

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT SCRUTINY SELECT COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Wednesday, 16th July, 2025

Present: Cllr S A Hudson (Chair), Cllr A G Bennison, Cllr G C Bridge (substitute), Cllr S Crisp, Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr F A Hoskins, Cllr D W King (substitute), Cllr J R S Lark, Cllr A McDermott, Cllr W E Palmer, Cllr S Pilgrim and Cllr M R Rhodes

Cllrs R P Betts, J Clokey, P M Hickmott, M A J Hood, D Keers and Mrs A S Oakley* were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

(*participated via MS Teams)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs M Tatton and K S Tunstall.

CE 25/17 NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Notification of substitute members were recorded as set out below:

- Cllr G Bridge substituted for Cllr M Tatton
- Cllr D King substituted for Cllr K Tunstall

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.

CE 25/18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

For openness, Councillor James Lark declared that he was the Chair of the Heusenstam Friendship Circle which was a stakeholder of Haysden Country Park, Item 11 on the agenda.

CE 25/19 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the notes of the meeting of the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee held on 5 March 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CE 25/20 OUTSIDE BODIES UPDATE - MAIDSTONE MEDIATION SCHEME

Members received a presentation on the recent activities of the Maidstone Mediation Scheme.

The charity offered a free, confidential and impartial mediation service, which had been working in the Tonbridge and Malling community for over 20 years, helping to resolve conflict and the breakdown of relationships between individuals, organisations, families and groups.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE CABINET

CE 25/21 TONBRIDGE AND MALLING COMMUNITY AWARDS SCHEME

(Decision Notice D250086MEM)

Member approval was sought on a Community Awards Scheme which would recognise and celebrate individuals, groups and organisations who had made outstanding contributions through volunteering or initiatives that improved the lives of others.

In terms of the categories of award, Members suggested that the 'Individual volunteer of the year' and 'Young community champion' categories be broken down further into age categories.

It was proposed by Councillor Hudson (Chair), seconded by Councillor Rhodes and the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee

RECOMMENDED*: That

- (1) the Community Awards Scheme for Tonbridge and Malling, be approved; and
- (2) the categories of awards and the nomination process, as set out in the report, be agreed.

***Decision taken by Cabinet Member for Community Services**

CE 25/22 CLIMATE CHANGE MONITORING AND REPORTING

(Decision Notice: D250087MEM)

The Council had committed to producing annual climate change action plans and publishing its greenhouse gas emissions (Carbon Audits) to track progress towards the Council's carbon neutral by 2030 aspiration. The report summarised progress achieved to date, the new action plan and trends in emissions from the Council's estate and operations. A progress report for the Climate Change Action Plan Year 5 (2024/25), a Climate Change Action Plan Year 6 (2025/26) and the Carbon Audit for emissions in 2024/25 were attached respectively at Annexes 1, 2 and 3 to the report.

In terms of progress, most actions from the current year's Climate Change Action Plan were either complete or ongoing and the draft Action Plan for 2025-26 continued existing work and introduced new projects, subject to available funding. Members were made aware that the withdrawal of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund posed a challenge, however the Council would monitor and pursue alternative funding opportunities.

Whilst recognising that some increases in emissions were attributed to changes in building use and more accurate reporting rather than significant increases in activity, it was noted that the most significant sources of emissions across the TMBC estate and operations remained leisure facilities and refuse collection vehicles and addressing these would make the largest impact towards the 2030 carbon neutral aspiration. In the next year, the Council would continue to invest in renewable and low carbon technologies, part funded by grants awarded to the Council, to tackle emissions from leisure facilities. Furthermore, the new waste contract would offer an opportunity to take steps to reduce emissions from refuse collection.

During discussion, concern was raised regarding recycling at events, in particular contamination and the need to put the onus on the event organisers to ensure cross contamination did not occur.

Annual monitoring and reporting were essential for tracking progress towards the Council's environmental goals and ensuring accountability on the journey to carbon neutrality by 2030 and Members indicated that they would welcome an annual report on climate change monitoring.

Finally, due regard was given to the finance and value for money considerations and the risk assessment outlined in the report.

It was proposed by Councillor Hudson (Chair), seconded by Councillor Lark and the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee

RECOMMENDED*: That the publication of the Climate Change Action Plan Year 5 Progress Report, the Climate Change Action Plan Year 6 2025/2 and the Carbon Audit 2024/25, be approved.

***Decision taken by Cabinet Member for Housing, Environment and Economy**

CE 25/23 RENEWAL OF PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION NOTICE

(Decision Notice D250088MEM)

The report gave details about the proposed Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for 2026 and details of the consultation that must take place as part of the PSPO renewal process.

