



A G E N D A

Thursday 20 March 2014 at 6.30 pm
Council Chamber, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 1RS

1 Apologies

2 Membership changes

- a Membership applications (for decision)
- b Changes of representatives (for information)

3 Minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 January 2014 (Pages 1 - 12)

4 Actions from previous meetings

Minute 4 – Evidence of formal appointments – all representatives
NB – To date, 21 out of 37 active organisations have submitted evidence

5 Update report from the Leader of the Council, including TWBC's draft 'Vision' (Pages 13 - 16)

In addition to a general update report, the Leader of the Council will introduce the Borough Council's draft 'Vision', which sets out what the authority aims to achieve in the next five years to ensure that Tunbridge Wells remains a prosperous, green and confident borough.

The draft 'Vision' is currently the subject of formal public consultation until 28 March. It can be accessed via the following link:

http://consult.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/portal/community_living/vision/draft_vision_2014

The Town Forum's Management Committee met to consider a response to the document. A copy of this draft response is attached and is presented to the full Town Forum for comment and approval. (It was felt that this was a task more suited to the full Management Committee, rather than a specific working group, because the draft 'Vision' relates to the work of all the groups.)

6 Localism 'Prospectus' (Pages 17 - 30)

Cllr John Cunningham will lead a discussion on this issue, with Paul Taylor (Director of Change and Communities) and Nick Green (Sports, Grants and Communities Officer) also in attendance.

This issue has recently been considered by TWBC's Cabinet, at their meeting held on 27 February. A copy of the report considered by the Cabinet, which explains the role of voluntary groups and social enterprises, is attached.

- 7 Reports from the Town Forum working groups** (Pages 31 - 40)
- (a) **Water in the Wells** – Michael Holman, chairman of this working group, has provided the attached update report (**pages 31-32**).
 - (b) **Leisure, Culture and Tourism** – the working group has already submitted the attached consultation response to TWBC’s Green Infrastructure Plan (consultation draft) in order to meet the specified deadline. It is submitted to the Town Forum for information (**pages 33-35**).
 - (c) **Traffic Strategy** – Jane Fenwick, acting chairman of this working group, has provided the attached update report (**page 37**).
 - (d) **Planning and Development** – Michael Doyle, chairman of this working group, has provided the attached update report (**page 39**).
 - (e) **Finance and Other Issues** – David Wakefield, chairman of this working group, will provide a verbal update report.

- 8 Street cleaning in Tunbridge Wells**
- Dorothea Holman, Chair of the Boyne Park Residents’ Association, will lead a discussion on the street cleaning practices of TWBC’s contractors, Cory Environmental. Mrs Holman will also raise concerns about the performance of KCC’s gully emptying service in Boyne Park.

Members of the Town Forum will be invited to comment on these issues within their own areas.

- 9 Proposed change to the Town Forum's Constitution** (Pages 41 - 44)
- At the Town Forum’s AGM, held in November, it was agreed that the Management Committee should review the Forum’s constitution, to examine what changes might be suitable, in order to encourage more nominations for the key positions of Chairman and Vice-Chairman. This was in the wake of no nominations coming forward for the position of Chairman and only one nomination for the two Vice-Chairman posts.

A report on the outcome of that review process and the resultant recommendation is attached.

- 10 TWBC consultation issues** (Pages 45 - 46)
- Attached is an extract from TWBC’s ‘Forward Plan’ of ‘key decisions’ which are being considered by the Cabinet over the course of the next two to three months. This has been provided for Town Forum members for information only.

11 Any other business

Dates of remaining meetings in 2014

Thursday 29 May

Thursday 10 July

Thursday 25 September

Thursday 27 November (including the AGM)

All meetings to start at 6.30pm



ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

Thursday 16 January 2014

Attended: Cllr Bob Backhouse, Sally Balcon, David Barnett, Lorna Blackmore, Stephen Bowser, June Bridgeman, David Bushell (sub), Cllr Mrs Barbara Cobbold, Adrian Cory, John Cunningham, Michael Doyle, John Forster, Alex Green, Michaela van Halewyn, Tim Harper, Dorothea Holman, Michael Holman, Bill Kern, Kyrios Kyriacou, George Lawson (sub), Katharina Mahler-Bech, Chris Morris, Cllr David Neve, Cllr James Scholes, Cllr David Scott, Peter Taylor, Alastair Tod, David Wakefield (Chairman), Mary Wardrop, Margaret Watts, Cllr Mrs Lynne Weatherly, Victor Webb, Philip Whitbourn (sub) and Cllr Chris Woodward

TWBC officers present: Adam Chalmers (Democratic and Community Engagement Manager), Holly Goring (Policy, Performance and Partnerships Manager), Gary Stevenson (Head of Environment and Street Scene) and Mike McGeary (Democratic Services Officer)

Also present: Léonie Harrington and Cllr Paul Barrington-King (Portfolio-holder for Sustainability)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were reported from: Jane Fenwick, Sue Kaner, Jim Kedge, Angela Phillips, Chris Wigley and Cllrs Mrs Catherine Mayhew, Trevor Poile and Frank Williams.

2. MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

Mike McGeary, TWBC's Democratic Services Officer, reported the following: (a) that the Chairman had approved an application to join the Town Forum from the Number One Community Trust; their representative, Adrian Cory, was welcomed to his first meeting; and (b) that Maggie Fraser had stood down as representative for the Tunbridge Wells Over 50s Forum and had been replaced by David Morris, with Cllr Mrs Barbara Cobbold as the substitute member.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meetings (including the Annual General Meeting) held on 28 November 2013 be agreed.

4. ACTIONS FROM PREVIOUS MINUTES

28 November 2013

4 Evidence of formal appointment to the Town Forum

MMcG Representatives to submit evidence of their formal appointment to the Town Forum.

The Democratic Services Officer advised that 21 out of the 35 active representative organisations had now submitted evidence of their formal appointment to the Town

Forum. The Chairman reiterated once more the importance of submitting this information, in the interests of good governance.

5. TWBC'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2014/15 – DRAFT LIST OF COMMUNITY PROJECTS

Holly Goring, TWBC's Policy, Performance and Partnerships Manager, introduced the draft list of community projects, which formed a key part of the proposed Strategic Plan for the Borough Council for 2014/15. She explained how the projects linked to the authority's political and strategic priorities, both for the financial year ahead and longer term.

Miss Goring added that the list of community projects had been the subject of a formal consultation process on the Council's website, the closing date for responses being the following day.

David Wakefield, Chairman of the Finance and Other Issues Working Group, reported that his group had made the following observations on the draft list of projects; he sought the Town Forum's approval to the submission of the following:

- Generally, they welcomed the list of projects and considered items 2 (Making the best use of land and property assets for the benefit of all residents) and 7 (Developing the concept of a 'cultural and learning hub' in the centre of Royal Tunbridge Wells) to be of paramount importance. (A prosperous Borough)
- Under item 11 (Commence works to enhance the appearance and facilities at Grosvenor & Hilbert Park), they welcomed the successful bid for HLF funding. They were also particularly supportive of item 12 (Working in partnership to roll out an ECO-funded housing retrofit project within the Borough, supporting the residents to improve the energy efficiency of their homes and reduce their energy consumption). (A green Borough)
- Under 13 (Working with our parish and town councils to develop community facilities and help them take control of local services), they asked if the Town Forum could be a formal part of that process. (A confident Borough)

In approving the above response, Town Forum members were keen to see more detail added in due course on how the specific projects would be developed and delivered, including at what point the necessary funding would be agreed. They accepted the point that, once the list had been formally approved by the full Council, specific milestones – against which the stage-by-stage progress of each project could be judged – would form part of the performance management process.

RESOLVED – That the draft response of the Finance and Other Issues Working Group be approved and submitted to the Borough Council.

6. HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING POLICY

In the absence of the Acting Chairman of the Transport Strategy Working Group Chairman (Jane Fenwick), Lorna Blackmore had convened a meeting of the group. She reported on the key findings, in response to this formal consultation issue.

The issue on which TWBC was seeking the public's views followed an independent survey into whether there was an unmet demand for additional taxi services. The working group's proposed response covered four main areas of study, namely: town centre taxi ranks; accessible vehicles; the number of licensed hackney carriages; and the number of hours worked v. income received.

Gary Stevenson, TWBC's Head of Environment and Street Scene, who was responsible for the management of the Council's Licensing team, thanked Mrs Blackmore and her group for the proposed response which, he added, would be reported back to the Council's Licensing Committee the following month.

He clarified a number of points of detail which had been raised, in order to help with a wider understanding of the key issues.

The Chairman then sought members' views on the proposed response.

- June Bridgeman reminded the Forum that the Soroptimists organisation had undertaken a review of taxi services in the town, some years ago; she felt that some of the conclusions and recommendations made at that stage remained relevant. She suggested that the pertinent aspects from that earlier study could very usefully be annexed to this latest response;
- John Forster responded to the comment about the taxi 'feeder' area, opposite the station at the entrance to Calverley Grounds. He advised that he had witnessed drivers racing from the feeder area to collect a fare and, on occasions, had viewed taxi drivers jumping red lights. He suggested that 'chevron' type parking at the front of the station might provide a better solution, which could cater for more vehicles in that prime spot;
- Cllr David Scott voiced concerns about the poor provision of taxis and hackney carriages with access for disabled people. He felt that there should be an ambition of achieving 100% accessible vehicles over a set period of time;
- Tim Harper enquired how many licences had actually been withdrawn in recent years, as a result of holders failing to meet the associated conditions.

In response to the questions raised, Cllr Mrs Barbara Cobbold, Chairman of the Licensing Committee, stated that there were certain codes of conduct which drivers were required to follow, so that any observed breaches should be reported to the Licensing team at the Town Hall.

