

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, 10th April, 2018

At the meeting of the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council held at Civic Suite, Gibson Building, Kings Hill, West Malling on Tuesday, 10th April, 2018

Present: His Worship the Mayor (Councillor R W Dalton), the Deputy Mayor (Councillor Mrs P A Bates), Cllr Mrs J A Anderson, Cllr O C Baldock, Cllr M A C Balfour, Cllr Mrs S M Barker, Cllr M C Base, Cllr Mrs S Bell, Cllr R P Betts, Cllr T Bishop, Cllr P F Bolt, Cllr J L Botten, Cllr V M C Branson, Cllr Mrs B A Brown, Cllr T I B Cannon, Cllr M A Coffin, Cllr D J Cure, Cllr M O Davis, Cllr B T M Elks, Cllr S M Hammond, Cllr Mrs M F Heslop, Cllr N J Heslop, Cllr S R J Jessel, Cllr D Keeley, Cllr D Keers, Cllr Mrs F A Kemp, Cllr R D Lancaster, Cllr D Lettington, Cllr Mrs S L Luck, Cllr B J Luker, Cllr D Markham, Cllr P J Montague, Cllr Mrs A S Oakley, Cllr L J O'Toole, Cllr M Parry-Waller, Cllr S C Perry, Cllr M R Rhodes, Cllr H S Rogers, Cllr R V Roud, Cllr Miss J L Sergison, Cllr T B Shaw, Cllr Miss S O Shrubsole, Cllr Ms S V Spence, Cllr A K Sullivan, Cllr M Taylor, Cllr Miss G E Thomas, Cllr F G Tombolis, Cllr B W Walker and Cllr T C Walker

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D A S Davis, Mrs T Dean, S M King and C P Smith

PART 1 - PUBLIC

C 18/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

C 18/16 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Council held on 20 February 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

C 18/17 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported that he and the Deputy Mayor had attended 195 engagements since May. He highlighted some memorable events including the Dementia Friendly Business Exchange, the Derwent Day Care Centre's anniversary party and East Malling Partnership's Sports Relief. He also mentioned the Lord Lieutenant of Kent's Civic Service at

Canterbury, a concert by Sevenoaks and Tonbridge Concert Band and the Tonbridge Juddians RFC annual sponsors lunch and match. Members were reminded of the forthcoming Charity Gala evening at Kings Hill Golf Club on 28 April.

C 18/18 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 5.6

No questions were received from members of the public pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 5.6.

C 18/19 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 5.5

No questions were received from Members pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 5.5.

C 18/20 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader indicated that he would use his announcements to remind the Council of some of the activity that had been achieved over the past 12 months, highlighting three particular areas.

However, he began by referring to the recent sad passing of David Evans who served on the Borough Council, Kent County Council and as a parish councillor for many years. He was first elected in May 1991 to the Borough Green Ward which subsequently became Borough Green and Long Mill Ward and retired in November 2013 after 22 years' service, having chaired a number of committees, most notably the Area 2 Planning Committee and the then Policy Overview Committee. In March 2016 David was appointed to the position of Honorary Alderman and the Leader expressed condolences on behalf of the Council to Sheila Evans and the family.

The Leader also reflected on the 100th anniversary of the Royal Air Force earlier this month and he indicated that it was in 1918 that RAF West Malling became operational. In recognition, the RAF flag was flying at the Council offices that day.

Review of the year

Looking back over the year, the Leader said Members had worked hard to remain true to the Council's core principles and its record of service, recognising the financial challenges faced by local authorities. The concern must be to protect what was cherished in Tonbridge and Malling, providing the services believed to be important to local people but also being mindful of the wider challenges faced.

The focus on driving value for money had meant that the Borough Council had also delivered savings in excess of £1.8m over the last

three years. But the age of austerity continued for local government and a further £1m in savings had to be found over the next three years. That would require a joint effort between Members and senior officers in driving this forward. Colleagues were asked to note from the programme of meetings which followed on the agenda that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was beginning a series of regular meetings over the course of the year and the Leader hoped that some of the topics would be able to contribute to that significant target.

Housing

The Leader referred to a recommendation later on the agenda that the Borough Council commit up to £1.6m of development contributions for the purchase of temporary accommodation. This was a positive move which would give the Council more options to assist people to whom it had a duty to house temporarily. It would also reduce the reliance on nightly paid accommodation and consequently help to manage and reduce costs. All round this provided a way of using resources that the Council had properly accrued from development in the Borough to provide suitable homes that were fit for purpose for those requiring help, at the cost of developers rather than the tax payers.

