

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY SELECT
COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Monday, 6th November, 2023

Present: Cllr S A Hudson (Chair), Cllr S Crisp, Cllr G B Hines, Cllr F A Hoskins, Cllr J R S Lark, Cllr A McDermott, Cllr Mrs A S Oakley, Cllr W E Palmer, Cllr M R Rhodes, Cllr Mrs M Tatton, Cllr K S Tunstall and Cllr D A S Davis (substitute)

In attendance: Councillors M A Coffin, M A J Hood and D Keers were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Virtual: Councillors M D Boughton, K B Tanner and R W Dalton participated via MS Teams in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs S Bell (Vice-Chair).

PART 1 - PUBLIC

CE 23/42 NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Notification of substitute members were recorded as set out below:

- Councillor D Davis substituted for Councillor S Bell

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

CE 23/43 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

CE 23/44 MINUTES

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

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

CE 23/45 REVIEW OF CAR PARKING FEES AND CHARGES

Consideration was given to a set of proposals for existing on-street and off-street car parking fees and charges, as summarised in 1.1.3 of the report, for implementation from 1 April 2024, taking into account the guiding principles for the setting of fees and charges established by the Borough Council and a number of specific principles relating to the provision of a successful car parking service. Members' attention was drawn to the high level inflation since the fees and charges were last reviewed in 2021 and implemented in April 2022, impacting on the cost of providing the parking service.

The Director of Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services brought to Members' attention a few clarifications/amendments in respect of the following points set out in the report:

- (1) 1.4.3 should read "... Income (for Haysden Country Park) after the first 6 months is above profile, with a year-end forecast of £89,000.";
- (2) 1.8.3 should read "... The (Ryarsh Lane) car park has 114 spaces and the allocation of tickets is currently limited to 142..."; and
- (3) 1.21.1 should read "It is RECOMMENDED that the Committee considers the following car parking proposals for formal public consultation in November this year, implementation from 1st April 2024, and makes recommendations to Cabinet ...".

It was proposed that, in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England & Wales) Regulations 1996, formal public consultation be undertaken on the proposed changes to the on-street and off-street charges with the outcomes to be reported to the Joint Transportation Board in respect of the on-street car parking charges and to the Cabinet in respect of the off-street car parking charges for consideration.

Particular reference was made to the set of car parking proposals considered by the Committee in September 2023, including the introduction of Sunday and Bank Holiday parking charges and extension of evening charges to 8pm, and Members noted it was proposed that formal public consultation on both the set of car parking proposals, considered by the Committee in September 2023, and the set of car parking fees and charges proposals, recommended in this report, be undertaken at the same time later in November this year, with the outcomes reported to Cabinet in the New Year.

Members had an in-depth discussion with regard to the ongoing engagement with the West Malling Chamber of Commerce in respect of

the West Malling car parks and noted that their feedbacks on the proposals were invited through the public consultation process.

In addition, a proposal for Officers to investigate the card reader facility of ticket machines was supported by the Committee, in light of the significant cost associated with cash collection from the ticket machines.

RECOMMENDED*: That

- (1) the following car parking proposals be taken forward to formal public consultation in November this year and the outcomes reported to future meetings of the Joint Transportation Board and the Cabinet as appropriate, with implementation from 1 April 2024:
 - (i) the schedule of proposed charges for off-street short and long stay parking in Tonbridge as shown in Table 1 of the report, be approved;
 - (ii) the schedules of proposed Peak and Off-Peak Season Ticket charges in Tonbridge as shown in Tables 2 and 3 respectively, be approved;
 - (iii) the charges for the Tonbridge Town Centre Residents Season ticket be increased to £90 for a 3-month ticket and £360 for an annual ticket respectively as set out in 1.6.4 of the report;
 - (iv) the designated area for the Tonbridge Town Centre Residents Season ticket be extended to include residential properties in the area shown in orange in the Plan attached at Annex 1 and as detailed in 1.6.1 of the report;
 - (v) the schedules of proposed charges for long stay and short stay parking in West Malling as shown in Tables 4 and 5 respectively and as detailed in 1.8.4 of the report, be approved, including increasing the charge for Ryarsh Lane car park annual season ticket to £290;
 - (vi) the schedule of proposed charges for parking in Borough Green Western Road car park as shown in Table 6, be approved;
 - (vii) the schedule of proposed charges for Residents Permits as shown in Table 7, be approved; the charge of 6-month Residents Permits offered to non-UK registered vehicles belonging to residents be increased to £28.50, as detailed in 1.9.2 of the report;

- (viii) the schedule of proposed charges for Business and Carers Permits and Dispensations as shown in Table 8, be approved;
 - (ix) the charge of Visitor Permits be increased to £14 for a book of 10 permits, with the current offer of 10 free permits to new applicants being retained, as set out in 1.10.2 of the report;
 - (x) the schedule of proposed charges for Haysden Country Park car park as shown in Table 9, be approved; and
 - (xi) the schedule of proposed charges for on-street Pay & Display parking in Tonbridge as shown in Table 10, be approved.
- (2) investigation be undertaken in respect of the facility of card reader ticket machines and/or adding card reading facility to existing car park ticket machines, and the outcomes be reported back to a future meeting of the Committee.

