

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

Tuesday, 19th February, 2019

At the meeting of the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council held at Civic Suite, Gibson Building, Kings Hill, West Malling on Tuesday, 19th February, 2019

Present: Her Worship the Mayor (Councillor Mrs P A Bates), the Deputy Mayor (Councillor 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 T Bishop, 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 R W Dalton, Cllr D A S Davis, Cllr M O Davis, Cllr N J Heslop, 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 Miss J L Sergison, Cllr T B Shaw, Cllr C P Smith, Cllr A K Sullivan, Cllr F G Tombolis and Cllr T C Walker

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R P Betts, P F Bolt, Mrs T Dean, Mrs M F Heslop, H S Rogers, R V Roud, M Taylor, Miss G E Thomas and B W Walker

PART 1 - PUBLIC

C 19/1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

C 19/2 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Council held on 30 October 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

C 19/3 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported that since October she had visited many school nativities, Christmas fayres and award presentations. She highlighted a number of memorable events including the Hi Kent dinner, Eynsford Band concert, Kings Hill Parish Council's opening of a new play area, Kent Young Chef 2019, visit to the 8th Tonbridge Brownies and Guides, Heart of Kent Hospice's Light up a Life service and a visit to Demelza Hospice. The Mayor had also attended the switching on of Christmas lights at Snodland and Liberty Square, West Kent College's Burns Night,

the induction of the vicar of St Peter and St Paul's Church, Aylesford and presentations of the Bluebird Care Assistant of the Year, Kent Police Certificate of Merit and to the Environment Champions.

Past Mayoral events included Remembrance Sunday Services, hosting local primary and senior schools' debates and the Charity Night at the Oast Theatre. The Mayor encouraged Members to buy tickets for the forthcoming Charity Event at the Old Fire Station on 10 April.

C 19/4 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 19/5 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 19/6 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader began by formally welcoming Eleanor Hoyle as the Borough Council's new Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health and wishing her all the best at Tonbridge and Malling.

He indicated that Councillor Peter Bolt had been very unwell of late but was pleased to say that he was now back at home. The Leader would be writing to him on behalf of the Council and sending best wishes.

Members were advised that Councillor Martin Coffin would present the budget proposals later in the proceedings and, in doing so, would set out the achievements of the Council over the course of the past four years.

Financial matters

The Leader reminded Members that the Council's record was set against one of the toughest economic circumstances. Notwithstanding losing over £1 million in grant funding since 2016/17 (or 15.2 per cent), Members working with the officers had held their nerve in maintaining front line services but also exceeding the requirements of the savings and transformation strategy by £629,000. Members were asked to note that the Council had over-achieved on the savings and transformation target of £350k for this year. As Grant Thornton reported in the most recent audit letter, they were "satisfied that the Council put in place proper arrangements to ensure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources."

A clean and tidy Borough

The Leader stated that a key priority for residents was to maintain a clean and tidy Borough. The Council had the responsibility to empty the bins of over 52,000 households and sweep over 400 miles of roads, pavements and footpaths. He was pleased to report that the latest data from the Kent Waste Resource Partnership showed that just 0.04 per cent of what was collected was taken to landfill.

Members of the Street Scene and Environment Services Advisory Board recently had the opportunity to meet the Business Development Manager and Contract Manager for Urbaser and asked a number of detailed questions relating to the new contract. The new contract would commence on 1 March with the new recycling arrangements being introduced on 30 September. Every household would receive an introductory leaflet next week through their door and officers were making further arrangements to meet Parish Councils and hold a number of roadshows.

The Leader advised that the Government yesterday went out to consultation on its new long term Waste and Recycling strategy, focusing on three areas including reforming the UK packaging producer responsibility system, introducing a deposit return scheme and consistency in household and business recycling collection. He indicated that the majority of the recommendations in the strategy were in line with the Council's future approach and were welcomed. The Government had said that it would fund a free garden waste collection service; with over 53 per cent of local authorities now charging for green waste, any such consideration would be subject to significant financial implications. The Leader stated that the Council would be responding in full to the consultation in close liaison with the Kent Resource Partnership.

