

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PARISH PARTNERSHIP PANEL

Thursday, 14th June, 2018

Present: Cllr N J Heslop (Chairman), Cllr M A Coffin (Vice-Chairman), Cllr R P Betts, Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr D Lettington, Cllr B J Luker, Cllr D Markham and Cllr T B Shaw.

Together with Addington, Aylesford, Borough Green, Burham, East Peckham, Hadlow, Hildenborough, Kings Hill, Leybourne, Offham, Platt, Plaxtol, Shipbourne, Snodland, Trottiscliffe, Watlington, Wouldham, Wrotham Parish/Town Councils and County Councillors Mrs S Hohler and Mr H Rayner.

Councillors O C Baldock, H S Rogers, M Parry-Waller and Miss J L Sergison were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs J A Anderson, Mrs S M Barker, T I B Cannon, R V Roud and Birling, East Malling and Larkfield, Ightham and Ryarsh Parish Councils.

PART 1 - PUBLIC

PPP 18/9 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 February 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

PPP 18/10 UPDATE ON ACTION IDENTIFIED IN THE LAST MINUTES

The Chairman referred to Minute Number PPP 18/8 (Tonbridge and Malling Services Update) regarding the creation of a 'service directory' for parish councils and, although this continued to be a work in progress, comments on the draft version circulated in advance of the meeting were invited.

PPP 18/11 KENT POLICE SERVICES UPDATE

The Sub-Divisional Commander for Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge (Chief Inspector Pete Steenhuis) provided a brief overview of the new model of policing introduced by Kent Police. This included the amalgamation of Tonbridge and Tunbridge Wells into one sub-division and the establishment of Specialist Investigation Teams to look at serious and complex crime.

With regard to general crime officers now followed cases through from first reporting, investigation and follow up and, whilst the central office was based in Tonbridge, officers were distributed throughout the sub-

divisional area as required. Meetings were held daily at 0830 hours to identify areas of concerns and actions for the day.

The Community Safety Unit continued to deal with local crime and safety issues and for Tonbridge and Malling this was based at the Borough Council offices in Kings Hill.

Particular reference was made to traveller incursions and whether the police had any powers to act if there was evidence of anti-social behaviour, criminal damage, fly-tipping or intimidation on those sites.

In response, Chief Inspector Steenhuis advised that Kent Police were able to remove unlawful encampments promptly and emphasised that crime would not be tolerated. Individuals would be prosecuted where possible but evidence was required to support the case.

Chief Inspector Steenhuis referred to the strong processes in place at Tonbridge and Malling which enabled a very quick response to traveller incursions, with 'directions to leave' served within 24 hours and an application to the court for a hearing (section 72) being applied for at the same time.

It was noted that for privately owned land it was the responsibility of that individual landowner to deal with a traveller incursion and not the local authority.

A Government consultation on seeking views on the effectiveness of powers for dealing with unauthorised development and encampments finished on 15 June and a response would be submitted on behalf of the Borough Council.

In response to a question on street gangs, Chief Inspector Steenhuis advised that a Serious and Organised Crime Board had been established to discuss, review and monitor this issue. Currently, there was no significant movement of street gangs from London into Tonbridge and Malling identified, although there had been some movement related to drug dealing and this had recently resulted in some arrests.

Other points discussed included:

- 'Red routing': Increased police visibility and patrols in areas identified with heightened activity, mainly related to anti-social behaviour, to act as a deterrent and to try and identify those causing problems;
- Police attendance at parish council meetings: There was a preference for PSCOs to be dealing with crime for the benefit of the community rather than attending numerous meetings. It was felt

that officers should only attend these meetings when there was something significant to report.

Finally, it was noted that Chief Inspector Steenhuis would be transferring to the Metropolitan police area in the future. He apologised for the lack of continuity this offered but that he remained the Sub-Divisional Commander until further notice.

PPP 18/12 LOCAL PLAN

The Chairman, in his role as Leader of the Council, opened the discussion by reminding Members that the Borough Council had a duty, prescribed by Government, to set out local planning policies which identified how land was used and determine what would be built where. A Local Plan enabled a local authority to retain control of potential development opportunities.