***Recommended to Cabinet**

CE 23/46 REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES - MISCELLANEOUS

The joint report of the Director of Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services, the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health and the Director of Finance and Transformation set out the proposed fees and charges for the provision of services in respect of garden waste subscriptions, household bulky refuse and fridge/freezer collections, “missed” refuse collections, stray dog redemption fees, Tonbridge Allotments, Tonbridge Cemetery, events, billboards and banners, food certificates, contaminated land monitoring and private water supplies from 1 April 2024.

In bringing forward the charging proposals for 2024/25 consideration had been given to a range of factors, including the Borough Council’s overall financial position, market position, trading patterns, the current rate of inflation and customer feedback, apart from which a set of guiding principles for the setting of fees and charges had also been taken into account and were summarised in 1.1.2 of the report.

Particular reference was made to the Allotments in Tonbridge managed by the Tonbridge Allotments and Gardens Association on behalf of the Borough Council and it was clarified by the Director of Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services that the Association was a non-profit organisation.

The Head of Housing and Health brought to Members' attention that the fees and charges for the provision of services in relation to pest control had been resolved separately under Cabinet Member Decision D230093MEM on 13 October 2023 due to the need to extend the contract arrangements in place.

In addition, Members noted that it was proposed not to increase the fee for 2024/25 of requests for re-visits of food businesses following food hygiene inspections as detailed in 1.11 of the report.

RECOMMENDED*: That

- (1) the proposed annual garden waste subscription of £53 for the first bin and £36 for a second or third bin, as set out in 1.2.4 of the report, be approved;
- (2) the schedule of proposed charges for household bulky refuse and fridge/freezer collection service as set out in 1.3.5 and 1.3.6 of the report, be approved;
- (3) the proposed charge for "missed" refuse collection as set out in 1.4.3 of the report, be approved;
- (4) the schedule of proposed charges in respect of Stray Dog redemption service, as set out in 1.5.3 to 1.5.5 of the report, be approved;
- (5) the charging structure for Tonbridge Allotment as set out in 1.6.1 and 1.6.2 of the report, be noted;
- (6) the schedule of proposed charges for Tonbridge Cemetery as set out in Annex 1 and 1.7.2 of the report, be approved;
- (7) the schedule of proposed charges for Events on Public Open Spaces, including the hire of billboards and banners, as set out in Annex 2 and 1.8 of the report, be approved;
- (8) the proposed charge for condemned food certificates as set out in 1.9.2 of the report, be approved;
- (9) the proposed charge for exported food certificates as set out in 1.10.4 of the report, be approved;
- (10) the proposed charge for provision of services in respect of contaminated land as set out in 1.13.5 of the report, be approved;
- (11) the proposed charge for provision of services in respect of private water supplies as set out in 1.14.3 and 1.14.5 of the report, be approved; and

- (12) the above proposed scale of charges be implemented from 1 April 2024.

***Recommended to Cabinet**

CE 23/47 TACKLING GRAFFITI

(Decision Notice D230098MEM)

The report of the Director of Central Services and Deputy Chief Executive provided details of the Borough Council's work in tackling graffiti, including the current reporting mechanisms, the cleaning and removal of graffiti and work with the Community Payback scheme.

Members welcomed the report and noted that the Borough Council's current approach to tackling graffiti aimed to remove all offensive, racist and abusive graffiti from council-owned land and public property within 48 hours of it being reported, with priority being given to areas on or close to main roads, main town areas and schools. However, the Borough Council would not remove graffiti from privately owned property, railway structures or telephone boxes and instead, residents would be encouraged to report this graffiti to the police or directly to the landowners. A flowchart showing the process for reporting graffiti was attached at Annex 1. A table providing examples of a number of other Kent local authorities' approaches to tackling graffiti was provided at Annex 3.

Particular reference was made to the one-off Welcome Back Funding which was secured to remove graffiti from privately owned property during the Covid Pandemic and Members noted that this funding was no longer available.

The use of graffiti walls to address graffiti issues was discussed and a clarification was made between 'graffiti walls' and 'graffiti/street art'. Member supported a public consultation be undertaken to gather residents' views on 'graffiti walls', subject to a clear definition of 'graffiti walls' being provided in the survey.

RECOMMENDED*: That

- (1) the graffiti reporting page on the website be further publicised to residents;
- (2) a Graffiti policy setting out how the Borough Council intended to tackle graffiti, be developed;

- (3) a single database to record reports of graffiti across Council Services and record when the graffiti had been removed, be developed; and
- (4) a survey to gather information of views on graffiti and 'graffiti walls' from residents, including Parish Councils, be undertaken within the borough.

***Decision Taken by Cabinet Member**

MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION

CE 23/48 KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Members received a list of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that were aligned to the priorities as identified in the adopted Corporate Strategy 2023-2027 and were relevant to the Committee. A baseline covering the period 2022/23 had for the most part been used, with the data for July to September 2023 representing the most up-to-date available statistics in most instances. In order to improve the effectiveness of KPI monitoring, trend analysis and targets had also been included in the KPIs provided at Appendix 1 and a number of the identified trends were highlighted in 1.1.5 of the report. The KPIs would be monitored on a quarterly-annual basis and would be made available on an ongoing basis.

With regard to benchmarking, it was noted that for those KPIs that were already being benchmarked, the benchmarking data would be added in the next cycle of reporting, and further work would be undertaken to build up benchmarking for the remaining KPIs.

CE 23/49 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

CE 23/50 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no matters considered in private.

The meeting ended at 8.45 pm