

## **Cabinet**

**11 March 2025**

### **Town Centres Board – Revised Terms of Reference**

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Harinder Mahil, Portfolio Holder for Economic and Social Regeneration and Inward Investment

Report from: Adam Bryan, Director of Place

Author: Anne Knight, Head of Economic Development, Innovation and Town Centres

#### **Summary**

This report requests Cabinet to revise the Terms of Reference for the Town Centres Board (TCB) and to declassify the TCB as a Cabinet Advisory Group.

#### **1. Recommendations**

- 1.1. The Cabinet is asked to consider and approve a revised Terms of Reference for the Town Centres Board, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report.
- 1.2. The Cabinet is asked to declassify the Town Centres Board as a Cabinet Advisory Group.

#### **2. Suggested reasons for decisions**

- 2.1. To update the Town Centres Board Terms of Reference to refine the membership of the group to ensure comprehensive representation at senior officer level, clarify the protocol for deputisation and to update the executive support arrangements for the Board. Declassification as a Cabinet Advisory Group will assist to reduce associated administrative processes.

#### **3. Budget and policy framework**

- 3.1. The decision to be taken by the Cabinet is within the Council's policy and budget framework, including the Council Plan.

#### **4. Background**

- 4.1. A revised Town Centres Board Terms of Reference is proposed at Appendix 1 to the report. This refines the membership of the group to ensure comprehensive representation at senior officer level and clarifies the protocol

for deputisation. It also updates the executive support arrangements for the Board. The revisions are highlighted in **bold**.

- 4.2. The revised Terms of Reference have been discussed and supported at the Town Centres Board on 26 November 2024 and recommended for submission to Cabinet for agreement.

## 5. Options

- 5.1. The options for the Cabinet are as follows:

- a) approve the proposed revised Terms of Reference (this will ensure comprehensive representation at senior officer level and clarifies the protocol for deputisation. It also updates the executive support arrangements for the Board) and declassification of the Board as a Cabinet Advisory Group allows for reduced bureaucracy.
- b) reject the proposed revised Terms of Reference and retain existing (this does not ensure comprehensive representation at senior officer level; clarify the protocol for deputisations or update the executive support arrangements) and approve or reject reclassification of the Board.
- c) reject and request further amendments to the Terms of Reference (this will significantly delay the implementation of a revised Terms of Reference, and the Town Centres Board will continue to operate within the existing Terms of Reference until another revised version is presented to Cabinet and approved) and approve or reject reclassification of the Board.
- d) approve subject to requesting further amendments to the Terms of Reference (this will somewhat delay the Town Centres Board implementing the new Terms of Reference) and approve or reject reclassification of the Board.

## 6. Advice and analysis

- 6.1. The recommendation is for the Cabinet to approve option 'a' as outlined in section 5, which is to approve the proposed revised Terms of Reference. This will ensure comprehensive representation at senior officer level and clarify the protocol for deputisation. It will also update and strengthen the executive support arrangements for the Board. It will enable implementation of the revised Terms of Reference from immediate effect.
- 6.2. The Cabinet is also requested to declassify the TCB as a Cabinet Advisory Group in order to streamline governance processes.

## 7. Risk management

Risk	Description	Action to avoid or mitigate risk	Risk rating
Cabinet does not approve revised Terms of Reference for TC Board	Risk of TC Board not having comprehensive representation at senior officer level; a protocol for deputization and updated/strengthened executive support.	Cabinet to approve revised Terms of Reference for Town Centres Board	CIV
Cabinet does not approve reclassification of the Board from Cabinet Advisory Group to an officer Board	In order to streamline governance processes it is recommended that the Town Centre Board is reclassified.	Cabinet to approve reclassification of Board	CIV

Likelihood	Impact:
A Very likely B Likely C Unlikely D Rare	I Catastrophic II Major III Moderate IV Minor

## 8. Consultation

8.1. The revised Terms of Reference have been discussed and supported at the Town Centres Board on 26 November 2024 and recommended for submission to Cabinet for agreement. Declassification of the TCB is a matter within the gift of Cabinet.