The Leader highlighted that, working with its registered social landlord partners, over 570 affordable homes had been provided throughout the Borough during the past three years and, in the most recent year 2017/18, the Council had secured 315 homes for affordable rent, social rent, shared ownership and extra care accommodation.

Business support

The Leader stated that supporting its businesses remained a key Council priority and he was proud of what had been achieved through the West Kent Partnership. A familiar plea from local employers was the need to improve careers advice and guidance. So he was pleased that this year a dedicated careers advice network was in place, funded both locally and by the national Career and Enterprise Company. The Council had worked with partners in staging Job Fairs throughout the Borough, putting business leaders in direct contact with job seekers.

The Village Stores Initiative over the course of a 12 month pilot project had supported local stores in East Peckham, Wateringbury, Plaxtol and Wouldham and the programme would now continue this year.

The Leader had been pleased to support the county-wide proposal to be a pilot area for the Business Rates retention scheme. This bid having been successful, he was looking forward to seeing the benefits and financial rewards including business investment in West Kent.

Leisure

Working in partnership, the Leader said that the Council could be proud of the leisure facilities offered to its residents. He highlighted the fact that in October last year, Tonbridge Swimming Pool was awarded an industry standard Quest Outstanding for the second time. Of the 706 leisure centres in the UK being independently inspected by Quest only 12 had achieved this rating, two of those 12 facilities being Tonbridge Swimming Pool and Larkfield Leisure Centre. This placed the Council's facilities in the top 2%. It was noted that in the Quest assessment of Tonbridge Swimming Pool, the inspectors made specific reference to the quality of engagement by the Borough Council, both by senior Members and officers.

Reference was made to the successful negotiation of a revised Service Fee with the Leisure Trust resulting in an annual saving of £150,000 with no reduction in service quality. Furthermore, the Trust was investing over £700,000 of their own money in new fitness facilities at Larkfield Leisure Centre, due to open this coming summer.

The Council's outdoor facilities continued to be improved through the success in securing external funding from developer contributions and grant sources. The improvements included path works, play facilities, planting and new wild flower areas at both of its Country Parks. This external investment had been significant and new exciting plans were now being developed for Leybourne Lakes Country Park with the intention of reducing the overall cost of this facility to the Council in the future.

General

The Leader concluded by referring to the period of snow earlier this year and the fact that the Council was open for business throughout. Whilst the snow prevented the collection of bins, there was a strong engagement with residents to keep them informed and a rapid recovery. The Council's offices were open daily as were its telephones and priority services were able to be delivered to those most in need. The Severe Weather Emergency Protocol was in place ensuring those without a place to sleep were given full support. The Council's investment in IT systems meant that its staff could work in a flexible way providing maximum services to the residents.

C 18/21 FEEDBACK FROM CONSULTATION ON THE HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE POLICY 2018 - 2023

Item LA 18/19 referred from Licensing and Appeals Committee minutes of 13 March 2018

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute LA 18/19 be approved.

C 18/22 GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATION SOFTWARE

Item CB 18/24 referred from Cabinet minutes of 20 March 2018

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute CB 18/24 be approved.

C 18/23 PURCHASE OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION

Item CB 18/25 referred from Cabinet minutes of 20 March 2018

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute CB 18/25 be approved.

C 18/24 AUDIT COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Item AU 18/17 referred from Audit Committee minutes of 3 April 2018

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute AU 18/17 be approved.

C 18/25 LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Item AU 18/18 referred from Audit Committee minutes of 3 April 2018

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute AU 18/18 be approved.

C 18/26 PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2018/19

The report of the Director of Central Services presented for consideration a draft proposed programme of meetings for 2018/19. Details of arrangements for the remainder of this year to the commencement of the municipal year 2020 were set out in the annex to the report. Particular attention was drawn to changes to the programme arising from the Waste Services Tender process, the revised Local Plan timetable and the decision to hold additional meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED: That the programme of meetings be endorsed, subject to any amendments following further considerations and submitted to Annual Council for final confirmation.

C 18/27 SEALING OF DOCUMENTS

RESOLVED: That authority be given for the Common Seal of the Council to be affixed to any instrument to give effect to a decision of the Council incorporated into these Minutes and proceedings.

The meeting ended at 7.59 pm