Gary Stevenson, in response to the accessibility of vehicles, which was also raised by Cllr David Neve, advised that if a new licence plate were being sought, the vehicle was required to be accessible; in the case of the renewal of a licence, the policy was not so strict, although he added that there was nothing to prevent a review of that aspect of the Licensing Policy.

Finally, Mr Stevenson advised that, in recent years, there had been a number of hearings into alleged breaches of a driver's licensing conditions. Whilst none of these had led to the revocation of a licence, there had been cases where penalty points had been applied, under which a driver might suffer a sufficient number leading to the suspension of a licence, Mr Stevenson added.

RESOLVED – That the Traffic Strategy Working Group's proposed response to the current consultation issue, as set out in the appendix to these minutes, be approved and submitted to the Borough Council.

7. FIVE WAYS SHARED PUBLIC REALM PROPOSALS

Further to the discussion on this issue at the September 2013 meeting, Cllr Paul Barrington-King reported on progress with this proposed public realm improvement for the town centre.

Cllr Barrington-King began with a related 'good news' issue, namely the progress being made with Network Rail, in efforts to repair and re-paint the two bridges, at the foot of Mount Pleasant. The Cabinet Portfolio-holder also placed on record his grateful thanks to Alastair Tod and to the town's MP for their unstinting support with this initiative.

With Five Ways, Cllr Barrington-King advised that the public consultation stage over the concept and possible surface materials had been very supportive. He added that discussions with KCC and with their civil engineering contractor for highway design services – AMEY – had been very positive. On the surface materials, Cllr Barrington-King added that while Purbeck stone might have been the most attractive, visually, it was acknowledged that it would not be sufficiently strong to take public transport vehicles. As a very good alternative, he added, discussions had been held with Marshalls, who were able to supply reinforced flag paving, which could be manufactured in bespoke colours. Cllr Barrington-King suggested that he would like members of the small working group to view a design presentation by Marshalls, either at their base near Halifax or, preferably, in Tunbridge Wells.

Gary Stevenson advised that he was keen to have two representatives of the Town Forum on the working group, adding that the Council would next be looking to work up the detailed design of the scheme and obtain costings for the project.

- Michael Holman sought clarification on whether the detailed design would include provision for a water feature and also what plans there were for the future of the Millennium Clock, either its retention or relocation. Cllr Barrington-King advised that the Leader of the Council would like to make provision for a water feature as part of this project, adding that this would be discussed with the design engineers, to assess the feasibility and costs;
- Tim Harper enquired whether the shared space scheme would allow only public transport (buses and taxis) to operate along its length. Mr Stevenson advised that, originally, the concept had been for pedestrian use only but that it had become clear that there was a strong case for allowing public transport to use this route. He advised, therefore, that there were discussions taking place on what types of access would be the most appropriate;
- Sally Balcon asked whether Sundays might be kept as a day when not even public transport was permitted; Mr Stevenson advised that this was part of the current consideration of the detail of the scheme.

The Chairman of the Forum thanked the presenters for their positive update on this scheme and asked whether Alistair Tod and John Forster would be willing to serve on the small working group examining the detailed design of the project; both agreed to act in this capacity. David Wakefield asked that a further update be provided in a few months' time.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That Alistair Tod and John Forster be appointed to serve on the working group which would be examining the detailed design of the shared space scheme; and

- (2) That Cllr Barrington-King and Gary Stevenson provide a further update report at either the May or July meeting of the Town Forum.

8. UPDATE REPORT FROM TWBC'S CABINET

In the absence of the Leader of the Council, Cllr Paul Barrington-King, Cabinet Portfolio-holder for Sustainability, provided a summary of some of the key issues which had been considered by the Cabinet since the last Town Forum meeting. These included:

- (a) Budget – where Cllr Barrington-King referred to the significant challenge the Council faced, against a backdrop of a reduction of government funding of over £700k, compared with just four years ago. He advised that, despite that, TWBC aimed to deliver a 'balanced' budget in 2014/15, where no use would be made of its reserves. This would be achieved in part, he added, through reducing staffing and making other efficiencies, totalling £604k, without any impact on frontline services;
- (b) Vision – Cllr Barrington-King advised that the Leader of the Council, with Cabinet support, had prepared a draft 'vision', which set out the Council's ambitions over the next five years. This, he advised, would be considered by the Cabinet on 6 February, at which point it would be going out for public consultation;
- (c) Cinema site – Cllr Barrington-King reported on three elements under this heading: (i) detailed discussions were continuing between the owners of the cinema site and a major supermarket chain; (ii) two separate public petitions had received much support, urging the owners to act; and (iii) the authority was still pursuing the owners for unpaid business rates, with a magistrates' court hearing beginning on 21 May;
- (d) Grosvenor and Hilbert Park – Cllr Barrington-King thanked all those who had been involved in the successful bid for Heritage Lottery Fund money, particularly the Friends of Grosvenor and Hilbert Park;
- (e) Energy Deal – Cllr Barrington-King advised that the next stage of the energy switch campaign was taking place. He urged those interested in seeing whether they could make savings on their energy costs to register at the following address (linked to the TWBC website), to obtain a 'no obligation' quote, before 17 February: www.energydealswitch.com
- (f) Christmas – Finally, Cllr Barrington-King reported on the success of the ice rink in Calverley Grounds and the Santa train, both of which had been extremely well-used and supported, he added, with approximately 28,000 skaters and 11,000 passengers on the train.

The Deputy Leader of the Council, Cllr James Scholes, provided further background on the budgetary situation, advising that it was expected that, by 2020/21, this authority would no longer be in receipt of government grant funding, due to the programme of year-on-year reductions. He added that there was therefore a keen focus on income generating initiatives. Cllr Scholes also reported on the successful 'annual (external) audit' which once more had delivered an unconditional endorsement of the authority's accounts and governance.

In response, the Chairman thanked the Cabinet members for the report and for the successful pre-Christmas initiatives.

There were no action points arising from this report.

9. WORKING GROUPS

Update reports were made from the working groups as follows:

Water in the Wells Working Group – The Chairman, Michael Holman, thanked Cllr Barrington-King for his encouraging progress report on the Five Ways initiative and welcomed the ‘Five Ways final consultation report’, which showed that a large majority of respondents favoured the installation of a water feature at this location.

Mr Holman advised that the Water in the Wells group was concentrating on publicity planning and website design, with a focus on publicising the aims and importance of Tunbridge Wells promoting its water- and health-based heritage. He added that the intention was to raise funds to support water-based projects, which in part would rely upon the Council agreeing an overall vision for public realm development that included water features.

Mr Holman next summarised where the group felt that water features could be best placed: (i) **Five Ways** – where specific details of the Council’s plans for a water feature were eagerly awaited; (ii) **Royal Wells Park (Berkeley Homes)** – where the group sought reassurance that the water feature proposals were adhered to; (iii) **Brighton Lake** – costed proposals (to be put to the Commons Conservators) were awaiting information on electricity supply details; (iv) **BUPA care home, Southborough** – a main road entrance to the Borough, where it was hoped that a forecourt water feature might be installed; (v) **Sussex Mews, Pantiles** – where the group was investigating the possibility of a water feature linked to the Grombrook, to help attract more footfall; and (vi) **Grosvenor and Hilbert Park** – where Mr Holman added his own congratulations for the HLF bid outcome, adding that the group was encouraging the addition of some smaller water features in the Park, as well as hoping to build on the success of the HLF process, and see such features implemented in other parks, over time.

In conclusion, Mr Holman observed how much the interests of the different working groups tended to overlap, adding that the common issue was to find partnerships that would help make the town a more pleasant place to live in and to visit and help to generate income for the town.

RESOLVED – That the progress report be accepted.

Leisure, Culture and Tourism Working Group – June Bridgeman, Chairman of this working group, focused on three, related, reports which had been published by TWBC in recent months, which can be accessed from the following links. All, she added, had linked in with the focus of her working group.

- (i) the draft Destination Management Plan (item 6)
<http://democracy.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/documents/g2876/Public%20reports%20pack%2018th-Dec-2013%2018.30%20Communities%20Cabinet%20Advisory%20Board.pdf?T=10>
- (ii) the Cultural Strategy (item 7)
<http://democracy.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/documents/g2875/Public%20reports%20pack%2013th-Nov-2013%2018.00%20Communities%20Cabinet%20Advisory%20Board.pdf?T=10>

- (iii) the consultant's report on the cultural hub (item 6)
<http://democracy.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/documents/g3031/Public%20reports%20opack%2021st-Nov-2013%2009.30%20Cabinet.pdf?T=10>

Mrs Bridgeman advised that, with the Destination Management Plan, TWBC had decided that a steering group should be formed, with the intention of involving partners in implementing the Plan's recommendations; she hoped that the Town Forum would be represented in that process.

Mrs Bridgeman added that there were still some concerns as to how the specific detail set out in the cultural hub proposals would work, i.e. how the different functions of the civic centre would link and operate. She felt that a working group should be established to examine this aspect. As part of that process, Mrs Bridgeman suggested it would be helpful for the Town Forum to agree what it felt the priorities were for the town and how the Forum could feed those ideas, and practical actions, in to the Borough Council, to help it achieve those objectives.

In the meantime, Mrs Bridgeman added, her working group would be looking at how other towns approached tourism initiatives, with a view to finding out about best practice, from which Tunbridge Wells might learn. As part of that process, Mrs Bridgeman believed that establishing a proper planning brief for the development of the town was essential.

