

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
HOUSING AND PLANNING SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday, 7th June, 2023

Present: Cllr D A S Davis (Chair), Cllr D W King (Vice-Chair),
Cllr L Athwal, Cllr G C Bridge, Cllr D Harman,
Cllr M A J Hood, Cllr A Mehmet, Cllr W E Palmer,
Cllr R V Roud, Cllr D Thornewell and Cllr M R Rhodes
(substitute)

In attendance: Councillors M D Boughton, A G Bennison, J Clokey, S Crisp,
Mrs T Dean, F A Hoskins, K B Tanner, Mrs M Tatton and
M Taylor were also present pursuant to Council Procedure
Rule No 15.21.

Virtual: Councillor B A Parry participated via MS Teams in
accordance with Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors
Mrs S Bell and R W Dalton.

HP 23/8 NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Notification of substitute Members were recorded as set out below:

- Councillor M R Rhodes substituting for Councillor Mrs S Bell

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.

HP 23/9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

HP 23/10 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the notes of the meeting of the Housing and
Planning Scrutiny Select Committee held on 21 March 2023 be
approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

HP 23/11 NEW LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health set out the new Local Development Scheme (LDS) timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan to enable the deadlines to be met once the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill was enacted and recommendation was sought from Members on the timetable and the associated budgets and costs of this work.

Members had regard to the key dates set out in the new LDS timetable, next stages in the preparation of the Local Plan, the legal implications and the financial and value for money consideration detailed in the report. Identified risks and issues and recommendations for mitigation were listed in Annex 2 and a full cost breakdown was set out in Annex 3. In respect of the proposed one-off injection of £330,000 to the reserve, it was noted that the majority of the additional spend related to the new requirement to produce borough-wide design codes which was not previously budgeted for.

Clarity was sought around the inclusion of the additional 57 identified sites as part of the Regulation 18 consultation and potential changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), with particular reference made to the Green Belt and housing targets. In response Members were advised that these additional sites would be treated in the same way as the other sites identified through the previous Call for Sites exercise and all the sites would be considered as a whole set during the second round of the Regulation 18B consultation. Members were further advised that there was potential for the housing delivery target to be set not directly by the Objectively Assessed Needs and potential for a different approach to Green Belt boundaries subject to proposed changes to the NPPF being adopted.

Positive political engagement and collaboration between Officers and Members throughout the Local Plan process was regarded key in securing its successful adoption and Members were assured that Officers were monitoring and managing progress closely with ongoing reassurance support from Audit.

RECOMMENDED*: That

- (1) the new Local Development Scheme and timetable, as set out at Annex 1, be adopted; and
- (2) the additional budget requirements of the Local Plan and the need for further financial provision in future budget setting process be noted.

*** Referred to Cabinet**

HP 23/12 HOUSING STANDARDS IN RENTED PROPERTIES IN ENGLAND

(Decision Notice D230052MEM)

Members were updated on the Government focus on improving housing standards in rented properties and how the Borough Council had responded to the requests of the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities in respect of damp and mould issues affecting privately rented properties in the borough and enforcement of housing standards.

A copy of the Borough Council's initial response was attached at Annex 1 and a full response was subsequently submitted via online survey with a focus on Housing Health and Safety Rating Scheme. It was highlighted from both responses that the Borough Council already had a robust approach to dealing with damp and mould complaints/issues within the borough, however it was recognised that a jointly agreed formal approach to damp and mould complaints needed to be developed with Clarion Housing Group, being the main housing provider in the borough.

In addition, Members were updated on how Clarion Housing Group were responding on this important issue and noted the Borough Council's intention to work with them in a more formal manner to ensure social housing in the borough was of an acceptable standard and to develop a targeted repairs monitoring framework with them to ensure the Borough Council were regularly updated on the condition of their housing stock and could offer support when needed to. Members expressed concern in respect of the performance of Clarion Housing Group in dealing with damp and mould repair and treatment issues and quality of the works and requested that these be included as part of the KPI monitoring.

RECOMMENDED*: That

- (1) a written request be sent from the Cabinet Member for Finance and Housing to Clarion Housing Group to seek their cooperation in agreeing a Memorandum of Understanding on how property condition complaints would be dealt with by both parties; and
- (2) a monitoring framework be adopted and reported on regularly, including to the Housing Association Liaison Panel.

*** Decision Taken by Cabinet Member**

MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION

HP 23/13 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Members received a list of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that were relevant to the committee. A baseline covering April to June 2022 had been used, with the data for January to March 2023 representing the most up-to-date available statistics in most instances. The KPIs would be monitored on a quarterly-annual basis and would be made available on an ongoing basis.

Members were requested to submit any questions regarding the KPIs to the relevant Director at least two days in advance of the meeting in order to ensure that a suitable response could be provided at the meeting.

HP 23/14 WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

The Work Programme setting out matters to be scrutinised during 2023/24 was attached for information. Members were invited to suggest future matters by liaising with the Chair of the Committee.

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE

HP 23/15 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no matters considered in private.

The meeting ended at 8.50 pm