

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING

MINUTES

Tuesday, 25th October, 2022

At the meeting of the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council held in the Civic Suite, Gibson Building, Kings Hill, West Malling on Tuesday, 25th October, 2022

Present: Her Worship the Mayor (Councillor Mrs S Bell), the Deputy Mayor (Councillor J R S Lark), Cllr Mrs J A Anderson, Cllr Mrs P A Bates, Cllr T Bishop, Cllr M D Boughton, Cllr P Boxall, Cllr V M C Branson, Cllr G C Bridge, Cllr C Brown, Cllr R I B Cannon, Cllr A E Clark, Cllr M A Coffin, Cllr D J Cooper, Cllr A Cope, Cllr D A S Davis, Cllr M O Davis, Cllr D Harman, Cllr P M Hickmott, Cllr M A J Hood, Cllr F A Hoskins, Cllr S A Hudson, Cllr D Keers, Cllr Mrs F A Kemp, Cllr A Kennedy, Cllr D W King, Cllr D Lettington, Cllr Mrs R F Lettington, Cllr B J Luker, Cllr P J Montague, Cllr Mrs A S Oakley, Cllr W E Palmer, Cllr M R Rhodes, Cllr H S Rogers, Cllr R V Roud, Cllr J L Sergison, Cllr T B Shaw, Cllr K B Tanner, Cllr Mrs M Tatton, Cllr M Taylor, Cllr Miss G E Thomas, Cllr D Thornewell and Cllr C J Williams

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M C Base, R P Betts, J L Botten, R W Dalton, Mrs T Dean, N Foyle, S M Hammond, N J Heslop, A P J Keeley, N G Stapleton and F G Tombolis.

PART 1 - PUBLIC

C 22/65 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

C 22/66 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Council held on 12 July 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

C 22/67 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor advised that she had attended a number of engagements since the last meeting of Council and made particular reference to:

- The Requiem Eucharist for Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at Rochester Cathedral;
- Reading the Proclamation for King Charles III at Tonbridge Castle;
- Civic Memorial Service for Her Late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at Tonbridge Church;
- Tonbridge Baptist Church's opening of the Friendly Bench;
- Cohesion Plus Annual Wrotham Festival of Light;

- St Katherine's School and Nursery TCS London Mini Marathon event;
- Hadlow Primary School's Celebration Tea and Awards Ceremony;
- St Peter's Church of England Primary School, Aylesford Harvest Festival;
- Local Amateur Musical Players Musical Theatre Show; and
- Snodland Town Council's Pump Track launch event.

With regard to the opening of the Pump Track in Snodland, the Mayor thanked the many organisations for the funding contributions which had helped in finalising this project.

Members were reminded that future civic and charity events included Remembrance Sunday Services and Parades on 13 November and a traditional Christmas Afternoon Tea at Bradbourne House on 29 November 2022.

The Mayor appreciated the opportunity during her term of office of meeting so many fantastic volunteers and organisations who provided a valuable service to residents and communities.

Finally, the Mayor thanked the Deputy Mayor for attending a number of events on her behalf.

C 22/68 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 22/69 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO 5.5

A question had been submitted by Councillor R Roud in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No. 5.5. A written response had been provided by the Cabinet Member for Housing. Both the question and answer had been tabled and circulated in advance of the meeting as set out in the Annex attached to the Minutes.

C 22/70 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader reflected on the recent Conservative Party leadership elections, the stability enjoyed by the Borough Council and how this helped build confidence with residents. This was demonstrated by the way the Borough Council had led on the community response on the death of Her Late Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II. The Leader paid tribute to the work of all officers at the authority involved in Operation London Bridge, manning of condolence books at Kings Hill and Tonbridge Castle, raising and lowering flags as appropriate and organising the Proclamation.

The Borough Council continued to take a proactive role with partners in supporting vulnerable communities and had played a role in the 'friendly bench' in Tonbridge, the Pump Track in Snodland and play and seating areas in East Malling.

Investment opportunities across the Borough continued to be actively explored and the launch of the new Tonbridge Trade Park was welcomed. Reference

was also made to the Post Office in Tonbridge which continued to operate at Tonbridge Castle as a temporary measure.

Other points highlighted included:

- The recent consultation in respect of Tonbridge Castle;
- The pilot being undertaken by National Enforcement Solutions to address fly tipping and littering;
- The Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation and the worthwhile attendance at local community and parish events by the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure to address concerns raised by residents;
- The impact of rising inflation and the support offered to vulnerable residents over the winter. Details of which were available on the Borough Council's website; and
- The Borough Council had supported approximately 840 households through the Warm Coats Scheme by distributing in the region of 1000 coats and 6 primary schools in deprived areas of the Borough had received £875 to distribute. The Leader thanked the Benefits and Welfare Manager and his team for their achievements in relation to this initiative.