Cllr David Scott made the following plea in respect of the issues falling within the remit of this working group: (a) he felt there was a need to co-ordinate and promote the 'Sounds of the Wells' initiative more effectively, with which the Town Forum could help; (b) he also believed that the Town Forum had an important role to play in identifying more facilities in the town for younger people and encouraging them to participate. This, he added, was of particular importance with music-based entertainment and participation, but was not limited to that aspect alone, he stressed.

Mrs Bridgeman accepted the point raised by Cllr Scott. She advised that her group had spoken to Cllr Caroline Derrick, who had been central in the 'Sounds of the Wells' initiative, as part of their work. Mrs Bridgeman was keen to learn what the current position was with KCC and their plans for a youth centre in the town. She also referred to an outcome from the survey work carried out amongst young people last year, which had identified swimming facilities in the town centre as something which were in high demand.

Cllr Chris Woodward, TWBC's 'Youth Champion' responded. He advised that KCC had acknowledged the importance of establishing a youth hub, but that they could only provide funds of up to £10k per annum to rent suitable accommodation. He added that he had visited the hub which KCC had established in Tonbridge & Malling, which was based in the Adult Education Centre, which might provide a model for what could be provided in Tunbridge Wells. In summary, Cllr Woodward advised that he would maintain the pressure on KCC to provide a proper facility for young people in the town which, he added, might have to take the form of short term rented accommodation.

Cllr Woodward also reported on the re-launch of the local Youth Advisory Group, which would provide another opportunity for direct dialogue between young people in the town and KCC, he advised.

RESOLVED – That the update report be noted.

Traffic Strategy Working Group – The Acting Chairman, Jane Fenwick, had submitted an update report with the agenda, which covered the main areas of activity since the last Town Forum meeting.

It was noted that the working group had been active at both the Joint Transportation Board (TWBC and KCC members) and at the Public Transport Forum meetings. They had also submitted a response on behalf of the Town Forum to TWBC's public consultation process on proposed changes to the parking fees and charges structure in the town centre, taking account of the results of the survey questionnaire submitted to all Town Forum members last November.

RESOLVED – That the progress report be accepted.

Planning and Development Strategy – Michael Doyle, Chairman of this working group, advised that his main concern in recent months had been the government's 'edicts' related to changes in planning rules, through the National Planning Policy Framework. This, he added, was also leading to the loss of business rates, as former office-use buildings were converted into residential units.

Mr Doyle added that his working group now awaited the outcome of TWBC's Planning Policy Working Group's deliberations into the responses the Council received on its Site Allocations Development Planning Document (DPD) consultation document; this was expected in the late spring, he advised.

Michael Holman asked if the timetable of the Borough Council's Planning Policy Working Group, indicating their programme of when they would be considering the individual town centre sites, could be made available to the Town Forum.

RESOLVED –

- (1) That the progress report be accepted; and
- (2) That the timetable of TWBC's Planning Policy Working Group, indicating their consideration of individual sites in the town centre, be made available to the Town Forum.

Finance and Other Issues – David Wakefield, Chairman of this working group, advised that the group had prepared a draft response to TWBC's consultation on its budget for 2014/15. A copy of the recommended response had been tabled, on which the Chairman invited comments.

Mr Webb responded to the Chairman's call that successful candidates in this May's TWBC elections should consider waiving their rights to receive a basic allowance for their work. He indicated that this was unrealistic, if the Council wished to attract the appropriate calibre of person to stand for election. Cllr Mrs Barbara Cobbold added that the basic allowance (currently £5,500 per annum) was significant in helping to meet the costs associated with being an active ward councillor.

Dorothea Holman felt that increasing car parking charges was not the best option; she believed that restricting the large number of free town centre parking spaces, including those in adjacent residential streets, was preferable, in order to encourage more use of the car parks. This view was supported by Margaret Watts, who added that the existing free spaces should be protected for residents.

Michael Holman advised that, while he agreed with the tabled recommended response to the formal consultation on TWBC's budget, he could not support any of the suggestions put forward concerning members' allowances which had been discussed.

Adam Chalmers, TWBC's Democratic and Community Engagement Manager, advised that he had noted the comments about car parking charges, which he would forward as part of another public consultation process taking place.

RESOLVED – That the draft response to TWBC’s consultation on its budget proposals for 2014/15 be agreed and submitted.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Customer metering programme – The Chairman, David Wakefield, advised that South East Water would be starting its programme of installing customer meters in 28,000 properties in Tunbridge Wells later this year. He added that they had invited Town Forum representatives to attend a ‘breakfast briefing’ in February, at which further details would be provided. Mike McGeary undertook to circulate details of the date/time/location of the briefing, and invite those wishing to attend to confirm their interest, which he would collate and forward on to South East Water.

It was suggested that this event might provide an opportunity to invite South East Water to sponsor a water feature, as part of the Town Forum’s current initiative.

Action: Mike McGeary to contact Town Forum members with details of South East Water’s briefing on the customer metering programme, inviting members to attend.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Thursday 20 March 2014 at 6.30pm

Subsequent meetings:

- **29 May** (NB – This is a change from the earlier published dates, due to Town Hall accommodation not being available on the original date, 8 May.)
- 10 July
- 25 September
- 27 November (including the AGM)

The meeting concluded at 8.40pm.

APPENDIX

Transport Strategy Working Group of the Town Forum

Hackney Carriage comments from this group

Having had sight of the CTS Hackney Carriage report we would wish to comment as follows and have based our comments simply on the town centre of this Borough.

The areas we looked at were concerned with:

1. Town centre taxi ranks
2. Accessible vehicles
3. Numbers of licensed hackney carriages
4. Numbers of hours worked verses income received

Town centre taxi ranks

1. Looking at the first matter of taxi ranks, based at Iceland, Camden Road and the Millennium Clock /Five Ways. Some people, whilst they were aware of these ranks, neither the public nor some of the taxi drivers were using these on a regular basis.
2. The most used taxi ranks were at both sides of the Railway Station, a station which has an annual footfall of approx 3.5 million. The Morrison's side, the front of the Station, has parking for 5 cars only; the Hooper's side is the rear of the Station. A snapshot of taxi usage on a specific friday was of 507 passengers and 621 on a Saturday.
3. Our main area of concern is the rear of the station (Hooper's side). This is a taxi rank for 10 cars. As you will see from the photographs being passed round there are more than 10 cars nearly all of the time, and chaos prevails. The cause of this chaos, it is understood, is due to this Council deregulating the taxis. This in effect means that once a licence has been issued the taxi driver can ply for their trade at anywhere in the Borough area. Consequently taxi drivers from Paddock Wood are coming and standing at the railway station. Most of the public are also unaware that there is in fact a disabled pick up space at this side to tie in with the lift which was installed on platform 2 a couple of years ago. The Police in the report we have seen are most concerned about the taxis parked facing down towards the High Street (again this is shown in the photographs) and are suggesting that the 10 taxis are parked to face upwards on Mount Pleasant Road. This Town Forum Transport Strategy Working Group would fully support the changing of the direction for the parking of these cars. I understand Network Rail would also be content with this.
4. We were also made aware by the public that they felt the fares were extremely high at £4.00 a mile; an example of this is from the Station to Carr's Corner is £4.00, or to the Tunbridge Wells Golf Club being £8.00. Bearing in mind that, when you enter a London taxi, the start fare is £2.10p - a great deal different.

Accessible vehicles

5. Option 2 recommended by the report is supported by this working group. This group would endorse this incentive relating to WAV provided correct marking of vehicles is

provided at the relevant ranks so that people with various disabilities are able to access these ranks easily.

Numbers of licensed hackney carriages

6. The number of licences for hackney carriage taxi rank drivers is currently 107 with two new licences being issued last year as prior to that there were 105. The number of private hire vehicles with a licence is 134.
7. The main concern for this group is the level of local knowledge those drivers of the hackney carriage have and this is borne out by the comments of the Police and the fact there have been disturbances amongst drivers aiming for various routes. On talking in general with railway staff they are also concerned there has been on occasions a high degree of tension that has arisen due to ethnic differences of drivers.

Numbers of hours worked verses income received

8. On reading the report produced by CTS there is concern about the number of hours worked by drivers which varied from 53 to 72 hours per week. Comments varied from the safety implications of both the drivers and more importantly the travelling public. Bearing in mind that PSV drivers are restricted to the number of hours they can work, this group felt there should also a restriction on the number of hours worked by our local drivers. From observations it has been noted that some drivers are working up to 20 hours at a stretch.
9. Conversely, our local drivers stated that on some days they only took approximately £52.00 whilst others stated they earned up to £120.00. However the average seemed to be £60.00.
10. Therefore in conclusion this group felt that greater use would be used of taxis (1) if they were priced the same as London taxis, (2) that the general public felt safe based on the drivers' attitude and ability and (3) accessibility of vehicles - this being both for disabled people but also where they are hailed from.
11. In previous years there was a 'red flashing light' just on the Station wall to hail a taxi and this could be seen from the opposite side of the road and then the taxi would draw up to collect the fare. In speaking to Network Rail they have confirmed they would be happy for this to be re-introduced. Another suggestion perhaps is a help point or similar to those provided at railway stations which are un-manned. A suggestion would be to position this sign on the wall near the Prêt-a-Manger. This could be linked to the flashing light and could have a number to signify which rank needed a taxi. Bearing in mind the modern technology we feel sure that a technological solution as to how this could work could be found.

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ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM THE FORUM'S PROPOSED RESPONSE TO TWBC'S DRAFT 'VISION'

General comments

The Town Forum welcomes both the draft 'Vision' document and the consultation process.

Against the backdrop of rapidly reducing central government financial support, the Town Forum fully supports the Leader's disposal programme of non-performing assets coupled with income-generating initiatives, as well as the Council's intention to become much more of an 'enabling' authority. The Town Forum firmly believes that there is also a need to identify partners with whom TWBC can work – which includes the Town Forum – in order to deliver the aspirations set out in the Vision. These partner groups need to be actively involved in the Council's planning processes.

