In reply, the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health advised that a robust and comprehensive response had been submitted setting out the Borough Council's concerns. This response had been shared with the Parish/Town Councils and the local Members of Parliament.

It was reported that Government proposals to introduce a standard methodology for estimating future housing needs, to reduce the number of challenges at the Local Plan Inquiry stage, were unwelcome and could have adverse implications on the Borough Councils' Local Plan programme.

The implications for each Local Planning Authority were published alongside the consultation document. For Tonbridge and Malling the result was an increase of 163 dwellings per year on top of the current estimate of 696, making a total of 859 new homes every year. Over the 20 year plan this equated to an additional 3,260 homes and represented a significant challenge if those figures were confirmed.

The Planning Policy Manager advised that the Borough Council had expressed concerns around deliverability, affordability and consistency of approach. It was noted that as most housing was delivered by the private sector and due to the proximity of London, increasing supply was unlikely to bring prices down. Unfortunately, the Borough Council was not in a position to submit its Local Plan before 31 March 2018, when the new methodology was expected to come into force, and would have to take account of the new housing need proposed.

Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council would continue with its Local Plan as previously set out and remained optimistic that an adoption date in 2019 was still achievable. Further information would be provided to the Planning and Transportation Advisory Board on 5 December 2017.

The Planning Policy Manager advised of the importance of completing the current work and assessments to place the Borough Council in a reasonable position if the proposals proceeded. At the present time it remained unclear how the Government would resolve the key messages arising from the consultation.

The Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health indicated that should the proposed figures be adopted it would be inevitable that the density and capacity of identified sites would have to be revisited. In addition, it was likely that previously identified and discounted proposals would have to be re-examined.

Finally, the Chairman, in his capacity as Leader of the Borough Council, reiterated that Tonbridge and Malling was extremely disappointed with the Government's latest consultation.

PPP 17/20 AIR QUALITY - PROPOSED ACTION PLAN FOR REDUCTION OF AIR POLLUTION

The Environmental Protection Team Manager presented an update on air quality matters of relevance to Tonbridge and Malling.

In July 2017, the Government had published a UK Air Quality Plan focused on reducing nitrogen dioxide. As a result, 29 local authorities which were forecast to have the greatest exceedance problem over the next 3-4 years were identified to produce action plans. Whilst the Borough Council was not one of the local authorities identified, the opportunity was being taken to update the Tonbridge and Malling Air Quality Action Plan in line with DEFRA targets.

In updating its Air Quality Action Plan, the Borough Council would explore opportunities to deliver practical change, such as bus retrofitting, provision of cycle routes and provision of electric vehicle charging points, and worked closely with schools and businesses to raise awareness of air quality issues. There would also be a focus on borough wide mitigation, including an infrastructure to support electric vehicles, and an opportunity to work with developers, planners and Kent County Council highways.

Currently within the Borough there were 7 Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in:

- Aylesford
- Borough Green
- Ditton
- Larkfield
- Tonbridge High Street
- Wateringbury
- M20

Monitoring of nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) was being carried out at 52 sites across the Borough and so far there was no exceedance of NO₂ limit levels identified outside of those areas already declared as AQMAs. If Parish Councils wanted further information on these monitoring points Environmental Protection would be pleased to assist.

Borough Green Parish Council made particular reference to particulates, which were a major concern due to the level of traffic movements and other environmental factors in the area, and asked whether the Borough Council would give consideration to any evidence collected by individual parish/town councils if they purchased their own monitoring devices. In response, the Environmental Protection Manager indicated that any results generated in this way would be looked at.

Members encouraged more emphasis on particulate monitoring. The Chief Environmental Health Officer advised that particulate monitoring equipment was a significant investment, although options were being explored with neighbouring authorities. Members were also reminded that although the Borough Council had a duty regarding monitoring of air quality, district authorities had little power to affect and/or implement change. The biggest opportunity to affect change was liaison with planners, developers and the Highway Authority. In addition, it was

noted that Public Health England could put pressure on traffic planners to take account of air quality.

In response to a question related to the M20 slip road at Junction 5, the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health advised that the Borough Council were fully supportive of these proposals. It was also hoped that the introduction of a 'smart' motorway along a stretch of the M20 would have a positive effect on the AQMAs in that vicinity.

