

## **TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **FINANCE, REGENERATION AND PROPERTY SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE**

#### **MINUTES**

**Tuesday, 25th February, 2025**

**Present:** Cllr D Harman (Chair), Cllr A Mehmet (Vice-Chair), Cllr L Athwal, Cllr T Bishop, Cllr P Boxall, Cllr C Brown, Cllr R I B Cannon, Cllr J Clokey, Cllr B A Parry, Cllr M R Rhodes and Cllr S A Hudson (substitute)

Cllrs Mrs S Bell\*, A G Bennison, R P Betts\*, M D Boughton\*, M A Coffin\*, D A S Davis\*, P M Hickmott and K B Tanner were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

(\*participated via MS Teams)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors W E Palmer and C J Williams.

#### **PART 1 - PUBLIC**

##### **FRP 25/1 NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Notification of substitute members were recorded as set out below:

- Cllr S Hudson substitute for Cllr C Williams

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.

##### **FRP 25/2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

##### **FRP 25/3 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the notes of the meeting of the Finance, Regeneration and Property Scrutiny Select Committee held on 19 November 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

## **FRP 25/4 OUTSIDE BODIES UPDATE - LOWER MEDWAY AND UPPER MEDWAY INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARDS**

The report of the Clerks to the Lower and Upper Medway Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs) provided an overview of the activities undertaken in relation to the Special Levey contribution from Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council. It outlined the key work areas including maintenance, flood risk management and biodiversity initiatives.

Both IDBs remained committed to effective land drainage and flood risk management across Tonbridge and Malling. Whilst the Special Levy funded a broad range of activities, the benefits contributed significantly to the boroughs' resilience.

The IDBs valued engagement with the Borough Council, welcomed constructive dialogue through its Board structure and appointed representatives, looked forward to continued collaboration through established governance channels and welcomed discussions on shared priorities.

Members sought clarification on how regularly routine inspections were carried out and the meaning of routine 'pioneering'. A response to these points would be sought from the IDBs and circulated to Members once received.

At the request of the Chair the report was attached as an Annex to the Minutes.

## **MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET**

### **FRP 25/5 UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND 2025/26**

Following an announcement by Government in December 2024, the report of the Chief Executive and Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Regeneration and Property set out proposals for the allocation of UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) for 2025/26.

Based on a total budget of £327,146, a proposal for a programme of activity in 2025/26 was outlined in Table 1 at 5.4 of the report. It aimed to take a balanced approach, aspiring to deliver under each of the three UKSPF priorities, whilst at the same time allocating funding towards the authority's own strategic priorities, such as Tonbridge Town Centre regeneration and Carbon Descent plans and delivering considerable tangible benefits to communities.

A background to each of the proposed projects in the programme was provided in 5.5 of the report. It was also noted that there were limited financial and value for money implications for the Borough Council as the proposal related to external funding. However, the use of UKSPF

funding to support corporate priorities had a positive impact on Borough Council budgets.

Members attention was drawn to the Rural England Prosperity Fund which had helped to support rural communities and businesses. At the current time the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) had not made any announcement on whether there would be another allocation of grant funding for 2025/26. However, it was proposed that if Rural England Prosperity Funding became available that it be used for further rounds of the West Kent Rural Grant Scheme.

Reference was made to the Riverside Walk Lighting Scheme plans and Members were advised that whilst s106 developer contributions would be used to fund the project, an allocation of UKSPF funding would strengthen the available funding. It was also indicated that alternative funding streams would be explored for projects once the UKSPF funding stopped.

Finally, it was indicated that due to high demand consideration was being given to purchasing a second thermal imaging camera for leasing to residents using the Climate Change reserve.

**\*RECOMMENDED:** That

- (1) the proposed UKSPF Programme for 2025/26, as set out in Table 1, be commended to Cabinet for approval;
- (2) Cabinet approve delegated authority be given to the Strategic Economic Regeneration Manager, in liaison with the Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Regeneration and Property, to make minor amendments to the programme that may be needed in the event of project underspend; and
- (3) the use of any additional Rural England Prosperity Fund for 2025/26 (to be confirmed) for further rounds of the West Kent Rural Grants scheme be commended to Cabinet for approval.

**\*Recommended to Cabinet**

### **MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION**

#### **FRP 25/6 WORK PROGRAMME 2025**

The Work Programme setting out matters to be scrutinised was attached for information. Members were invited to suggest future matters for 2025/26 by liaising with the Chair of the Committee and the Scrutiny Officer.

**MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION IN PRIVATE**

**FRP 25/7 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were no items considered in private.

The meeting ended at 8.21 pm