Alongside that general view, there are some issues where it believes the document needs to be examined in greater depth, in order to improve its content and impact. These specific points are set out below, as part of the formal public consultation on the draft 'Vision'.

5-year plan

There was general agreement that a 5-year plan period was a realistic timescale and the Vision document was therefore welcomed. It was also recognised that the 5-year plan needed to be slotted into developments envisaged for the period beyond 2019.

A vision or a plan?

The general view was that this was not a vision document in its proper sense. A vision document should inspire confidence; TWBC's draft Vision failed fully to achieve that. Where, for example, was any recognition of the spa-town heritage of health, leisure, wealth and water, on which such a vision for the future should be based? A vision should set out positive steps that benefit everyone, but this draft is not sufficiently people-focused and it lacks a degree of empathy.

The 'next steps' approach

There was widespread support for the 'next steps' approach followed in the document, as it linked some specific actions to the aspiration set out. The document would benefit, however, from a linking of a timescale against which the achievement of the 'next steps' should be set.

Status of the Vision

What status will the Vision have in terms of the Borough Council's overall planning processes and obligations?

Spa town heritage

This should be given far greater prominence in the document, as it provides a direct link to the origins of the town, around which other commitments and aspirations can be grouped. It might best be emphasised in the **Foreword (1)**, which currently refers only to our "rich

cultural history of music and the arts". It is equally important to stress that our cultural history is embedded in its landscape, its geology and in its health-giving waters.

Challenges: addressing traffic congestion (2.4)

The strong statement under this section is welcomed and supports the Town Forum's arguments put forward in response to the Draft Transport Strategy.

Tourism (4.1)

Tourism is important to the Borough and it is hoped that the Town Forum will play an active role in the working group established to progress the Destination Management Plan.

Calverley Grounds (4.2 and 7.1.3)

The 'Vision' has selectively highlighted and over-emphasised events and activities in the Grounds, that are not reflected in the management plan for the area. This indicates that the 'Vision' is just saying that it will merely maintain the Grounds with little change and no proper vision for maximising its potential future use.

Cultural and learning hub (5.1.1)

The Town Forum enthusiastically supports this project and is keen to be involved as a partner in its planning.

Public realm improvements (5.1.2)

The words "We have exciting ideas for the public realm in the town..." would have more impact if they were accompanied by some specific detail. We welcome the reference to the 'water features' – in the plural – but they should be linked to the town's spa heritage.

Civic complex (5.1.3)

"As we move into the next five years, the Council will be developing a clear framework for the re-development of this site." Why is this set out across such a long time frame? The 5-year vision for the town is significantly affected by what happens with both the civic site and cinema site. The civic complex needs to be considered in conjunction with the development of the cultural and learning hub.

Supporting growth: Economic development (6)

Tunbridge Wells has performed well during the economic downturn and the draft Vision should set this in context.

Office space (6.1.1)

The Vision makes a commitment to increasing office space in the town. A far greater priority is the establishment of a conference centre in Tunbridge Wells.

Creating opportunities for skills (6.2.1)

How will a medical excellence centre be achieved? Further details on this initiative would be very welcome. What is meant by a centre of medical excellence? Is it a physical entity or an

aspiration to bring a variety of medical and health-promoting services together in the town and borough?

A26 (Southborough and London Road) (6.3.3)

To alleviate traffic congestion in the town centre, "...could mean encroaching on green space in the future but this is the price the borough may have to pay if we consider the flow of traffic important to support the growth of the town". The Town Forum would like to know what this means in detail.

This is linked to some of the consequences of the 'Opportunities' column (2.4), many of which will be likely to generate additional traffic (more housing, business development, the improved cultural and tourism offer, etc). By the end of the 'Vision' period (2019), there should be in place a programme for traffic alleviation, including possible routes avoiding the town centre, that can be taken into account for future town and Borough planning, with KCC and the Department of Transport.

Finally, on traffic congestion, the Town Forum would welcome far greater encouragement to walk and cycle and to use public transport, alongside tackling the traffic congestion issue.

Providing housing (6.4)

An essential pre-requisite is the establishment of a town centre plan, to provide a proper structure within which housing development can take place.

Parks and open spaces (7.1)

There is considerable concern that some important locations, such as Dunorlan Park, the Commons and the town's cemeteries, have been completely omitted.

TWBC's staff (8.4.3)

The comment about staffing signals a negative view about the achievements and modus operandi of current TWBC staff, an unjust commentary on people who are seen by the Town Forum as generally efficient, well-motivated and helpful.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Town Forum welcomes the draft 'Vision' document and the consultation process and the fact that the Leader of the Council has engaged fully with the Town Forum.

13 March 2014

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Localism Prospectus

To: Cabinet

Date: 27 February 2014

Main Portfolio Area: Housing, Health, Wellbeing & Rural Communities

Author of report: Nick Green – Sports, Grants & Communities Officer

Classification: Non-exempt

Ward: All

SUMMARY

Since the introduction of the Localism Act 2011, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, as an 'enabling' council, has been proactive in identifying various services that might benefit from more community involvement and has worked with local organisations and community groups to re-design and deliver them differently. The 'Localism Prospectus' expands on this direction of travel and forms the basis of the Council's 'offer' to town and parish councils, social enterprises and voluntary groups on how they can engage with the Council in improving local services and their local communities through the localism agenda.

The 'Localism Prospectus' (attached at Appendix B) is recommended for endorsement by Cabinet as a means of communicating and promoting the Council's 'offer' to town and parish councils, social enterprises and voluntary groups.

LINK TO STRATEGIC COMPASS

Community:

The Strategic Compass for 2013/14 lists as one of our priority projects: *"Encouraging all parts of the community to become more involved in service design and provision by agreeing a framework for the community right to challenge, encouraging more community involvement in neighbourhood planning and the engagement of Parish & Town Councils"*.

Providing Value:

The Localism Act provides a new impetus for all tiers of local government to seek a more collaborative approach to decision-making and service provision, presenting opportunities for the Council to identify and deliver efficiencies, and deliver value through innovation.

Report status

For decision.

Route to Implementation/Timetable:

The proposals will be adopted following approval by Cabinet.

Portfolio Holder Decisions

I confirm that I have read the report and approve it for publication



Signed: Councillor John Cunningham

Dated: 13 February 2014

BACKGROUND / INTRODUCTION

1. The Localism Act 2011 is intended to devolve power from central government to individuals, communities and local councils. It has introduced legislation giving new rights to communities and individuals who want to help shape their communities and run local services.
2. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has chosen to adopt an 'enabling' approach towards Localism. This is reflected in our Strategic Compass for 2013/14 which lists as one of our priority projects: *"Encouraging all parts of the community to become more involved in service design and provision by agreeing a framework for the community right to challenge, encouraging more community involvement in neighbourhood planning and the engagement of Parish Councils"*.
3. The Council has already been proactive in identifying various services that might benefit from more community involvement and has worked with local organisations and community groups to re-design and deliver them differently. The 'Localism Prospectus' (attached at Appendix B) expands on this direction of travel and forms the basis of the Council's 'offer' to town and parish councils, social enterprises and voluntary groups on how they can engage with the Council in improving local services and their local communities through the localism agenda.

Financial context

4. The ambition to drive forward the localism agenda must also be viewed in the context of the current financial climate. The Council's budget for 2014/15 illustrates that the cumulative impact of central government reductions in funding to local authorities has resulted in a cut to the core government grant of £2.5 million (41 per cent) since 2010. The Council also has

historically low levels of council tax and, combined with our low central government grant, we receive around £2 million less each year than similar neighbouring authorities in Kent. This of course has a huge impact on the ability of the Council to continue to deliver services to the same extent as previously.

5. With inflation driving up costs, the Council has to decide whether to adopt a policy of 'everyone pays' through higher Council Tax or the 'user pays' through higher fees and charges for optional services. Feedback from residents over the years suggests that the 'user pays' principle is the preferred option.
6. Although the Council has repeatedly been assessed by the Audit Commission as delivering very good value for money, we still face severe financial challenges in setting a balanced budget and we anticipate that the budget gap will widen as more functions are localised by the government. The Council has made strenuous efforts and has had to make some tough decisions in order to meet these budgetary challenges through identifying further efficiencies, increased partnership working and reducing staff numbers. This will go some way to balancing the budget, but difficult decisions are still required as the Council will need to reduce service provision in some areas to achieve a sustainable budget position.
7. Further to the decision to localise Council Tax Benefit and mitigate the adverse effects to an extent through Council Tax Support Grant, the government wishes borough councils to pass on an appropriate amount to town and parish councils. The government has not separately identified the amount of money to pass on, but the Borough Council does intend to pass on a proportion to each parish as a discretionary grant payment in 2014/15 – in total £93,243. These amounts vary according to parish, but will range from a minimum of £350 to a maximum of £21,240. In addition, although the amount by which the Council can raise levels of council tax (without recourse to a referendum) is capped by government, this restriction does not apply to local precepting authorities such as town and parish councils.

Partnership working with Town and Parish Councils

8. The Localism Act 2011 has provided a new impetus for all tiers of local government to seek a more collaborative approach to decision-making and service provision. In this Borough, we have formalised arrangements between the Borough Council and Town and Parish Councils through the "Tunbridge Wells Agreement".
9. The agreement recognises the shared roles and responsibilities of delivering excellent services and commits us to working together to identify areas of service delivery that might be devolved to more local levels. The focus will be on those discretionary services that may not otherwise be deliverable, ensuring that communities can continue to benefit from a diverse range of high quality provision.