The PSPO had been in place in the borough since April 2017 and was reviewed in 2020 and 2023. The current PSPO was due to end in April 2026 and could be extended for a further three years. The report proposed to proceed with a PSPO containing multiple restrictions. Some of these restrictions were the same as included previously, as evidence had been provided to show that the issues were continuing. In addition, the report proposed one new restriction to prevent camping in the Memorial Gardens, Tonbridge. Furthermore, it was proposed that the restriction relating to the use of drones be amended to 'No person may launch or land a drone from any open space owned by the Borough Council without first obtaining authorisation from the Borough Council'. It was believed that each of the proposed restrictions would help prevent Anti-Social Behaviour in the borough.

Once approved, the Public Space Protection Order would go out for consultation for a six week period and a report would be brought back to a future meeting to give details of the consultation response and allow for a final Order to be confirmed.

On the grounds of public safety and the protection of wildlife, Members supported the inclusion of a new restriction prohibiting unauthorised catapult use, whilst noting that enforcement was only applicable to those persons over the age of 16 years.

It was proposed by Councillor Hudson (Chair), seconded by Councillor Pilgrim and the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee

RECOMMENDED*: That

- (1) the proposed amendments to the Public Space Protection Order, be agreed, subject to the inclusion of an additional restriction prohibiting the unauthorised use of catapults; and
- (2) the amended Public Space Protection Order, go out for public consultation for a six-week period.

***Decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Community Services**

CE 25/24 PREVENT STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2025-2028

(Decision Notice D250089MEM)

Members considered the proposed Prevent Action Plan 2025-28, which had been developed in response to the duty under the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015. The Plan set out the Borough Council's actions to prevent individuals from being drawn into terrorism and to support the Government's Prevent Strategy.

The Prevent Action Plan, attached at Annex 1 of the report, detailed steps the Council would take over the next three years, both internally and in partnership with the Community Safety Partnership and built on previous work as well as identifying any outstanding actions. The Plan aimed to challenge all forms of terrorism and address the current substantial terrorism threat level in the UK.

During discussion, Members noted the requirement for a Prevent Action Plan, the importance of delivery for community safety, that Prevent training for Members had been completed and the Community Safety Partnership prioritised safeguarding at-risk individuals, with Prevent as a standing agenda item at meetings.

The Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee

RECOMMENDED*: That the Prevent Action Plan 2025-2028, be supported and endorsed.

***Decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Community Services**

**CE 25/25 HAYSDEN COUNTRY PARK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2025-2029 -
CONSULTATION**

(Decision Notice D250090MEM)

The report outlined the consultation process and recommendations for adopting the Haysden Country Park Management Plan 2025-29. After an extensive public consultation, responses were supportive, with suggestions largely focused on accessibility, content and specific projects. All comments had been carefully considered and a summary of the comments received and Officer responses was attached at Annex 2 to the report. There were no proposed amendments to the Plan following the consultation.

During discussion, on grounds of public safety, the raising of the priority of the footpath along Lower Haysden Lane from 3 to 1 was supported.

RECOMMENDED*: That the Haysden Country Park Management Plan 2025-29 be adopted, subject to a minor amendment to the Access Audit (12.3.3) and the comments of the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Select Committee.

***Decision taken by the Cabinet Member for Community Services**

MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION

CE 25/26 GRENFELL INQUIRY - IMPLICATIONS FOR COUNCIL OPERATIONS

The report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health laid out the implications for the Council from the recommendations in the final report of the Grenfell Inquiry.

The inquiry looked at the circumstances leading up to and surrounding the Grenfell Tower disaster. Phase 1 looked at the events that led up to the fire on 14 June 2017, and Phase 2 focused on an analysis of the events that culminated in the tragedy and the Inquiry's recommendations on what should be done to prevent future similar disasters occurring. The Phase 2 report emphasised the importance of the role that local government had to play in major disaster prevention and management, and the need for authorities to have robust levels of preparedness in relation to such matters and the Inquiry put forward a number of specific recommendations that local authorities should take to ensure that effective plans were in place for the future. Government had already taken some steps and a summary of these were provided at Annex 1 of the report. A summary of the implications for the Council to consider were provided at Annex 2, and fell under building safety, social housing management and regulation and emergency planning and response.

CE 25/27 WORK PROGRAMME 2025-26

The Work Programme setting out matters to be scrutinised during 2025/26 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 25/28 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no matters considered in private.

The meeting ended at 8.57 pm