

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

MINUTES

Tuesday, 14th October, 2025

Present: Cllr M D Boughton (Chair), Cllr R P Betts, Cllr M A Coffin, Cllr D Keers, Cllr A Mehmet and Cllr M Taylor

Cllrs Mrs S Bell, D Harman, M A J Hood, S A Hudson, Mrs A S Oakley, M R Rhodes and K B Tanner were also present via MS Teams pursuant to Access to Information Rule No 23.

PART 1 - PUBLIC

CB 25/107 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Boughton and Betts declared an Other Significant Interest in the UKSPF Community Development Grant Scheme (item 8) on the grounds that they were involved with the Kent Farmers Market Association and the Swan Community Benefit Society who had both applied for grant funding. They withdrew from the meeting and did not participate in any discussion or vote on this matter.

CB 25/108 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 2 September 2025 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

MATTERS FOR RECOMMENDATION TO THE COUNCIL

CB 25/109 ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT 2024/25

Consideration was given to the recommendations of the Audit Committee in respect of the Borough Council's overall arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of resources as set out in the Annual Auditors report prepared by Grant Thornton UK LLP.

Due regard was given to the views of the Committee and Cabinet was pleased to note that the external auditors had not identified any significant weaknesses in the Borough Council's arrangements, although a small number of improvement actions had been recommended.

On the grounds that the external auditor was satisfied that the Borough Council had made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, Cabinet

***RECOMMENDED:** That

- (1) the Auditor's Annual report (Annex 1) be recommended to Council for approval;
- (2) the key recommendations made in respect of the comments made be noted; and
- (3) the management comments to the 2024/25 value for money recommendations be noted and endorsed.

***Recommended to Council**

CB 25/110 RISK MANAGEMENT

Consideration was given to the recommendations of the Audit Committee in respect of the risk management process and the Strategic Risk Register.

Due regard was given to the views of the Committee and Cabinet welcomed the work being undertaken within the Borough Council to champion risk management.

Attention was drawn to the 3 areas of risk categorised as RED as summarised below:

- Achievement of Savings and Transformation Strategy
- Failure to agree a Local Plan
- Managed exit from the Agile system

On the grounds that the identification, evaluation and cost-effective control of risks was essential in safeguarding the Borough Council's assets, employees, customers and the delivery of services to the local community, Cabinet

***RECOMMENDED:** That

- (1) the updates to the Strategic Risk Register since the last iteration with particular emphasis on those risks categorised as RED as shown in Annex 1 and 1a (and summarised above) be noted;
- (2) the service risks identified in Annex 2 be noted; and
- (3) the Risk Management Strategy and accompanying Risk Management Guidance be reviewed and adopted by Full Council.

Recommended to Council*MATTERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 3 OF THE CONSTITUTION****EXECUTIVE NON-KEY DECISIONS****CB 25/111 TONBRIDGE TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN FRAMEWORK
ADOPTION AND DELIVERY STRATEGY**

(Decision Notice D250109CAB)

Following receipt of the Masterplan Framework report from the external consultants, architects and commercial property specialist and completion of the Masterplan Framework public engagement survey, the report presented a Delivery Strategy for consideration.

Members welcomed the generally positive feedback received as part of the public engagement survey which had finished on 31 August 2025. It was also noted that Tonbridge Historical Society and Tonbridge Civic Society were generally supportive of the Masterplan Framework.

The Delivery Strategy expanded on the information contained within the East of the High Street Masterplan Framework, provided more detail on the proposed delivery options and timescales and, taking into account the results of the public engagement survey, proposed a preferred phasing of delivery within the context of Local Government Reorganisation timescales. An addendum (attached at Annex 3) provided additional information in respect of car parking provision and usage.

Due regard was given to the financial and value for money considerations and Cabinet recognised concerns expressed in respect of loss of parking provision and the importance of accessible parking.

On the grounds of retaining flexibility and opportunity to ensure sufficient parking capacity and GP services, it was proposed that the Delivery Strategy (attached at Annex 4) be amended as set out below:

- (i) Paragraph 6.1.5: change 'all bays retained for the medium term' to read 'all bays retained and decking be added for the medium term, should usage determine that more bays are required';
- (ii) Paragraph 6.1.6: add 'with the potential for capacity to be added by decking Angel West car park';
- (iii) Paragraph 6.3.2: remove the final sentence 'the GP Surgery should only be progressed if the new facility provides additionality in services and capacity for the benefit of the town' as this was difficult for the Borough Council to quantify and provide;

- (iv) Paragraph 6.7.1: add 'including decking options'; and
- (v) Paragraph 6.9: Angel West – remove 'planned in the short/medium term' and add 'and consider decking options' under additional comments.