DECISION REQUIRED

10. All these factors form the background to the Borough Council's 'offer' to town and parish councils as set out in the attached 'Localism Prospectus'. As well as explaining how town and parish councils, social enterprises and voluntary groups can engage more fully in exercising their community rights, the Council has also identified additional services that might be devolved to town and parish councils, and the current cost to the Council of providing those services (attached at Appendix C). The Council is particularly keen to discuss these areas of service provision with the relevant town and parish councils.

11. Cabinet is asked to endorse the 'Localism Prospectus' (attached at Appendix B) as a means of communicating and promoting the Council's 'offer' to town and parish councils, social enterprises and voluntary groups.

CONSULTATION

12. The Government consulted extensively on the Localism agenda with all tiers of local government before the Localism Act 2011 was implemented. The Council has kept Town and Parish Councils informed of the implications of the Act and advised them of the Council's approach and their new community rights through presentations and discussions - chiefly via Town and Parish Council Chairmen's meetings.

CABINET ADVISORY BOARD

13. Communities Cabinet Advisory Board considered this paper on 5 February. Subject to a number of minor alterations, all of which have now been incorporated in the report, they supported the recommendation.

COMMUNICATION

14. The decision will be communicated via the publication of Cabinet papers, and via the Council's website, which already incorporates Community Rights pages. The Localism Prospectus will be published and disseminated directly to town and parish councils. Voluntary Action Within Kent will help disseminate the Prospectus to the voluntary sector and social enterprises.

OPTIONS

15. Having adopted an 'enabling' approach to localism, it is appropriate that the Council should be proactive in working with town and parish councils and the voluntary and community sector to drive forward the localism agenda. The 'Localism Prospectus' is the next step on this path.

CONCLUSIONS

16. Since the introduction of the Localism Act 2011, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council, as an 'enabling' council, has been proactive in identifying various services that might benefit from more community involvement and has worked with local organisations and community groups to re-design and deliver them differently. The 'Localism Prospectus' expands on this direction of travel and forms the basis of the Council's 'offer' to town and parish councils, social enterprises and voluntary groups on how they can engage with the Council in improving local services and their local communities through the localism agenda.

RECOMMENDATION

That Cabinet endorses the 'Localism Prospectus' (as attached at Appendix B) for publication and dissemination to town and parish councils, and the voluntary and community sector.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:

To drive forward the localism agenda and encourage town and parish councils, social enterprises and voluntary groups to further engage in improving local services and their local communities.

Contact Officer: Nick Green - Sports, Grants & Communities Officer - 01892 554108

Name of Director/Head of Service

Kevin Hetherington – Head of Communities & Wellbeing

Background Papers

Cabinet report CAB173/12 (Localism Act - Community Right to Challenge and Community Right to Bid)

APPENDICES TO REPORT

Appendix A: Cross cutting issues

Appendix B: Localism Prospectus

Appendix C: TWBC discretionary services to Town and Parish Councils 2013/14

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Localism Prospectus

CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

LEGAL

Legal

1. The Localism Act was enacted on 15 November 2011, introducing a number of new community rights. Legal services advice may be required in assessing individual expressions of interest under the Right to Challenge and nominations for assets of community value, as and when they arise.

Human Rights Act

2. No issues have been identified in relation to the Human Rights Act.

VALUE FOR MONEY AND USE OF RESOURCES

Finance and other resources, including ICT

3. The Localism Prospectus provides a new impetus for the Borough Council and Town and Parish Councils to seek a more collaborative approach to decision-making and service provision, presenting opportunities for the Council to identify and deliver further efficiencies.

Staffing

4. The additional administrative burdens of implementing the new community rights are being borne by existing staff. There may be future impacts on staffing levels depending on whether any expressions of interest under the Community Right to Challenge lead to procurement exercises and contracting out of services.

Value for Money

5. Local authorities must consider their best value duty in assessing expressions of interest under the Community Right to Challenge, and any expressions of interest that lead to procurement exercises will provide opportunities for the Council to identify and deliver efficiencies, and deliver value.

Risk Management

6. No issues have been identified in relation to risk management.

COMMUNITY

Safer & Stronger Communities

7. The legislation introduced under the Localism Act 2011 gives community groups and town and parish councils in the Borough the opportunity to shape their neighbourhoods, bid to run Council services and to protect community assets they value.

Section 17, Crime and Disorder Act 1998

8. No issues have been identified in relation to Section 17, Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

Environment / Sustainability

9. The legislation introduced under the Localism Act 2011 gives community groups and town and parish councils in the Borough the opportunity to shape their neighbourhoods, bid to run Council services and to protect community assets they value.

Equalities

- 10.

Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty:		
Question	Answer	Explanation / Evidence
a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to disadvantage or discriminate against different groups in the community?	No	
b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have the potential to promote equality of opportunity?	Yes	The new community rights will give relevant bodies the opportunity to shape their neighbourhoods, apply to run local services and protect valued community assets
c. What steps can be taken to mitigate, reduce, avoid or minimise the impacts identified above?		

Health and Wellbeing

11. No issues have been identified in relation to health and wellbeing.

Localism Prospectus

Introduction

The Localism Act 2011 is intended to devolve power from central government to individuals, communities and local councils. It has introduced legislation giving new rights to communities and individuals who want to help shape their communities and run local services.

Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has chosen to adopt an 'enabling' approach towards Localism. This is reflected in our Strategic Compass for 2013/14 which lists as one of our priority projects: *"Encouraging all parts of the community to become more involved in service design and provision by agreeing a framework for the community right to challenge, encouraging more community involvement in neighbourhood planning and the engagement of Parish & Town Councils"*.

The Council is therefore keen to work with town and parish councils, social enterprises and community and voluntary groups who have great ideas on how to improve local services and their local communities. We aim to:

- make it easier for people to protect or take on the running of local amenities that they value and keep them as part of the community
- ensure that social enterprises and community and voluntary groups who believe they can run local services differently and better get an opportunity to bid to do so
- give people more of a say over what happens in their communities

Background

Under the new legislation, we are open to challenge on the majority of services we provide and all appropriate expressions of interest in running these services will be considered. However, the Council is currently committed to various service partnerships and long term contractual commitments that we would not be able to devolve in the short term. For example, we have long-term contracts with external suppliers for waste management and street cleaning, leisure centre management, parks and sports grounds maintenance; and several services such as Licensing, Revenues and Benefits and Legal Services are now delivered in partnership with neighbouring councils. We are currently looking at doing the same for Environmental Health and Planning Support services.

This has enabled us to increase efficiency and reduce costs. Dismantling these arrangements and devolving to a smaller level would prove expensive and time consuming, with no guarantee of improved delivery or lower cost to the Council and tax payer. As existing contracts and partnerships come towards an end, however, we will of course continue to look at how these services can best be provided in the future.

At the same time, Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has already devolved services such as public conveniences to some parishes and many open spaces around the Borough are owned

and managed by town and parish councils. We also work in partnership with other local organisations such as Kent High Weald Partnership and Friends Groups to protect, manage and enhance our community woodlands and urban parks.

But we are always looking to do more. We therefore welcome interest from town and parish councils and community organisations particularly in the services set out in the next section. So come and talk to us about how we can work together within our local communities to improve services for residents across the borough.

Delivering services differently

As an 'enabling' authority, the Council has already identified a number of services that might benefit from more community involvement and we have worked with local organisations and community groups to re-design and deliver them differently:

- As a result of a joint project between the Borough and the Parish Council, Cranbrook and Sissinghurst Parish Council has taken over responsibility for running Cranbrook's three public car parks. The car parks will remain free to use in order to encourage businesses and tourism in the town.
- The Council has worked with rural parishes and Kent County Council to re-design the Streetcruizer youth bus service. It was transferred to a not-for-profit organisation (Weald Rural Activities Project) and is now used to provide youth outreach activities five evenings per week across the borough (from previously only two evenings per week, mainly in Tunbridge Wells).
- For its Sports Awards for 2013, the Council joined forces with the Courier and their annual Sports Awards to create a bigger and more prestigious event.
- A tendering exercise was run for the Council's Summer Activities programme for 2013 – this is now being delivered by a local voluntary and community organisation, and has involved more partner organisations than in previous years. Numbers of participants this year were around 50% higher than previous years.
- The Council is developing an on-line event planning toolkit that community organisations can access and use to manage their own events.
- The Council has worked with the Town Forum and local communities in Tunbridge Wells to establish a Royal Tunbridge Wells in Bloom committee to take the lead in organising the annual competitions. Although the Council will continue to provide some funding, we hope that as a voluntary organisation, the committee will be able to attract funding, grow the competition and encourage even more community involvement.
- Ownership of a number of public toilets has been transferred from the Borough Council to local town and parish councils.
- Rusthall Parish Council has taken on responsibility for managing the Rusthall allotments.
- The Council welcomes and has assisted in the development of Friends Groups for our parks and open spaces such as Dunorlan, Grosvenor & Hilbert Park, Calverley Grounds and Woodbury Park Cemetery. We work closely with the Friends Groups to help improve the parks and encourage community ownership and use.
- The Council is working with partner organisations and the community in Sherwood as part of a national pilot scheme to develop 'Neighbourhood Community Budgets'. The broad aim is

for the community to be supported to help re-design services to meet local needs, with local centres as hubs for joined-up service delivery for all residents.

The Council is keen to do more in some of these areas and also take a fresh look at other services that could be delivered differently. Initially, we would welcome interest from town and parish councils, community groups and social enterprises in helping to run or taking on the running of the following services:

- Car parks
- Maintaining land or other assets
- Community halls and centres
- Public toilets in town and parish council areas
- Street lighting in private roads
- Civic amenity vehicle
- Community events (including Remembrance Sunday)
- Allotments
- Setting up new Friends Groups for parks and cemeteries

There may also be opportunities for town and parish councils to buy in enhanced levels of services where these are not currently provided by the Borough Council. These opportunities are most likely to arise as and when existing contracts and partnerships come towards an end.