Members were advised that failure to submit a Local Plan within the transitional period, proposed by the Government in the new draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), would result in significant risks associated with having to address a substantially higher provision of housing as a result of the introduction of a standardised methodology for assessing housing need. It would also cause significant further delays, which would place the Borough Council in a more vulnerable position in terms of land supply in responding to planning applications and facing planning appeals. This proposed transition period had prompted the need to revise the previous timetable and every effort was being made to submit the Local Plan to the Secretary of State in December 2018.

The Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health and the Planning Policy Manager provided an update on the preparation of the Local Plan. A draft document with a refined development strategy, policies and proposals had been considered by the Planning and Transportation Advisory Board on 5 June 2018. It was anticipated that the next meeting of the Advisory Board in July 2018 would review the final draft of the Local Plan with the formal public consultation, required under Regulation 19, to follow in September 2018. This offered parish councils and members of the public the opportunity to comment on the proposals. All responses received would be submitted to the Secretary of State with the Local Plan for approval in December.

It was reported that the policies in the draft Local Plan document outlined the key development requirements associated with each major site, including the need for significant infrastructure. Further work on completing and updating evidence was inevitable as the process progressed.

Particular reference was made to the major sites at Bushey Wood, South Aylesford, Kings Hill (Broadwater Farm) and Borough Green. All

of which had seen refined housing allocations in response to consultation and the emerging evidence, including further assessment on transport modelling and capacity issues. The extension of the green belt to the east of West Malling was welcomed and Planning Officers were confident that special circumstances could be demonstrated to support this case.

A number of concerns were raised and included:

- Infrastructure Funding and Delivery: Members were advised that an Infrastructure Delivery Plan would be prepared assessing and identifying funding opportunities;
- Congestion and increased traffic flows on roads and the effects on rural communities (particularly the A20, Hermitage Lane, Borough Green and Junction 4 of the M20);
- Duty to Co-operate: The Borough Council would robustly defend and challenge any request to meet development needs of nearby areas, although it was recognised that this issue was likely to arise at the Public Examination. The Cabinet Member for Strategic Infrastructure and Planning (Councillor Howard Rogers) advised of the importance of understanding the challenges and needs of neighbouring local planning authorities and he would be meeting with his counterparts to discuss common themes;
- Early delivery of the new A25 relief road for Borough Green Gardens. This point had been raised by the Planning and Transportation Advisory Board in June and noted by officers for further investigation;
- Risks around alternative and/or additional sites being brought forward by other interested parties were noted;
- Regulation 19 representations: Responses would be made available when submitted to the Secretary of State and options would be considered to support availability to third parties; and
- A number of questions were asked about air quality and mitigation and these would be addressed out of meeting.

Finally, the next steps in the Local Plan process were reiterated and these included further evidence assessment of a number of sites. Comments would be welcomed as part of the formal public consultation exercise expected to take place in September.

PPP 18/13 KENT COUNTY COUNCIL SERVICES UPDATE

Members noted the report of the Kent County Council Community Liaison Officer (Anne Charman), which set out details of a number of County initiatives and consultations.

All Kent County Council consultations could be viewed online at:

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

The Chairman referred to the Big Conversation programme on the future of rural bus services which aimed to find new potential opportunities in providing rural transport services. A meeting on this subject was to be held at Borough Green village hall on 5 July between 1900-2100 hours. If this was inconvenient a further meeting was arranged for 19 July in Sessions House, Maidstone between 1900-2100 hours. Parish councils were encouraged to attend to discuss and identify potential new opportunities for rural transport services.

It was also reported that the County Council continued to work on potholes and since March 2018 had filled 1,091 in Tonbridge and Malling.

PPP 18/14 TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL SERVICES UPDATE

The Chairman, in his role as Leader of the Council, provided an update on key points of relevance to Tonbridge and Malling. The headline messages included:

Larkfield Leisure Centre:

Investment in new gym, free weights area, two new dance studios and improved changing areas. The Leisure Centre had recently received an outstanding Quest award and this placed the facility in the top 2% nationally, together with Tonbridge Swimming Pool, which was a great achievement.

Leybourne Lakes Country Park:

Investment in new parking, interpretation and play structures. Consideration was also being given to future development opportunities.

In addition, the Borough Council continued to support, promote and run initiatives related to healthy living, business engagement and support, rural businesses, employment and skills and environmental initiatives. Further detail on these were set out in the presentation which would be attached to the Minutes for information.

The meeting ended at 9.30 pm