These amendments were supported unanimously.

On the grounds that the proposals invested in local economic growth and provided an opportunity for the Borough Council to use its land and assets better in Tonbridge Town Centre, Cllr Boughton proposed, Cllr Mehmet seconded and Cabinet

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the feedback received in response to the Masterplan Framework public engagement survey (Annex 1) be noted;
- (2) the final Masterplan Framework (Annex 2) and the Masterplan Framework Addendum 1 (Annex 3) be adopted; and
- (3) subject to the amendments set out in (i) – (v) above, the Masterplan Framework Delivery Strategy (Annex 4) be approved and reviewed annually.

CB 25/112 UKSPF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANT SCHEME

(Decision Notice D250110CAB)

The report of the Chief Executive provided details of the third round of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Community Development Grant Scheme and sought approval of grant allocations as set out in Annex 2.

As per previous years, the application process had been designed to minimise risk, with assessments based on set criteria (detailed in Annex 1). Payments would be made following this process and upon receipt of signed or audited accounts and a copy of the organisation's constitution.

During the 9-week application period, 56 eligible bids were received. As anticipated the scheme was oversubscribed with the total amount applied for by eligible applications exceeding the total funding pot. This meant that the full amount requested by all applicants could not be offered and the agreed scoring criteria had been used to determine the level of award for each applicant.

Attention was drawn to an additional application for funding from the organisation Arts without Boundaries. Members were advised that unfortunately this application had been missed, although it was an eligible bid and supported the Borough Council's priorities for the

Scheme. The application had been scored against the set criteria (Annex 1) and meant that the organisation was eligible for an award of £420. Funding of this would be met via the underspend of the 50th Anniversary Grant Scheme. On the grounds that this application met the scoring criteria, Cllr Coffin proposed, Cllr Keers seconded and Cabinet supported this additional application for funding.

Due regard was given to the financial and value for money considerations and on the grounds that the proposed grant allocations focused on projects that best met the criteria for the Community Development Grant Scheme and aligned with Council priorities, Cllr Coffin proposed, Cllr Keers seconded and Cabinet

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the grant allocations (set out in Annex 2) be endorsed; and
- (2) an additional grant allocation of £420 be awarded to Arts without Boundaries and funded from the 50th Anniversary Grant underspend.

(Note: Cllr Coffin assumed the role of Chair for this matter, as Cllr Boughton had declared an Other Significant Interest and withdrew from the meeting.)

CB 25/113 SAFEGUARDING AND EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY - STAFF TRAINING

(Decision Notice D25011CAB)

The report of the Chief Executive sought approval of proposed staff training plans in relation to safeguarding and equalities and diversity. This met the commitment set out in the Annual Service Delivery Plan 2025/26.

It was proposed to implement a tiered training framework, delivered through a rolling programme that ensured that all staff received appropriate training aligned to their role, that training was refreshed at regular intervals to maintain awareness and competence and that a centralised record of training completion was maintained for audit and assurance purposes.

Consideration was given to the proposed training structure for Safeguarding (Annex 1) and the proposed training structure for Equality and Diversity (Annex 2). Due regard was given to the financial and value for money considerations, the assessment of risk and the legal implications.

On the grounds that staff had an important role to consider and support children and adults at risk of harm and to deliver services where

everyone felt respected, represented and able to thrive, Cllr Keers proposed, Cllr Taylor seconded and Cabinet

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the training plan for Safeguarding (set out in Annex 1) be endorsed; and
- (2) the training plan for Equality and Diversity (set out in Annex 2) be endorsed.

CB 25/114 ANGEL LEISURE CENTRE - REPLACEMENT PROJECT

(Decision Notice D250112CAB)

Consideration was given to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 11 September in respect of the Angel Leisure Centre replacement project.

Due regard was given to the views of the Committee and Cabinet noted that there had been detailed and robust discussion on financial and value for money considerations, the potential risks in respect of local government reorganisation, asset disposal, borrowing of funds, potential loss of investment and repayment of loans. The Tonbridge Town Centre Programme Board would reflect on the feedback received.

