

**TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**COMMUNITIES AND HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD**

**Tuesday, 25th February, 2020**

**Present:** Cllr J L Botten (Chairman), Cllr Mrs J A Anderson, Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr N Foyle, Cllr P M Hickmott, Cllr F A Hoskins, Cllr S A Hudson, Cllr Mrs R F Lettington, Cllr L J O'Toole, Cllr W E Palmer and Cllr Mrs M Tatton

Councillors Mrs P A Bates, M A Coffin, N J Heslop, M A J Hood, D Lettington, P J Montague, Mrs A S Oakley and M R Rhodes were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Mr A Nicholl (Tonbridge Sports Association) was also present.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs S Bell, K King and Miss G E Thomas

**PART 1 - PUBLIC**

**CH 20/1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Mrs Tatton declared an Other Significant Interest in the item on Community Development Update on the grounds that she was a trustee of the East Malling Centre which received funding. She withdrew from the meeting during its consideration. In respect of the same item, in the interests of transparency, Councillor Mrs Oakley advised that she was a member of East Malling and Larkfield Parish Council and Councillor Mrs Bates that she was Chair of the Trench Community Foundation.

Also in the interests of transparency, Councillor Heslop advised in respect of any housing matters that he was a member of the Board of The Bridge Trust and with reference to the item on Basted Mill Public Open Space, Councillor Palmer indicated that she was Chair of Platt Parish Council.

**CH 20/2 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the notes of the meeting of the Communities and Housing Advisory Board held on 12 November 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**CH 20/3 PRESENTATION: MAIDSTONE AND TUNBRIDGE WELLS NHS TRUST**

The Advisory Board received a presentation from Mr Miles Scott, Chief Executive of Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust and his

colleague Mr John Weeks, providing an update on matters concerning the Trust. Particular reference was made to a number of topical matters including the coronavirus, operational performance, stroke services, staffing and recruitment and car parking provision at the hospitals.

After answering questions from Members on those issues, together with access to mental health services, the need for joined up services across agencies and funding for schemes such as the Better Care Fund and Disabled Facilities Grants, the Chairman thanked Messrs Scott and Weeks for their contribution to the meeting.

### **MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET**

#### **CH 20/4 HOUSING STRATEGY PROJECT PLAN**

Decision Notice D200019MEM

The report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health gave details of a proposal for the Council to have a Housing Strategy outlining its priorities and strategic approach to housing delivery in the Borough. Consideration was given to the approval of a project plan for the development of the Housing Strategy.

A number of suggestions were made regarding the scope of the strategy, its ambitions and supporting policies. Officers undertook to report back at the research and drafting stage of the project plan.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the Housing Strategy Project Plan set out at Annex 1 to the report be approved.

#### **CH 20/5 LOCAL LETTINGS POLICIES**

Decision Notice D200020MEM

The report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health provided information on the current approach to using Local Lettings Policies (LLPs) for affordable housing in partnership with Registered Providers, clarified the use of such LLPs in the future and proposed a pro-forma document for adoption for all new housing developments in the Borough.

**RECOMMENDED:** That

- (1) the current approach to using Local Lettings Policies be noted and the following priorities for using LLPs be agreed:
  - (a) local connection to the area in which the development is located using housing sub-market areas;

- (b) an aim for 50% of lettings to be to economically active households; and
- (2) the pro-forma Local Lettings Policy set out at Annex 1 to the report be approved subject to amendment of section C to clarify the definition of economically active households.

## **CH 20/6 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING CIVIL PENALTIES POLICY**

Decision Notice D200021MEM

The report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health recommended the implementation of a private sector housing financial (civil) penalties policy under the Housing Act 2004 and Housing and Planning Act 2016. This would enable the Council to adopt an alternative approach to prosecution of a private landlord or agent for certain housing offences or breaches of a banning order. It was noted that implementation of financial penalties would allow the Council to re-use the income to self-finance some of its future targeted enforcement activity.

**RECOMMENDED:** That

- (1) the Private Sector Housing Financial Civil Penalties Policy set out at Annex 1 to the report be endorsed; and
- (2) authority be delegated to the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing, to approve amendments to the policy to reflect any changes to the law affecting the enforcement of civil penalties under the Housing Act 2004, the Housing and Planning Act 2016 or other relevant legislation.

## **CH 20/7 KEY VOLUNTARY SECTOR BODIES - REVIEW OF CORE GRANT SUPPORT**

Decision Notice D200022MEM

The report of the Chief Executive gave details of summaries of progress achieved against the objectives set out in the Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with a number of key voluntary sector bodies at the end of the existing one year term. It was noted that each organisation had been consulted to establish the implications for service delivery if a reduction were applied to their grant which would enable the SLA to be extended for a suggested four year term, thus providing increased security and stability.

A summary was presented of the responses received from each grant recipient and future options considered.

**RECOMMENDED:** That

- (1) based on the good progress by all voluntary bodies and the vital support provided to residents, grant funding be continued for each organisation in line with Service Level Agreements;
- (2) based on the positive responses received regarding the suggested longer term settlement of four years and the level of difficulty highlighted with any reduction to grant, the following be agreed:
  - (a) the grants to Citizens Advice North and West Kent (CANWK) and Age UK Sevenoaks and Tonbridge be maintained at existing levels for a one year term and a more detailed review be undertaken via the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to fully explore options for the future; and
  - (b) in respect of Imago, Involve and Maidstone and West Kent Mediation Schemes, each organisation be offered a choice as follows:
    - set grants at the reduced rate for a fixed four year settlement, OR
    - maintain the grant at existing levels for a one year term and undertake a more detailed review via the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to fully explore options for the future.

**CH 20/8 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT UPDATE**

Decision Notice D200023MEM

The report of the Chief Executive provided an update on community development work taking place in the Borough's three priority communities of Trench, East Malling and Snodland. Consideration was given to the continuation of support for 2020/21 in accordance with budgetary provision.

**RECOMMENDED:** That the Council continue to support Community Development Partnerships in each of the priority communities.

**CH 20/9 BASTED MILL PUBLIC OPEN SPACE**

Decision Notice D200024MEM

The report of the Director of Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services provided an update on the current and proposed future management arrangements for Basted Mill Public Open Space, Borough

Green following formal notification of resignation from the existing Joint Management Committee by the three participating parish councils.

The work of the parish councils and volunteers over the years in the management and maintenance of the Public Open Space was acknowledged.

**RECOMMENDED:** That

- (1) the resignation of Plaxtol, Platt and Borough Green Parish Councils from the Basted Mill Public Open Space Joint Committee be noted;
- (2) the Basted Mill Public Open Space Joint Committee be “wound up” on 1 April 2021 and the management and maintenance of the site be undertaken solely by the Borough Council;
- (3) the current contribution made by the Borough Council to the Joint Committee be transferred in full to a revenue budget for the future maintenance of the site; and
- (4) any residual funding from the Joint Committee be transferred to the Borough Council on 1 April 2021 in accordance with the adopted Constitution and ring-fenced in a designated “Reserve” to be solely used for the future management and maintenance of Basted Mill Public Open Space.

[In accordance with Council and Committee Procedure Rule No 8.6, Councillor Palmer requested that her vote against the motion be recorded.]

**MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION**

**CH 20/10 LEISURE TRUST UPDATE**

The report reviewed the recent performance of the Tonbridge and Malling Leisure Trust and provided an update on progress of the major capital plan scheme for Larkfield Leisure Centre.

**MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE**

**CH 20/11 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were no items considered in private.

The meeting ended at 9.26 pm