Finally, the Leader was pleased to announce that the Borough Council's participation in the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund demonstrator had won top honours at the Kent Housing Group Excellence Awards. This was a credit to the Housing Team who demonstrated excellence every single day with the support provided to those in need of a home. The Leader welcomed the recognition of the Housing Team and congratulated all those involved in the process.

The full Leaders Announcements were available on the Borough Council's [YouTube channel](#).

MATTERS FOR COUNCIL DECISION

C 22/71 POLITICAL BALANCE ARRANGEMENTS FOR COMMITTEES

Following the reinstatement of Cllr D Lettington as a member of the Conservative Group, consideration was given to political balance arrangements for the Borough Council's committees, sub-committees, boards and panels. The proposed composition of all committees, sub-committees, boards and panels that were required to be politically balanced were set out at 1.1.6 of the report.

As a result of the revised political balance allocations there were consequential changes to the Conservative Group composition of committees, sub-committees, boards and panels and these were summarised in Annex 1 to the report.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the composition of all committees, sub-committees, boards and panels be approved in accordance with the table at paragraph 1.1.6 and the Monitoring Officer make any consequential changes to the Borough Council's Constitution in respect of political balance; and

- (2) the consequential changes to the Conservation Group composition of committees, sub-committees, boards and panels be approved as set out in Annex 1 to the report.

C 22/72 CHANGES TO CONSTITUTION

The Group Leaders were invited to nominate substitute Members for the Joint Transportation Board in accordance with the new rules approved by the Council in February 2022 and in accordance with Paragraph 2.1 of Schedule 1 to the agreement with Kent County Council which expressly allowed for the Borough Council to appoint substitute members.

This proposal would ensure that each group would be able to deal with unexpected short-term absences of Joint Transportation Board members.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the appointment of up to 5 substitute members to the Joint Transportation Board, as nominated by Group Leaders in accordance with paragraph (ii) of the Rules (attached at Annex 1), be approved; and
- (2) details of these nominations be finalised with Democratic Services out of meeting

C 22/73 LOCAL CODE OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Item AU 22/27 referred from Audit Committee of 25 July 2022

RESOLVED: That the amendments to the Local Code of Corporate Governance, as set out at Annex 1 to the report to the Audit Committee, be approved for adoption.

C 22/74 TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE AND MID-YEAR REVIEW

Item AU 22/40 referred from Audit Committee of 26 September 2022.

Recommendation AU 22/28 from the Audit Committee of 25 July 2022 was attached for information.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the action taken in respect of treasury management activity for the period April to August 2022 be endorsed; and
- (2) the existing parameters intended to limit the Borough Council's exposure to investment risks, as set out at Annex 5 to the report to the Audit Committee, be retained.

C 22/75 FINAL PROPOSALS FOR REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

Item GP 22/33 referred from General Purposes Committee of 3 October 2022

RESOLVED: That, subject to the ward changes being laid to law in Parliament in October 2022, the final proposals as detailed in the report to the General Purposes Committee, be approved.

C 22/76 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION - PUBLICATION SCHEME

Item GP 22/34 referred from General Purposes Committee of 3 October 2022

RESOLVED: That the updated Publication Scheme, at Annex 1 to the report to the General Purposes Committee, be adopted.

C 22/77 PLANNING ENFORCEMENT REVIEW

Item OS 22/32 (2) and (3) referred from Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 6 October 2022

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the budget growth required to fund staffing proposals in respect of planning enforcement be supported;
- (2) the hybrid proposal for staffing arrangements, as detailed in section 1.4.10 of the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, be commended to General Purposes for approval*; and
- (3) an increase in fees charged for activity relating to traveller incursions on Parish/Town Council or Leisure Trust land (as set out in 1.4 of the report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee) be considered as part of the budget setting process and the fees be regularly reviewed to ensure that realistic annual uplifts are applied.

***Referred to General Purposes Committee**

C 22/78 DECISION TAKEN UNDER URGENCY PROVISIONS - KENT BUSINESS RATES POOL

Members noted that decision D22009URG in respect of Kent Business Rates Pool had been taken under urgency provisions as it was a departure from the Borough Council's adopted Budget and Policy Framework and in accordance with paragraph 4 of the Budget and Policy Framework Procedure Rules.

C 22/79 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.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE

C 22/80 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair moved, it was seconded and

RESOLVED: That as public discussion would disclose exempt information, the following matters be considered in private.

PART 2 - PRIVATE**C 22/81 COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE AT MEETINGS**

(Reason: LGA 1972 – Sch 12A Paragraph 1 – Information relating to an individual)

Members were invited to approve the continued absence of a Member from meetings on ill health grounds for a further six months.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the waiver of the 6-month attendance rule, as set out in s85 of the Local Government Act 1982, for Councillor Alan Keely be approved due to illness; and
- (2) the extension of the permitted non-attendance time period for Councillor Alan Keeley be approved for a further 6-month period until 27 April 2023.

The meeting ended at 8.20 pm