

# TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

## CABINET

30 June 2020

### Report of the Management Team

#### Part 1- Public

#### Executive Non Key Decision

#### 1 CORPORATE PLAN – ADDENDUM

##### Executive Summary

**This report provides an update on recent activity in response to Coronavirus Emergency, and references activity in accordance with the Corporate Plan – Addendum, which will allow Cabinet to review progress at a strategic level.**

#### 1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 At its meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2020, Cabinet agreed an addendum to the Corporate Strategy to provide a strategic framework for the Council’s recovery plan, underpinned by three themes (Review, Re-orientation and Recovery), and within the context of the county wide recovery “cells”.
- 1.1.2 The structure of the framework is based on thematic strands of Economy, Infrastructure, Communities & Health, Environment and Running the Council.
- 1.1.3 Rather than deal with specific elements, this report seeks to set out a “roadmap” of current activity on the thematic strands, and highlights a variety of reports that will be coming to various Boards and Committees, for Member debate over the coming months.
- 1.1.4 As ever, this report has been written at a “point in time”. Any implications of significant changes to national guidance will be highlighted at the meeting.

#### 1.2 Economy

- 1.2.1 Economy – The county wide economic recovery cell, will provide the context for this work. The Chief Executive is a member of this cell. Detailed work is underway on modelling the impact assessment on various business sectors, and geographies. The work of this cell is key in ensuring engagement with a variety of partners and potential sources of funding, including the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP), The Kent and Medway Economic Partnership (KMEP), the business communities and the skills sectors. The proposed time frame for completion of this work is the end of July, which will then provide the context for a full report to Members via the Economic and Regeneration Advisory Board on 02 September 2020.

- 1.2.2 Business Support & Finance – The Government’s Small Business and Retail, Hospitality and Leisure Grants continue to be distributed. The initial allocation of funding reported to Members was £18.7 million. Our business intelligence demonstrated that if all eligible businesses did apply, the funding would be insufficient. We raised this with the relevant Minister, and received a further allocation of £1.446m taking at our total funding to £20.12 million. At the time of writing, 89% of this funding has been distributed. Our own Discretionary Business Support Grants Scheme (with an allocation of £1.006 million), has been adopted, promoted and applications are currently being assessed against our policy. A full report on both Government Schemes and our own discretionary scheme will be presented to the meeting of Finance Innovation and Property Board on 22 July.
- 1.2.3 Town Centres – Since the last meeting of Cabinet, our retail areas have re-opened. Our action plan included assessment of retail areas in Tonbridge, West Malling, Snodland and Borough Green. This has been a multi-agency approach led by the Community Safety Unit, and engagement with a variety of partners including Chambers of Commerce, Tonbridge Town Team, Town and Parish Councils and individual businesses. The Leader has held 2 virtual meetings with retailers to discuss issues and ideas, firstly to plan for re-opening and then a first week review. At the time of writing, a further meeting is being scheduled.
- 1.2.4 Our town centre re-opening action plan remains dynamic and will be amended if required in response to either changes in government guidance or experience on the ground. This is still a scenario of both response and recovery, with the short term focus, being the priority at this stage.

### **1.3 Infrastructure**

- 1.3.1 Local Plan – an update on the Local Plan will be reported to the Planning and Transportation Advisory Board in July 2020. Officers are in discussions with PINS, via the programme officer, about the methods for holding publically accessible hearings whilst COVID-19 related restrictions are in place and have been reviewing approached utilised in other examinations in public currently underway. At present, the timetable as presented to Members at PTAB in March 2020, with adoption in the second half of 2021, is considered to be achievable.
- 1.3.2 Housing – there will be a number of reports on use of the private sector to support housing need through utilising existing private housing infrastructure at the July meeting of the Communities, Housing Advisory Board. A Housing Needs survey, sampling residents across the borough, is due to take place in July, with results being utilised to augment existing knowledge about housing need. Initial work on delivery models for increasing the supply of affordable housing will be presented to Members in autumn 2020 and this work will include a renewed focus on Empty Homes.

- 1.3.3 Sustainable Transport – a report to PTAB in July 2020 will present options for a policy and delivery framework for sustainable transport infrastructure and update on the initial walking and cycling route audit stage of work being undertaken.