Local communities also played their part and the Leader was sure Members would wish to support their own groups with the Great British Spring Clean between 22 March and 23 April. In his own ward, Councillor Mark Davis and he would be supporting the Woodland Walk Residents' Group with their own litter pick.

Local Plan

The Leader said Members would be aware that the Local Plan agreed by full Council on 12 September was submitted to the Secretary of State in time to meet the deadline for the transitional arrangements on 23 January. Last week, the Council was advised that two inspectors had been appointed, Mr Simon Berkeley and Mr Luke Fleming and officers were now liaising with them via the Programme Officer in preparation for the public inquiry.

Housing – TA

When the Council last met, the Leader had been pleased to report that the purchase of six units for temporary accommodation had been completed and were in use. He indicated that while all six units were now in use, there had also been a turnaround of occupants as the housing team were able to find permanent housing solutions for clients.

Processing Benefits claims

The Leader referred to information given at the most recent meeting of the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board that the Benefits team now ranked third out of the 391 councils for the time taken to process benefits claims. There were no other Kent councils in the top 20. The average number of days to assess new benefit claims between April and December was 12.3, while it took an average of 2.2 days to deal with changes in circumstances.

He said this was an extremely commendable performance by the team, not least when considering that the recipients were those facing particular financial hardship. Members of the Audit Committee would be aware that Grant Thornton reported that no amendments were required to the housing subsidy claim; again a creditable performance by the team.

Country Parks

The Leader referred to the fact that Haysden Country Park had won the prestigious Green Flag Award from Keep Britain Tidy for 13 years in a row and Leybourne Lakes Country Park for 12 successive years.

Members of the Communities and Housing Advisory Board would see at its next meeting a detailed report of a recent onsite casual user survey at Haysden Country Park showing that 99.5 per cent of visitors were satisfied with the Park. This represented an increase of 2.5 per cent since the last survey in 2013 and reflected the continuing high standards being achieved and the significant level of ongoing investment in the site over recent years, funded in the majority of cases by developer contributions.

Business engagement

The Leader advised that in the past year, the Borough Council in partnership with others had hosted 8 business networking events (5 in Tonbridge, 2 in Snodland and 1 in Kings Hill). Over 200 businesses had attended one or more of these events which had helped build awareness of the activities the Council was undertaking to support the local economy, as well as wider hot topics such as cybercrime, GDPR and new funding opportunities and business advice. Feedback from local businesses attending these events had been overwhelmingly positive. The Council had also continued to produce a monthly e-bulletin for local

businesses which currently had a subscription list of over 600 business contacts.

Members were advised that having entered into partnership with Deskrenters, Castle Lodge, Tonbridge co-working business accommodation had opened in May 2018 and been a great success in supporting fledgling creative start-ups and freelancers. The Borough Council was now in discussion with Deskrenters about the delivery of a new scheme in the Gibson Building to provide small office accommodation for start-up businesses.

The Leader was also pleased to record that the Council had been able to facilitate two pop up shops in 2018 in partnership with a local business entrepreneur - Tonbridge Create. The pop-ups had helped give creative start-up businesses an opportunity to have a high street presence, as well as deliver children's art workshops and give students from Oakley School invaluable work experience.

The Leader reported that next month the Borough Council would be launching a new grant scheme for local independent retailers to offer funding support towards shopfront improvements. Independent retailers in eligible parts of Tonbridge, West Malling, Borough Green, Snodland, Hadlow, Larkfield, Kings Hill, East Peckham, Aylesford and Wrotham would receive a letter notifying them of the scheme in the next couple of weeks.

C 19/7 REMOVAL OF PROBATIONARY LICENCES FROM HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE POLICY - CONSULTATION

Item LA 18/109 referred from Licensing and Appeals Committee minutes of 27 November 2018

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute LA 18/109 be approved.

C 19/8 REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

Item GP 19/3 referred from General Purposes Committee minutes of 28 January 2019

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute GP 19/3 be approved.

C 19/9 LOCALISM ACT PAY POLICY

Item GP 19/4 referred from General Purposes Committee minutes of 28 January 2019

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute GP 19/4 be approved.

