

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Thursday, 10th March, 2022

Present: Cllr M O Davis (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair), Cllr Mrs A S Oakley (Vice-Chairman), Cllr S Bell Cllr R I B Cannon, Cllr A Cope, Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr F A Hoskins, Cllr S A Hudson, Cllr Mrs F A Kemp, Cllr D W King, Cllr J R S Lark, Cllr M Taylor, Cllr F G Tombolis,

Councillors S Bell, D Harman, M A J Hood and B J Luker were in attendance as substitute members in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 17.

Councillor Mrs T Dean was also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Councillors R Betts, M D Boughton, P Boxall, V M C Branson, D Keers, P J Montague, M R Rhodes, K B Tanner and Mrs M Tatton participated via MS Teams and joined the discussion when invited to do so by the Chairman in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J L Sergison, M C Base, H S Rogers, N G Stapleton and D Thornewell

PART 1 - PUBLIC

OS 22/9 NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Notification of substitutes members were recorded as set out below:

Cllr D Harman - substitute for Cllr Base
Cllr B Luker - substitute for Cllr Sergison
Cllr M Hood - substitute for Cllr Stapleton
Cllr S Bell – substitute for Cllr Brown

In accordance with Council Procedure Rules 17.5 to 17.9 these Councillors had the same rights as the ordinary member of the committee for whom they were substituting.

OS 22/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

For reasons of transparency, Councillor Mrs Dean, who was not a member of the Committee and therefore had no voting rights, advised that she was Chairman of West Malling Parish Council whose response

in respect of the transfer of public toilets would be considered under agenda item 7. As this did not represent a Disclosable Pecuniary or Other Significant Interest there was no requirement to leave the meeting.

OS 22/11 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 18 January 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

OS 22/12 PUBLIC TOILETS

The report of the Director of Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services provided an update on the current position regarding Borough Council owned public toilets in Hadlow, Snodland and West Malling. A proposed way forward for each was set out in the report.

Careful consideration was given to the written response of West Malling Parish Council which detailed their views in respect of the future of the public toilets in the town centre. Reference was made to the current location of the facilities, the temporary funding arrangements organised by the local County Member and the views of local residents, businesses and visitors. It was felt by the parish council that the permanent closure of the public toilets would have implications for footfall and discourage people from visiting the shops, the Farmers Market and the various events held throughout the year.

The Committee recognised that there was no funding allocated to public toilets in these locations after 2020/21 and this position had been approved when setting the budget for 2022/23. Any changes in arrangements would represent budget growth.

In conclusion the wishes of West Malling Parish Council had to be balanced against the Borough Council's difficult financial position and the views of other parish/town councils to ensure a consistent approach was applied across the Borough.

However, the Borough Council remained open to exploring alternative venues, grant funding streams, outside of the Borough Council, and community toilet schemes with West Malling Parish Council.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) it be noted that the future of the toilets in Borough Green, Wrotham, Tonbridge, Larkfield, East Peckham and Aylesford, as set out in 1.1.2 of the report, was resolved;

- (2) the toilets in Hadlow and Snodland remain closed and that a report be taken to a future meeting of the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board to consider alternative uses and/or disposal; and
- (3) in respect of West Malling, the toilets remain open until July 2022, as funded under the current arrangement with the County Member, and a further report be taken to the Finance, Innovation and Property Advisory Board to consider alternative uses and/or disposal.

***Referred to Cabinet**

OS 22/13 EQUALITY POLICY STATEMENTS AND OBJECTIVES

The report of the Chief Executive presented an updated Equality Policy Statement which set out the organisations objectives and areas of focus and action.

The Borough Council continued to take a proportionate approach to responding to its duties under the Equality Act (2010) reflecting the demographics of its communities.

It was proposed that four equality objectives, detailed in Annex 1, be adopted. These were:

- Training
- Equality of Opportunity
- Employment
- Housing (Temporary Housing Support)

RECOMMENDED: That the updated Equality Policy Statement and Objectives, set out in Annex 1 to the report and summarised above, be approved. 

***Referred to Cabinet**

OS 22/14 SCRUTINY TRAINING

Consideration was given to a proposal in respect of training for Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as it was recognised that the Borough Councils difficult financial position required effective scrutiny, robust challenge and informed decision making.

It was proposed that a Member development session be held one evening at the Council offices and that all Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be strongly encouraged to attend. Further details of the proposal were set out in Annex 1.

Reference was made to the financial and value for money considerations and the proposal was considered 'essential spend' given the challenges ahead.

RECOMMENDED: That the approach to training as set out in the report, and detailed in Annex 1, be endorsed. 

***Referred to Cabinet**

MATTERS FOR INFORMATION

OS 22/15 BUDGETARY CHANGES AND STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER

Careful consideration was given to the report of Management Team which provided high level information in terms of the budget position and direction of travel. Members were also directed to the red rated risks on the Strategic Risk Register.

Reference was made to the potential areas of risk that could arise as a consequence of the ongoing conflict in the Ukraine. These included increased prices for fuel and energy.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE

OS 22/16 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items considered in private.

The meeting ended at 9.15 pm