A number of significant concerns were raised and noted. These included monitoring air quality at schools; risks to children as a result of NO₂ and particulates; impacts on local schools and communities, especially where concerns had already been expressed; the explanation around 'receptors' (housing) and the requirement for these to trigger an AQMA; the clarification that the M20 AQMA related to the area from the bridge at New Hythe Lane to Hall Road in Aylesford and the need for environmental permits and Local Planning Authority consent before crushing of aggregates.

The Chairman suggested that further questions related to particular sites should be raised out of meeting for Officers to advise further.

PPP 17/21 KENT POLICE SERVICES UPDATE

Inspector Martin provided a verbal update on the achievements made in performance and the neighbourhood policing agenda.

A number of minor staff changes were reported and it was noted that Inspector Martin was Acting Chief Inspector for both Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells, whilst Andy Gallon was Acting Inspector. In addition, the Community Safety Unit had recently recruited Vulnerable Adult and Vulnerable Youth Officers.

In response to a question from Kings Hill Parish Council, it was confirmed that an active campaign to recruit voluntary Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) was ongoing.

Recent initiatives and operations included attendance at Remembrance Parades in Snodland, Tonbridge and West Malling; increased patrols over Halloween, especially in East Malling and Kings Hill, had resulted in a reduced number of anti-social behaviour incidents on the previous year; and the use of Dispersal Orders and Anti-social Behaviour Orders in the Borough continued.

Particular reference was made to the increased number of thefts from motor vehicles in Aylesford, Larkfield and Snodland and these continued to be an active investigation.

In addition, Inspector Martin referred to the HMIC (Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary) annual inspection of police effectiveness,

efficiency and legitimacy which assessed how effective police forces were at keeping people safe and reducing crime. Kent Police had received good results in the first two (effectiveness and efficiency) and the interim feedback suggested a positive result for legitimacy.

Finally, it was noted that contact information and details relevant to individual parishes were available on the Kent Police website. This could be used to identify local PCSOs.

PPP 17/22 KENT COUNTY COUNCIL SERVICES UPDATE

The Kent County Council Community Liaison Officer (Anne Charman) reported on a number of County initiatives and consultations. Further detail was set out in the Kent County Council Services update report attached to the agenda.

Particular reference was made to a number of initiatives and these included:

- Lorry Watch and details on how to set up a scheme were available by emailing freight@kent.gov.uk
- Apprenticeships: KCC had recently launched the 1000 interview campaign and required more employers to register vacancies
- Member Grant Scheme 2017/18 was now opened with £22,000 available to fund both community and highway projects. Tonbridge and Malling County Councillors had a total of £154,000 to allocate in 2017/18. Further information was available from local County Councillors or the Community Liaison Officer

Current consultations included the Draft Budget Strategy 2018/19 and the Community Infant Feeding Support, both of which ended on 3 December 2017. A consultation related to Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Allocations, setting out proposals related to the introduction of service charges, deposit scheme and changes to the application process, had a deadline for responses of 20 December 2017. In addition, the Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment consultation sought views from health and social care professionals, organisations and local communities on the level of pharmacy services. The deadline for responses was 22 January 2018.

All Kent County Council consultations could be viewed online at:

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

Comments from the Panel related to enforcement on HGV parking in light of the recent decision not to progress plans for a lorry park in Kent were noted. The Chairman anticipated that the Joint Transportation

Board would review the potential consequences arising from this decision and the implications for parked HGVs.

PPP 17/23 TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL SERVICES UPDATE

The Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health provided an update on key points relevant to Tonbridge and Malling. The headline messages included:

- Larkfield Leisure Centre:

Works had commenced to extend the fitness suite and included construction of new dance studios to meet growing demand. The project was anticipated to cost £750,000 and these would be met in full by the Leisure Trust. These facilities could revert to Borough Council ownership at the end of the agreement with the Leisure Trust.

- Leybourne Lakes Country Park:

The Borough Council was looking at options to make the Country Park more financially self-sufficient. There was a focus on income generation linked to capital investment in the facilities, with the potential for a lakeside visitor centre incorporating catering and water sports.

It was reported that the Borough Council had £700,000 of developer contribution funds to invest in the project and was looking to work in partnership with a third party operator. The Panel was pleased to note that there had been strong interest from a number of operations.

The intention was to advertise the opportunity in Spring 2018 after a period of consultation, in which Parish councils were encouraged to participate.

- Financial Planning for Parish Councils

The Chairman advised that the Borough Council was aware that Parish and Town Councils would be preparing their budgets for the next financial year and assured that they would be updated as soon as possible.

The meeting ended at 9.40 pm