After careful consideration of the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and on the grounds that the replacement of the Angel Centre would help to facilitate the wider development plans for Tonbridge Town Centre and supported the aspiration to be carbon neutral by 2030, Cllr Mehmet proposed, Cllr Boughton seconded and Cabinet

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Tonbridge Town Centre Programme Board give consideration to potential options around how any proceeds arising from the redevelopment of the current Angel Centre site could be used to offset any debt incurred in relation to the provision of the new leisure centre;
- (2) the intention to present a fully costed business case to Members in advance of seeking approval for the final construction of the Angel Leisure Centre replacement be noted; and
- (3) the progress being made on the replacement of the Angel Leisure Centre, Tonbridge be noted.

CB 25/115 ANNUAL SERVICE DELIVERY PLAN 2025/26 - QUARTER 1

(Decision Notice D250113CAB)

Consideration was given to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 11 September 2025 in respect of Quarter 1 of the Annual Service Delivery Plan 2025/26.

Due regard was given to the views of the Committee and Cabinet noted that a satisfactory level of progress had been achieved for 52% of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and that a strong level of performance had been achieved with 70% of activities making good progress.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) appreciation be recorded for the overall progress made during Quarter 1;
- (2) appreciation be recorded for the achievements made during Quarter 1; and
- (3) the areas needing focus be noted.

CB 25/116 EXECUTIVE/SCRUTINY PROTOCOL

(Decision Notice D250114CAB)

Consideration was given to the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of 11 September 2025 in respect of the effectiveness of the Executive-Scrutiny Protocol.

Due regard was given to the views of the Committee and Cabinet noted that the Protocol (attached at Annex 1) had been updated to include reference to IT Policies and Strategies within the standing items for consideration. On the grounds that this amendment was supported and the Protocol remained fit for purpose, Cllr Boughton proposed, Cllr Coffin seconded and Cabinet

RESOLVED: That the revised Protocol (Annex 1) be approved.

MATTERS SUBMITTED FOR INFORMATION**CB 25/117 MINUTES OF PANELS, BOARDS AND OTHER GROUPS**

The Minutes of the meetings of the following Advisory Panels and other Groups were received, any recommendations contained therein being incorporated within the decisions of the Cabinet reproduced at the annex to these Minutes:

- Parish Partnership Panel of 28 August 2025

- Tonbridge Community Forum of 1 September 2025

CB 25/118 DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET MEMBERS

Details of the Decisions taken in accordance with the rules for the making of decisions by executive members, as set out in Part 4 of the Constitution, were presented for information.

CB 25/119 NOTICE OF FORTHCOMING KEY DECISIONS

The Notice setting out the Key Decisions anticipated to be taken during the period November to December 2026 was noted.

CB 25/120 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Cllr Boughton proposed, Cllr Coffin seconded and it was

RESOLVED: That as public discussion would disclose exempt information, the following matters be considered in private.

PART 2 - PRIVATE**MATTERS IN ACCORDANCE WITH PART 3 OF THE CONSTITUTION****EXECUTIVE KEY DECISIONS****CB 25/121 TONBRIDGE TOWN CENTRE PROGRAMME BOARD -
RECOMMENDATIONS AND NOTES**

(Reasons: Part 2 – Private – LGA 1972 Sch 12A Paragraph 3 – Financial or business affairs of any particular person)

(Decision Notice D250115CAB)

Members reviewed the Notes of the Tonbridge Town Centre Programme Board for the meeting of 10 October 2025 (attached as a supplement to the main agenda).

Careful consideration was given to recommendations in respect of the replacement Angel Leisure Centre project and proposed changes to delegations to determine progression between RIBA Stages 3 and 4. The latter was required as a result of the changes made to Cabinet Member portfolios at Annual Council in May 2025.

Cabinet had due regard to the recommendations of the Programme Board, the financial and value for money considerations and the legal implications and recognised the good progress being made. On the grounds of supporting the regeneration of Tonbridge Town Centre, Cllr Mehmet proposed, Cllr Boughton seconded and Cabinet

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the completion of the RIBA Stage 2 of the Angel Centre replacement project be confirmed;
- (2) in accordance with the fee proposal detailed within the Angel Centre report considered by the Tonbridge Town Centre Programme Board on the 10 October 2025, Alliance Leisure be appointed to progress RIBA Stage 3 of the project; and
- (3) delegated authority be granted to the Director of Street Scene, Leisure and Technical Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Members for Infrastructure and Tonbridge Regeneration, Community Services and Finance, Waste and Transformation, to authorise future progression from RIBA Stage 3 to RIBA Stage 4 of the project at the relevant time.

The meeting ended at 8.05 pm