Community Right to Challenge

The right to challenge allows voluntary and community groups, charities, parish councils, and local authority staff to bid to run a local authority service where they believe they can do so differently and better. This may be a whole service or part of a service.

Local authorities have to consider and respond to 'expressions of interest' which, if accepted, will trigger a procurement exercise for that service. The challenging body can then participate, alongside others. Tunbridge Wells Borough Council has agreed a framework for the community right to challenge and set a specified period for accepting expressions of interest for relevant services - from 1 April to 31 May each year, commencing 1 April 2013.

No 'expressions of interest' have been submitted by relevant bodies in the period 1 April to 31 May 2013. However, the Council is being proactive in bringing forward discussions with organisations who might be interested in providing services such as those described in the previous section.

Further information:

For more details on the Community Right to Challenge, and how to submit an expression of interest, see the Community Rights section on the Council's website:

www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/community

Community Right to Bid (Assets of Community Value)

The Community Right to Bid gives community groups an opportunity to bid to buy community buildings and facilities that are important to them – for example, a village shop, pub or a local community centre.

Community groups can nominate a facility and the local authority is required to keep a list of these ‘assets of community value’. If an owner of a listed asset wants to sell it they have to notify the local authority. The local authority then, in turn, has to notify any interested parties. If local groups are interested in buying the asset they have 6 months to prepare a bid to buy it before the asset can be sold.

There has been some interest from community groups in the community right to bid and following early nominations the Council has started to compile a list of assets of community value. These so far include:

Ridgeway Centre, Southborough – sports club facility
Royal Oak Public House, Pembury
Royal Oak Public House, Royal Tunbridge Wells
TN2, Sherwood – community centre

Further information:

For more details on the Community Right to Bid, to find out which community assets have been listed, and how to make a nomination for an asset of community value, see the Community Rights section on the Council’s website: www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/community

Asset Management

The Council manages a substantial land and property portfolio. As part of good asset management we constantly review our assets and where non-performing land and properties are identified we will bring these forward for disposal or transfer.

A list of 61 land assets under consideration for disposal is detailed in the Council’s Property Asset Management Plan 2013/14 (Appendix 8). Ward Members, and Parish and Town Councils have been invited to submit viable alternative proposals for the Council to consider before any site is disposed of. Following submissions received, a number of land assets have been transferred to Town and Parish Councils including Paddock Wood, Rusthall and Speldhurst.

The Council will continue to seek opportunities to work with local community groups to improve community facilities. We will also look for opportunities to develop and enhance property assets across the borough, including opportunities to work in partnership with other public and private sector owners.

Further information:

For more details on the Council’s approach to asset management and possible opportunities to take on community assets and facilities, see the Council’s Property Asset Management Plan. You can find this on the Council’s website in the Plans and Strategies section: www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/council/strategies,-plans-and-policies

Neighbourhood Planning

The Localism Act introduced Neighbourhood Planning as a way of passing decision-making to a more local level. This allows local communities the option of producing their own Neighbourhood Plan, Neighbourhood Development Orders, or a Community Right to Build Order for their area.

A Neighbourhood Plan is a document produced by the community, for the community, to shape and guide its future development. It may contain a vision, aims, policies and proposals for providing new development or improving existing facilities and it may also allocate sites for specific development. Such plans need to be developed through cooperative working and extensive community engagement and be in line with the principles set out in Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's own policy documents and National Planning policy. There is a formal procedure for producing these plans and, if adopted after successful examination and local referendum, the plan will form part of the statutory development plan for the area giving it more weight than other forms of Community Led Plans.

Other forms of Community Led Plans such as Parish Plans and Village Design Statements do not constitute Neighbourhood Plans under the Localism Act and have less statutory weight, but are still a very valid form of local community planning.

Currently, the Council is consulting on an application from Paddock Wood Town Council to designate a neighbourhood area, which is the first step towards preparing and adopting a Neighbourhood Plan.

Further information:

For more details on Neighbourhood Plans adopted or under consideration, and how you can develop your own, see the Neighbourhood Planning page on the Planning Policy section of the Council's website: www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk/planning

How we can help

The Council is keen to assist any organisations or community groups who are interested in exercising their community rights or working with the Council to deliver services differently. We have put in place a number of measures to help:

- We have created a new section on our website covering all aspects of Community Rights, including the Right to Challenge, the Right to Bid and Neighbourhood Planning.
- We have produced guidance documents and templates for organisations to use when submitting an expression of interest in running a service or making a nomination for an asset of community value.
- We can signpost organisations to specific advice and guidance and potential sources of funding to help communities exercise their community rights.
- We are happy to discuss and share general information on any Council-run services that organisations might be interested in bidding to provide.
- We are preparing guidance for local communities on the various different types of locally-led planning documents and how we can help out - this is being prepared in collaboration with

other Kent authorities. We are happy to offer general advice on developing a plan, but it is unlikely that the Council will have the resources to assist directly in drawing up the plan.

- We have provided funding to Voluntary Action Within Kent so that they can offer assistance, training and advice to community groups who want to know more about their community rights, such as:
 - advice and guidance on the requirements of setting up a properly constituted body
 - advice on sources of funding
 - developing business plans
 - tendering and procurement exercises
 - preparing 'expressions of interest'
 - networking opportunities with similar groups locally

Contacts

If you have any questions about the new community rights introduced under the Localism Act or would like more information, please visit our website or contact the Council as follows:

'Community Right to Challenge' enquires

Sports, Grants & Communities Officer

Telephone: 01892 554108

E-mail: nick.green@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

'Community Right to Bid' enquiries

Economic Development Team

Telephone: 01892 554229

E-mail: business@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

'Neighbourhood Planning' enquiries

Planning Policy Team

Telephone: 01892 554056

E-mail: planning.policy@tunbridgewells.gov.uk

Celebrating the historic spa waters of Royal Tunbridge Wells

The 'Water in the Wells Working Group' of the Tunbridge Wells Town Forum was formed in 2012. It is working to promote the installation of high quality water features at key locations in and around the town to:

- create landmarks and meeting points;
- provide modern play places;
- refresh the environment;
- emphasise the unique Tunbridge Wells spa brand;
- raise the profile of Tunbridge Wells and thus visitors/tourism.

'Water in the Wells' has established Water in the Wells CIC, a community interest company, to act as the vehicle through which the rejuvenation initiative will be carried out.

A WATERLESS SPA

Tunbridge Wells is a town which owes its name and its very existence to its natural springs. The town is twinned with Wiesbaden in Germany, another spa town. Wiesbaden successfully exploits its spa facilities. Visitors spend their cash on hotels, spa treatments, entertainment and retail. The contrast between Tunbridge Wells and Wiesbaden could not be more stark.

Over many years there has been no vision of the Tunbridge Wells water and health brand. This USP has not been promoted. Consequently, the town has become an almost waterless spa. Unaccountably, Tunbridge Wells is not making use of its unique spa brand to enhance business in the town and the surrounding area.

The spa-town heritage is a bankable commodity. Not the mannered and outmoded image of the spa. But, building on the historic central role that water, health, wealth and leisure have played in the past development of Tunbridge Wells is important. This, however, is not our primary objective.

A vision for the town's prosperous future must sympathetically combine its historic sights with new and innovative ways to enhance the spa experience. Otherwise, Tunbridge Wells is just another dormitory town for London.

OUR VISION

It is the aspiration of 'Water in the Wells' that Royal Tunbridge Wells be rejuvenated as a destination for tourists and shoppers. Visitors, tourists, workers and residents alike value spa towns as places to 'see' and enjoy the waters. A place where the business community, visitors and residents can genuinely enjoy living, relaxing and working.

Agenda Item 7

Water in the Wells CIC

Refreshing health and wealth in Tunbridge Wells - a spa town

That means more visible water features. 'Water in the Wells' aims to place a water feature at key locations in and at all entry points to the town. Not just fountains. But also interactive splash and play features for children – and adults too!

WORKING TOGETHER

The business and civic communities need to work together to rejuvenate the town. Water can again play its role as an important focus of prosperity and civic pride. Visible water features provide a healthy, stimulating environment in which to live, work and play.

So that we can move swiftly from aspiration to achievement, 'Water in the Wells' is looking for the support of all stakeholders. We need people who love to live, visit and work in Tunbridge Wells. We need the support of everyone who treasures its past and believes in actively working for its future.

Our vision is that with a little help from friends, particularly in the business community who have everything to gain, our all-but waterless spa can be revitalised, rejuvenated and commerce will be boosted. Collaborative action from the retailers and other business rate payers of the town, to support public art and play spaces which incorporate water features will enhance the town and increase visitor revenue.

Water in the Wells CIC

Water in the Wells CIC is a community interest company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales with number 8586591. Its Registered Office is at 2 Mayfield Road Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN4 8ES. It is independent of local authority control and is non-political. Its board directors come from a variety of fields, including design, the water industry, advertising and academia. Its company secretary is a Solicitor.

The objects of the Water in the Wells CIC are to carry on activities which benefit the community and in particular (without limitation) to:

- work for the regeneration of the spa-town heritage of Royal Tunbridge Wells by promoting the installation of Water Features;
- design, construct, install, maintain and otherwise operate Water Features; and
- contribute to the design, construction, installation, maintenance or operation of Water Features by others,

for the benefit and enjoyment of the residents of Royal Tunbridge Wells and visitors to it alike.