C 19/10 RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Item CB 19/3 referred from Cabinet minutes of 14 February 2019

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute CB 19/3 be approved.

C 19/11 TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Item CB 19/4 referred from Cabinet minutes of 14 February 2019

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute CB 19/4 be approved.

C 19/12 SETTING THE BUDGET 2019/20

Item CB 19/5 referred from Cabinet minutes of 14 February 2019

It was proposed by Councillor Coffin and seconded by Councillor N Heslop that the recommendations at Minute CB 19/5 be adopted. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No 8.5 voting was recorded as follows:

Members voting for the motion:

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 P A Bates, Cllr Mrs S Bell, Cllr J L Botten, Cllr V M C Branson, Cllr Mrs B A Brown, Cllr M A Coffin, Cllr D J Cure, Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr D A S Davis, Cllr M O Davis, Cllr N J Heslop, 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 L J O'Toole, Cllr M Parry-Waller, Cllr S C Perry, Cllr M R Rhodes, Cllr Miss J L Sergison, Cllr T B Shaw, Cllr C P Smith, Cllr A K Sullivan, Cllr F G Tombolis and Cllr T C Walker

Total 35

Members voting against the motion:

Cllr T Bishop, Cllr T I B Cannon, Cllr Mrs A S Oakley

Total 3

Members abstaining:

None

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute CB 19/5 be approved.

C 19/13 SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX FOR 2019/20

Item CB 19/6 referred from Cabinet minutes of 14 February 2019

It was proposed by Councillor Coffin and seconded by Councillor N Heslop that the recommendations at Minute CB 19/6 be adopted. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule No 8.5 voting was recorded as follows:

Members voting for the motion:

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 P A Bates, Cllr Mrs S Bell, Cllr T Bishop, Cllr J L Botten, Cllr V M C Branson, Cllr Mrs B A Brown, Cllr M A Coffin, Cllr D J Cure, Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr D A S Davis, Cllr M O Davis, Cllr N J Heslop, 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 Miss J L Sergison, Cllr T B Shaw, Cllr C P Smith, Cllr A K Sullivan, Cllr F G Tombolis and Cllr T C Walker

Total 37

Members voting against the motion:

Cllr T I B Cannon

Total 1

Members abstaining:

None

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute CB 19/6 be approved and the Council Tax Resolution 2019/20, as set out as an Annex to these Minutes, be adopted.

C 19/14 BREXIT PREPAREDNESS

Item CB 19/7 referred from Cabinet minutes of 14 February 2019

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute CB 19/7 be approved.

C 19/15 CHERRY ORCHARD/BRAMPTON FIELD, DITTON

Item CB 19/8 referred from Cabinet minutes of 14 February 2019

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute CB 19/8 be approved.

C 19/16 REVENUES AND BENEFITS UPDATE REPORT

Item CB 19/9 referred from Cabinet minutes of 14 February 2019

Supplementary information was circulated updating the position regarding the local scheme for retail discount and providing details of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2019/20.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations at Minute CB 19/9 be approved.

C 19/17 AMENDMENT TO SCALE OF FEES FOR ELECTION STAFF

Consideration was given to the report of the Chief Executive regarding endorsement of an updated scale of fees for staff working during any elections scheduled or unscheduled in 2019.

RESOLVED: That the updated scale of fees set out at Annex 1 to the report be endorsed.

C 19/18 CHANGES TO CONSTITUTION

The report of the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer recommended changes to the Constitution to extend his existing delegation in respect of public rights of way to cover any Council functions relating to village greens. The issue had been highlighted by a current application to register a village green, in respect of which a response to the consultation was required within a timescale that precluded preparation of a report to the Council.

RESOLVED: That the Monitoring Officer be authorised to amend the Constitution to give effect to the changes outlined in the report.

C 19/19 APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Central Services regarding the nomination of a person to serve as a Trustee of the Tonbridge United Charity in place of Councillor R Lancaster. Thanks were recorded to Councillor Lancaster for his past service.

RESOLVED: That Councillor V Branson be nominated as a Trustee of the Tonbridge United Charity.

C 19/20 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 8.27 pm