## **1.4 Communities and Housing**

- 1.4.1 Housing – the review of the housing allocations policy is underway as per the timetable reported to CHAB in November 2019 and it is envisaged that revised draft policy will be presented for Member approval to consult in November 2020. Officers are working closely at both an operational and strategic level with RP partners and partners including Homes England and MHCLG to look at a range of housing options. There is a continuing strong focus from MHCLG on Rough Sleepers and officers are actively engaged in securing move on options for those housed during COVID-19 and looking at longer term programmes for homeless households of all types.

## **1.5 Environment**

- 1.5.1 Air Quality and Climate Change– following a report to the Street Scene and Environment Advisory Board in February 2020, a draft Air Quality Management Action Plan, which responds to statutory requirements, the wider policy framework at a national and county level and the Council's own emerging Climate Change strategy will be presented to the September meeting of SSEAB. The consultation period for the Draft Climate Change Strategy has been extended until 30 June 2020, to allow more time for residents and groups to submit their comments as previously agreed by Cabinet.
- 1.5.2 Parks and Leisure-an update report will be presented to the next meeting of CHAB in early July on progress with the reopening of indoor and outdoor leisure facilities, progress with capital schemes and the outdoor events calendar. Members will note the separate report in these papers on the financial stability of the Leisure Trust and the establishment of a budget to support the Trust. The major capital works at Larkfield Leisure Centre are nearing completion and the potential transfer of management arrangements at Leybourne Lakes Country Park is under review including external legal advice on procurement.
- 1.5.3 Parking-whilst parking charges now apply in the Council's car parks Cabinet has agreed that any increases in charges and the introduction of charges to car parks in the northern parishes will be deferred. It is the intention to report to the next meeting of the Street Scene and Environment Advisory Board in September on this issue. An internal Officer Group has been established to consider the potential introduction of contactless payments in the car parks and an update will be included at the aforementioned meeting of the SSEAB.
- 1.5.4 Street Scene-the garden waste subscriptions have recently been reintroduced and demand has been strong. The timescale for the introduction of the new service arrangements to flats and communals are currently under discussion with Urbaser, and will be progressed on a phased basis as soon as is practicable. Work on the

transfer of public conveniences to Parish/Town Councils has recommenced and the original timescale will still apply. A full update will be reported to the next meeting of SSEAB.

## **1.6 Running the Council**

- 1.6.1 New Ways of Working – work is underway on a review of the Council’s office accommodation requirements, with a view to facilitating more flexible working, reducing overheads and meeting targets within the Climate Change Strategy. Our recent positive experiences in relation to homeworking necessitated by the pandemic give us confidence that we can identify new ways of working and at the same time reduce the financial costs associated with maintaining our assets.
- 1.6.2 Financial Recovery – a report elsewhere on the agenda sets out proposals in regard to the Cabinet’s decision regarding ‘essential spend’ only in 2020/21; and initial indications regarding the impact on the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Further information will be reported to the Finance, Innovation & Property Advisory Board in due course as well as Cabinet in due course.
- 1.6.3 Property & Investments – impacts on treasury management activity will be reported to the Audit Committee at its meeting on 27 July.

## **1.7 Legal Implications**

- 1.7.1 The statutory framework governing the response to the pandemic is evolving and changing on a frequent basis, both in the restrictions placed upon individuals and upon the responsibilities of local authorities. Any specific proposals or changes brought about by the Addendum will be assessed at the appropriate time to ensure they are lawful

## **1.8 Financial and Value for Money Considerations**

- 1.8.1 As previously reported, the Council received funding from the government in two tranches totalling some £1.35m. Unless supplemented, this funding will not be sufficient to cover the current financial impacts as reported to Members. Returns are being submitted to government by the Director of Finance & Transformation on a monthly basis as required by MHCLG.
- 1.8.2 An earmarked Reorientation/ Post Emergency Reserve of £200,000 has been established to assist the Council in some of its recovery activity. This may prove to be insufficient, and will be kept under review.

## **1.9 Risk Assessment**

- 1.9.1 The Council’s Strategic Risk Register has been updated substantially and will be revised again as appropriate prior to reporting to the Audit Committee in July.

### **1.10 Policy Considerations**

- Procurement
- Community
- Business Continuity/Resilience
- Healthy Lifestyles
- Climate Change
- Asset Management
- Customer Contact
- Health & Safety
- Human Resources

### **1.11 Recommendations**

1.11.1 That the strategic update in respect of the Corporate Plan Addendum be **ENDORSED**

1.11.2 That regular strategic monitoring reports be submitted to future meetings of Cabinet

Background papers:

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Nil