For more information, please contact Professor Michael Holman at michaeldekholman@gmail.com, or waterinthewells@gmail.com.

Green Infrastructure Plan – Supplementary Planning Document Consultation Draft

Response by the Leisure, Culture and Tourism Working Group of Tunbridge Wells Town Forum

General overview in relation to Royal Tunbridge Wells

1. We welcome this important document, which sets out clearly the national, regional and local context for green infrastructure planning. We also welcome the Council's adoption of the ten guiding principles set out in paras 3.18-3.19. Four of these are particularly relevant to issues of concern to the Town Forum - reflection and enhancing of the area's locally distinctive character, better connections between sites and accessible spaces at strategic and local levels, the desirability of facilitating physically active travel ie on foot or bicycle; and proper resourcing. We support the document's emphasis on close working between Local Planning Authorities "to secure seamless integration across planning boundaries" since so much of the town's hinterland lies in East Sussex.
2. However the document insufficiently reflects the strong development and traffic pressures threatening the historical landscape and green infrastructure of Tunbridge Wells town and Southborough. This is where over half of the Borough's population live and is its administrative and economic hub. These pressures should be addressed by adding a further priority item - preparation of a Green Master Plan for this built up area- to its eight "spatial proposals".
3. Since its earliest years the town landscape of gentle hills and valleys, threaded with green spaces, has made it particularly attractive to both residents and visitors. This has helped local industries and services to thrive, and more recently drawn in a new generation of creative businesses. More could undoubtedly be done to capitalise on its green open spaces, large and small, both to foster general health and well-being and to tap further into them as a resource important for the prosperity of the town as a whole. But they and the links between them also have to be protected and enhanced by robust planning policies and steps taken to keeping the right balance between vehicle traffic and those on foot. Each green area that disappears is lost for ever. It is concerning that the newly published draft of a 5 year vision document for the town includes a statement that in the interest of easing vehicle movement "this could mean encroaching on green space in the future but this is the price the borough may have to pay if we consider the flow of traffic important to support the growth of the town".

Priority areas for specific action

4. Three of the document's eight spatial proposals are directly relevant to Tunbridge Wells town, namely,

Paras 7.28-7.31: Use of redundant railway line formations to develop footpath and cycle links particularly between tourist attractions. The Working Group warmly support this approach. Our recent published report¹ recommends among other things preparation of new booklets about cycle trails and walks on the Commons and better signage;

Paras 7.13- 7.15 and 7.32-7.33: Surface water management. Five streams ultimately flowing into the Medway rise in the sandstone dome where the town stands. This winter's rains have highlighted not just the risks facing properties built on flood plains, but also the impact of activities upriver on what happens downstream. It is timely to reassess in that wider water management context the impact of Tunbridge Wells' major housebuilding programme on former lightly developed sites and large gardens, the reducing numbers of large trees and the runoff from paved- over front gardens and hard standings now overwhelming Victorian street drains.

Paras 6.38 -6.41 and 7.19-7.21: Enhanced links between key tourist attractions. We support this proposal but have several comments to offer.

¹Tunbridge Wells Souvenirs: What people said - October 2013

Enhanced borough-wide green links between tourist attractions.

5. We welcome this concept. Tunbridge Wells town is an important base for many tourists keen to visit the exceptionally large range of historic villages, properties and gardens within easy distance on all sides. Our January report on fostering tourism² noted that excursions to surrounding interesting places have always been part of the "Tunbridge Wells brand". The Destination Management Plan, Cultural Strategy and draft 5 year Vision document all identify tourism as an economic driver for the prosperity of the whole borough.

6. However we have some reservations about how far and fast the proposal as outlined here will progress. The other seven proposals list among their driving forces Kent Wildlife, High Weald, Natural England and the Environment Agency all of whose remits are to conserve and enhance the natural environment. The tourism proposal lacks such focussed and proactive champions.

7. We also note that Map 5 in the consultation document identifies only a handful of important tourist destinations and is limited to the County of Kent rather than "seamless integration across planning boundaries". Our January report listed some 50 local destinations around Tunbridge Wells and no doubt there are others to add to this list. The focus of the proposal also seems to be exclusively on walkers and cyclists. A key early task should be to identify much more comprehensively the network of attractions that could benefit from greener links with the Tunbridge Wells town as a tourist hub. This should ignore administrative boundaries. These, as the Destination Management Report pointed out are irrelevant to tourists.

8. Once clearly mapped, this network would be used to identify a selection of possible "green routes" using scenic back roads designated on associated maps and signage on the Michelin model. These could aim to benefit car tourists as well as cyclists and walkers, enabling those seeking an enjoyable day out to regard the journey there as an interesting and informative part of it rather than something to be endured. Such routes might include provision of small laybys for viewing scenery and wildlife, appropriate information boards, preparation of an accompanying landscape narrative for the whole route, and appropriate low cost traffic management and safety measures such as attention to foliage management on blind corners, and colourful verge plantings of wildflowers. Development of this proposal might be an appropriate task for the new Borough Destination Management Steering group to oversee.

A Green Framework within Tunbridge Wells

9. For the reasons set out in our opening comments, urgent preparation is needed of a green framework document specific to the town area, linked with the sixth of the basic principles in para 3.18 espoused by the Council namely "that green infrastructure must reflect and enhance the area's locally distinctive character" and its emphasis on alternatives to car travel. We would wholly support and endorse an approach that provides for a comprehensive joined up plan of practical action to provide linkages for continuous routes of movement of pedestrians and cyclists between all the key "green areas" of the town. We recommend 5 key actions:

- Developing specific proposals actively demonstrating ways that enhancement and better linkages between green spaces could shift emphasis from a transport/development driven environment within the town towards one that promotes a good sustainable environment with health and wellbeing at the top of the agenda.
- Preparing a framework - a Green Master Plan for the town- to provide an overview of landscape character and quality, ecological and cultural value and ease of accessibility for both vehicles and pedestrians . Much of this information will be readily available from

² *A place of pleasure and resort: Tunbridge Wells tourism and the cultural offer- January 2013*

the Open Spaces Strategy but this plan should go further and identify actions for conserving, enhancing and strengthening/linking green spaces together with a budget estimate and timescale for the work. This would then enable the Council to prioritise actions and also importantly to seek funding or direct implementation via Section 106 or Council Infrastructure Levy from developers.

- Measures to tame fast moving traffic on the main roads that sever the commons and isolate them from the town centre. These might form part of an appropriate linked set of speed limits and traffic slowing measures over a wide area, (one suggestion would be to provide a 20 mph network). They should be associated with the design and implementation of an associated network of safe green routes for pedestrians and cyclists throughout the whole town. Problem spots where physical crossings should be a priority can then be comprehensively identified.
- A plan of action to enhance the “look” of the town’s main access routes and to reduce pollution by careful attention to vistas, green plantings and proximity of roadside buildings. Just as Water in the Wells has suggested that spa history should be prominently presented to arrivals using water features so should its green character be emphasised as people arrive. It was for good reason that Pembury Road with its wide leafy borders used to be called "the Fair Mile"
- Correcting the failure to identify important green public spaces such as Woodbury Park Cemetery and the Borough Cemetery at Hawkenbury. Both are of great landscape and heritage value, with habitats contributing to local biodiversity. The former can be glimpsed on the map on page 15 as the loose end of a potential green link into the town centre area. But it lacks any associated narrative. There is no mention at all of the 23 tranquil acres of the Borough cemetery, whose setting and habitat was in 2010 the subject of a High Weald study commissioned by the Council. The Commons and the routes that link into them also receive only passing mention despite being the central green feature of the town and containing a number of remarkable rock formations

Working with the Friends groups and the Town Forum

10. The past few years have seen a growing number of Friends Groups working with the Council to support conservation and wider public enjoyment of the town’s open spaces. These have in-depth knowledge of the horticultural, ecological and cultural value of their areas, as well as holding data about users and the links to and from the wider community. Their flexible ways of working allow innovative approaches to problems. Using their knowledge and skills more directly could in some cases dispense with the need to engage specialist outside contractors. Appropriate guidance and financial priming would enable practical action by them to realise more of the economic potential of some of the areas concerned in a cost-effective and sensitive way. Some groups have already drawn up management plans for the longer term and undertaken a variety of practical projects such as conservation, habitat creation, interpretation, marketing and facilitating cultural and leisure activities, and educational development allied to the school curriculum. Friends of Dunorlan, the Commons the Grove, Woodbury Park Cemetery and Grosvenor and Hilbert Park have in particular led the way in demonstrating the range of what is possible by way of activities ranging from Family Fun Days and open air concerts to nature conservation and memorial repairs.

11 At a time of severe budget constraints, we suggest the Council should bring all the Friends Groups and the Town Forum more directly and unreservedly into the development of policies on Green Infrastructure at the formative stages especially preparation of planning briefs and thereafter as part of a joint management steering group overseeing progress on relevant activities affecting Tunbridge Wells town. The Town Forum would be happy to participate in such a review group and to add its own contributions.