## 9. Climate change implications

9.1. There are no known negative climate change/carbon emission implications arising from the report.

## 10. Financial implications

10.1. There are no financial implications directly arising from the recommendation set out in the report.

## 11. Legal implications

11.1. There are no legal implications directly arising from the recommendations set out in the report.

## Lead officer contact

Anne Knight, Head of Economic Development, Innovation and Town Centres,  
[anne.knight@medway.gov.uk](mailto:anne.knight@medway.gov.uk)

## Appendices

Appendix 1- Proposed revised Town Centres Board: Terms of Reference

## Background papers

None

## **Proposed revised Town Centres Board: Terms of Reference**

### **1 Purpose of Group**

The Town Centres Board will function as an advisory board to enable town centres regeneration, diversification, and growth in particular shaping Medway's future Town Centre Strategy, Action Plan, associated investment priorities and interventions. The Town Centres Board will seek to enable and support the implementation of the Town Centres Strategy and Action Plan in line with funding streams and appropriate mechanisms. It will be supported by officers across the Council, particularly the Town Centres, Economic Development and Regeneration teams. It will be chaired by the Leader of the Council.

The objectives of the Town Centres Board are to:

- Advise and shape the development of Medway's Town Centres Strategy and associated Action Plans
- Identify and review investment opportunities and advise which should be pursued
- Support and guide the development of external funding bids to maximise investment for Medway's town centres
- Advise on the prioritisation of target interventions/projects in the short, medium, and long-term across Medway's town centres
- Champion the internal alignment of multi-disciplinary staff expertise and resource to realise the Town Centres Strategy and Action Plans
- Champion the engagement of key external stakeholders and work in partnership to realise the delivery of the Town Centres Strategy
- Review the progress of the Town Centres Strategy and Action Plans and associated programmes and projects, providing advice and promoting success

### **2 Decision-Making Processes**

The Town Centres Board is not a decision-making body, therefore, It may make recommendations, which will either be implemented under existing Medway Council officer delegations or referred for decision by the Council, Leader and Cabinet or other Committees as appropriate, and in accordance with legal and constitutional provisions.

Medway Council will make decisions in its role as promotor of economic growth and as a corporate parent, however in some circumstances, recommendations will also need to be considered and agreed by other bodies and Government agencies. All matters coming before the Board shall be decided by a majority of the Board present and voting thereon at the meeting. In the case of an equality of votes, the chairperson or person presiding shall have a second or casting vote.

### 3 Membership

The Medway Town Centres Board will consist of representatives with strategic interest in Medway's town centres as follows:

- 3 Cabinet Members
- Nominated Ward Members from the 5 town centres
- **Assistant Director for Regeneration, with a Service Manager level officer deputising for them in their absence**
- **Assistant Director for Front Line Services, with a Service Manager level officer deputising for them in their absence**
- **Assistant Director for Culture and Community, with a Service Manager level officer deputising for them in their absence**
- Service Manager for Economic Development and Town Centres
- Town Centres Managers for Chatham, Gillingham, Rainham, Strood and Rochester

The Chair or a deputy representative of each Town Centre Forum will be invited once a year to attend the Town Centre Board.

### 4 Administration

- The Town Centres Board will be chaired by the Leader of Medway Council.
- Regeneration Team officers will be responsible for preparing and agreeing the agenda and papers.
- **The EA/PA to the Assistant Director for Regeneration will set meeting dates in consultation with the office of the Leader and Town Centres Team**
- **RCE Divisional Support will be responsible for taking minutes of the meeting.**
- Agendas will be circulated at least one week prior to the Town Centres Board meeting, following a template report format. The Town Centres Board will aim to meet 3 or 4 times per annum.