

HIGHWAY OFFICER ATTENDANCE AT TMBC AREA PLANNING COMMITTEES

Item HP 22/6 referred from Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee of 19 July 2022

The report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health provided an update for members on the negotiations with Kent County Council to agree a protocol for highway officer attendance at the Area Planning Committees.

The Borough Council wished to work collaboratively with Kent County Council to find a workable solution and agree a protocol that would result in attendance of County Council officers at the Area Planning Committee meetings and it was considered that the proposed protocol set out at paragraph 1.1.2 of the report did not address the key concerns of Members and Officers. The Borough Council's alternative proposal on a draft protocol was set out in Annex 1 and the response of the Corporate Director of Growth, Environment and Transport confirming that highways officers would only attend planning meetings in accordance with the terms set out in paragraph 1.1.2 of the report was attached as Annex 2 of the report and the approach had been reaffirmed by the Cabinet member for Highways and Transport and agreed with other Kent districts.

Members gave detailed consideration to the report which and expressed concern of not having an agreed protocol in place. During discussion, Members recognised the capacity restraints of the Highways team, however agreed that a Highways Officer should be in attendance where proposals were of a strategic nature or where it was agreed that there were significant or complex highways issues which could not be adequately presented by the district officer so Members could ask questions and seek clarification on their response as a statutory consultee.

RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) the contents of the report be noted;
- (2) the concerns of Members with not having an agreed protocol in place be set out and relayed to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport; and
- (3) a Member/Senior Officer group be established to liaise with Kent County Council with the aim to seek a compromise on an agreed protocol, articulating the counter proposal from Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council.

*** Referred to Cabinet**

