

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING AND PLANNING SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 18th July, 2023

Present: Cllr D A S Davis (Chair), Cllr D W King (Vice-Chair), Cllr L Athwal, Cllr Mrs S Bell, Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr D Harman, Cllr P M Hickmott, Cllr M A J Hood, Cllr A Mehmet, Cllr W E Palmer, Cllr R V Roud and Cllr D Thornewell

(Note: As Councillor G C Bridge was unable to attend in person and participated via MS Teams, he was unable to vote on any matters).

In attendance: Councillors S Crisp and M Taylor were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Virtual: Councillors M A Boughton, G C Bridge, Mrs A S Oakley and M R Rhodes participated via MS Teams and joined the discussion when invited to do so in accordance with Council Procedure No 15.21.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor G C Bridge.

PART 1 - PUBLIC

HP 23/16 NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute Members nominated for this meeting.

HP 23/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

HP 23/18 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the notes of the meeting of the Housing and Planning Scrutiny Select Committee held on 7 June 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

HP 23/19 MEMBER BRIEFING ON HOUSING ALLOCATIONS SCHEME

Members received an update on the new Housing Allocations Scheme. In 2019, it was agreed that amendments could be made to the scheme, however due to Covid, the project was delayed and the review was reinvigorated in early 2022. Extensive consultation was undertaken and proposals presented to Members, following which the scheme was rewritten and subsequently agreed. Since the launch of the scheme, a large number of applicants had applied and early feedback had been


positive. A large number of applications now needed to be assessed and data transfer and retention work was ongoing.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

HP 23/20 REGULATION 18 CONSULTATION

The report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Heath built upon the initial results presented to the Committee on 6 December 2022, and set out the full consultation analysis from the Regulation 18 consultation. The responses would be utilised and drawn upon in preparing the next Regulation 18B document for Spring 2024. The updated outputs of the questionnaire were included at Annex 1 of the report and the free text answers were included within Annex 2. In addition to the questionnaire, comments were received against sections of the local plan document and the responses were included in Annex 3 together with the officer response. It was highlighted that the level of detail provided on these responses reflected the early stage in plan-preparation.

During discussion, Members welcomed the positive response to optimising the density on development sites within Tonbridge, particularly on those sites within the town centre and maximising their potential for residential and mixed-use development.

RECOMMENDED*: That the output of the Regulation 18 consultation, be noted. 

***Referred to Cabinet**

HP 23/21 HOUSING STRATEGY UPDATE AND DRAFT YEAR 2 ACTION PLAN

(Decision Notice D230067MEM)

The Housing Strategy 2022-2027, adopted in July 2022, set out the Borough Council priorities and strategic approach to housing and outlined objectives for each priority to be delivered and monitored through annual action plans. The report provided an update on the progress of the Year 1 Action Plan and proposed a draft Year 2 Action Plan for approval.

Key actions in Year 2 included the development of a Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Action Plan and Empty Homes Policy. Occupation levels in social housing and Sustainable Temporary Accommodation delivery options would also be investigated.

During discussion, Members requested that quantitative information be provided in terms of outcomes.

RECOMMENDED*: That

- (1) the progress on the delivery of the Year 1 Action Plan for the Housing Strategy, as summarised in Annex 1, be noted; and
- (2) the Year 2 Action Plan, attached at Annex 2, be approved.

***Decision Taken by Cabinet Member**

MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION

HP 23/22 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 23/23 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no matters considered in private.

The meeting ended at 8.31 pm