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Report from the Transport Working Group for the Town Forum meeting 20th March 2014

Since the last Town Forum meeting

1. **The Working Group met** on 12th March and planned its future attendance at the Public Transport Forum and Joint Transportation Board meetings in 2014, with a view to ensure that matters of interest are placed on the Agenda at most meetings.
2. **Joint Transportation Board 20th January:** Peter Perry attended this meeting to hear of progress on Carrs Corner, but as the KCC officer concerned was not in attendance there was no report to the JTB. However, Peter Perry will continue to ensure that suggested road markings to improve pedestrian safety are made at Carrs Corner. Cllr Scholes spoke in support of the letter sent to the JTB chairman by the Transport Working Group asking that all future changes planned for junctions in the Transport Strategy should prioritise pedestrian safety. The JTB chairman, Cllr J Davies instructed officers to take this into account.
3. **Public Transport Forum meeting 26 March 2014.** We will follow up on progress on improved marketing of the hospital bus services, and how the £1 fare for journeys within the town centre can be better publicised as the fact that some 11,000 people used the festive 'Santa train' in December 2013 shows that there is a market for a link between the top and bottom on the town. We will also ask how bus operators will approach the new 'shared space' area at Fiveways.
4. **Parking:** The Working Group is arranging a meeting with officers about the Draft Parking Strategy. We will also be proposing the use of spare parking capacity at the hospital and bus services into the town centre as a basis for a park and ride option to reduce traffic and parking in the town centre.
5. **Draft Vision statement.** The Working Group is gratified that the important issue of town centre congestion is listed as the Vision's first 'challenge', and that the need for additional road capacity is recognised in the statement (6.3.3) 'encroaching on green space in the future ... if we consider the flow of traffic important to support the growth of the town'. However, there are no specifics or timetable so that the proposed growth of the town will likely generate more traffic in the meantime. Working Group members will be responding to the consultation.

Jane Fenwick,

Acting Chair, Transport Working Group
Transport Working Group members: Peter Perry, Lorna Blackmore, Sally Balcon, Stephen Bowser, Katharina Mahler-Bech, George Lawson

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UPDATE ON SITE ALLOCATIONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT (DPD) PROCESS – MARCH 2014

- The Council has processed and entered all the comments it received during the consultation. In total the Council received 1,414 comments from 548 consultees on the draft Site Allocations Development Plan Document.
- These comments are still being assessed by officers and proposed amendments to the DPD will be drafted in the light of the consultation comments and further evidence base which is currently being produced. Several major pieces of evidence are still required prior to completion of the document for the next stage of publication and consultation and these include commissioning a new Retail and Leisure report, currently at draft stage; a transport assessment being undertaken through KCC; and further information on site availability and viability which will be needed towards the end of the analysis.
- At present it is hoped that the final draft documents will be able to commence consideration through the committee stages in June/July but this is subject to all of the required information being available by that time. This timescale would then allow for the next public consultation stage to take place in September/October and submission of the Proposed Plan to the Secretary of State in early 2015.
- The above timescale is also dependent upon current staffing levels and no significant further changes in legislation or case law interpretation of current procedures, which could have a bearing on the timescale envisaged.
- In addition to work on the Site Allocations DPD being progressed, the Council is nearing the adoption stage of the Green Infrastructure Supplementary Planning Document and has commenced early stages of consultation on a Noise and Vibration Supplementary Planning Document.

Michael Doyle
Chairman of the Planning and Development Working Group
March 2014

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ROYAL TUNBRIDGE WELLS TOWN FORUM

20 March 2014

PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE TOWN FORUM'S CONSTITUTION

Introduction

- (1) At the Town Forum's AGM held on 28 November 2013, members might recall that there were no nominations made for the position of Chairman for 2013/14 and only one nomination made for the two Deputy Chairmen posts.
- (2) Accordingly, the existing Chairman, David Wakefield, was appointed to continue to serve as Chairman for a further six month period (up to 28 May 2014) and the Management Committee was tasked with examining what changes could be considered to the Forum's Constitution, in order to encourage more nominations to come forward for these key roles.

The current position

- (3) The Town Forum's Constitution specifies the following regarding the annual election of its Management Committee (section 5):
 - The Chairman must be a named representative of a member residents' association;
 - Of the two Deputy-Chairmen, at least one must be a named representative from a member residents' association;
 - The Chairman and both Deputy Chairmen shall be elected annually and will only be eligible to serve a maximum of two terms in any one office, unless a majority of eligible voting Forum members agree to allow a further term of office. It is not intended that a Deputy Chairman will automatically become Chairman.
 - The Management Committee may co-opt onto the Committee (for up to one year in an advisory and non-voting capacity) up to three members of the Town Forum, whom it considers will help to fulfil the aims of, or have some valuable expertise to contribute to, the Town Forum.

The Management Committee's recommendations

- (4) The principal change recommended is that the Chairman must be a named representative of a member organisation, rather than the narrower field of a residents' association.
- (5) The opportunity has also been taken to propose a few – relatively minor – changes, to reflect how the Management Committee has been working in practice, in preparation for each meeting of the full Forum, as well as bringing the Constitution up to date on some TWBC strategic documents.

Summary of changes

- (6) The recommended changes to the existing Constitution are set out below:

Current wording	Recommended wording
<p>Section 1 – Purpose of the Town Forum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • contributing to the development and implementation of the Sustainable Community Plan as it relates to residents in Royal Tunbridge Wells and working with and informing the Local Strategic Partnership; 	<p>Remove this paragraph, on the basis that these strategic documents are no longer in place.</p>
<p>Section 5 – Management of the Town Forum</p> <p>The Town Forum shall be administered by a Management Committee of three officers elected at the AGM. The officers of the Management Committee shall be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Chair, who must be a named representative of a member residents' association; and • two Deputy Chairs, at least one of whom must be a named representative from a member residents' association. <p>The Management Committee may co-opt onto the Committee (for up to one year in an advisory and non-voting capacity) up to three other members of the Town Forum whom it considers will help to fulfil the aims of, or have some valuable expertise to contribute to, the Town Forum.</p> <p>The Management Committee shall meet at least four times a year and at least three members, including the Chair and one Deputy, must be present in order that a Management Committee meeting may take place.</p>	<p>The Town Forum shall be administered by a Management Committee. This shall be made up of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Three officers elected at the AGM: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Chair, who must be a named representative of a member organisation; and • two Deputy Chairs, at least one of whom must be a named representative from a member residents' association. 2. The chairs of the working groups. 3. In addition, the Management Committee may co-opt onto the Committee (for up to one year in the first instance and in an advisory and non-voting capacity) up to three other members of the Town Forum whom it considers will help to fulfil the aims of, or have some valuable expertise to contribute to, the Town Forum. <p>The Management Committee shall meet before each plenary meeting of the Town Forum and at least three members, including the Chair and one Deputy, must be present in order that a Management Committee meeting may take place.</p>
<p>Section 6 – Duties of the Officers</p> <p>(Duties of the Secretary)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prepare, in consultation with the Chair, the agenda for meetings of the (Management) Committee and the Forum; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • prepare, in consultation with the Management Committee, the agenda for meetings of the (Management) Committee and the Forum;

Section 7 – Meetings of the Town Forum Election process Election of the Management Committee at the AGM ...	Election of officers of the Town Forum at the AGM ...
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Conclusions

- (7) The purpose of this review was to see how the Constitution might be amended, so as to encourage members of the Town Forum to come forward for election as either a Chairman or one of the Deputy Chairman posts. It is hoped that the change set out above, under Section 5, will achieve that aim.
- (8) The opportunity has also been taken to propose a number of minor alterations to the Constitution, to reflect the working arrangements of the Management Committee, as it prepares for each meeting of the Town Forum.

Extraordinary General Meeting

- (9) The Town Forum is now asked to approve the recommended changes, in principle. As the Constitution states that “changes to the Constitution can only be made at an AGM or EGM (Extraordinary General Meeting) and must be agreed by at least two thirds of those eligible representatives present”, this item will need to be agreed formally at an EGM, notice of which has to be provided at least 14 days in advance.
- (10) It is therefore suggested that an EGM section of the agenda be included for the next scheduled meeting of the Town Forum, which takes place on Thursday 29 May. It will then be for that 29 May meeting to consider and decide whether to agree to these recommended changes.

RECOMMENDED –

- (1) That the schedule of proposed amendments to the Constitution, as set out above, be approved in principle; and
- (2) That the Town Forum consider this issue on 29 May, under an ‘extraordinary general meeting’ section of the agenda that same evening, where the formal decision can be taken.

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Extract from latest version of 'Notice of Intent to Make Key Decisions', summarising issues on which TWBC will be consulting in 2013/14 (including existing consultations*) or other matters of general interest.

Cabinet:

Advisory Board:

Lead Officer:

(a) Leader of the Council: David Jukes

*Draft 'Vision'

10 April 2014

Finance and Governance -
19 March

(b) Finance and Governance Portfolio-holder: Councillor James Scholes

No specific issues to highlight in this immediate period

(c) Tourism, Leisure and Economic Development Portfolio Holder: Councillor Jane March

Destination Management Plan

10 April 2014

(Already been to
Advisory Board)

David Candlin

Cultural Strategy (final)

10 April 2014

(Already been to
Advisory Board)

Jo Wiltcher

(d) Planning & Transportation Portfolio Holder: Councillor Alan McDermott

(Draft) Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) – preliminary
charging schedule

26 June 2014

Planning & Transportation James Freeman
23 June 2014

Borough Transportation Strategy – to agree final document	15 May 2014	Planning & Transportation, David Candlin 17 April
Tunbridge Wells Parking Strategy – start of consultation	15 May 2014	Planning & Transportation, Kevin Hetherington 17 April

(e) Housing, Health, Wellbeing & Rural Communities Portfolio Holder: Councillor John Cunningham

No specific issues to highlight in this immediate period

(f) Joint Portfolio-holders: (i) Leader of the Council and (ii) Finance and Governance: David Jukes and James Scholes

John Street car park - proposals for redevelopment	15 May 2014	Finance & Governance 22 April 2014	David Candlin
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Kevin Hetherington: Head of Communities and Wellbeing
James Freeman: Head of Planning
Lee Colyer: Head of Finance and Governance

David Candlin: Head of Economic Development
Jo Wiltcher: Museum Manager
Holly Goring: Policy, Performance and Partnerships Manager