

## **REVIEW OF TONBRIDGE COMMUNITY FORUM AND PARISH PARTNERSHIP PANEL**

### **Item OS 24/50 referred from Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 14 November 2024**

Following a review of the operation of the Tonbridge Community Forum, as recommended by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, the report of the Chief Executive set out a number of options for consideration.

Due regard was given to the views of existing members of the Forum on the current venue, style and format of the meetings as detailed in Annex 2. It was evident that there was a preference for in-person meetings with greater input from community groups and a more collaborative approach.

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Forum expressed a preference for meetings of the Forum to be held at Tonbridge Methodist Church as room hire was reasonably priced, compared to the Angel Centre, and included audio equipment which avoided the requirement for an external provider.

It was noted that community groups had expressed a desire for a 'dedicated open discussion' to provide an opportunity for all members to discuss and respond to matters to ensure an equal distribution of views between Borough Councillors, County Councillors and community representatives. Whilst this was supported in principle, it was also recognised that topics should continue to be raised in advance to assist with effective agenda planning. There was also opportunity to raise other matters under Any Other Business.

**\*RECOMMENDED:** That

- (1) the venue for Tonbridge Community Forum be moved to Tonbridge Methodist Church on a trial basis for all meetings in 2025;
- (2) all Meetings of the Tonbridge Community Forum be held in person on a trial basis in 2025;
- (3) following a topic or item raised at Tonbridge Community Forum a section should be dedicated to open discussion to provide an opportunity for all members to discuss and respond to the matter;
- (4) initial responses in relation to the operation of the Parish Partnership Panel be shared at a future meeting of the Parish Partnership Panel to allow all members additional opportunity to discuss and consider options for this meeting.

**\*Recommended to Cabinet**