

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 12 JULY 2022

Present: Councillors Bartlett, Brindle, Conyard, Fort, McKenna (Chairman), Newton, Rose, R Webb and Young

Lead Members Present: Leader of the Council, Councillor David Burton
Lead Member for Housing and Health, Councillor Simon Webb

Also Present: Councillor D Wilkinson

19. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received by Councillor Khadka.

20. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor Conyard was present as a Substitute Member for Councillor Khadka.

21. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman stated that he wished to put forward an urgent Member Agenda Item Request concerning the provision of CCTV in the Parkwood area. The item would be presented after Item 12 – Forward Plan relating to the Committee’s Terms of Reference.

22. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor D Wilkinson was in attendance for the urgent item concerning the provision of CCTV in the Parkwood Area.

23. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members and Officers.

24. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

25. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public unless any Member of the Committee wished to refer to Item 15 – Exempt Appendix 2 to Item 14 –

Food Service Plan 2022-23, in which case the Committee would enter into closed session due to the possible disclosure of exempt information.

26. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 JUNE 2022

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 14 June 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed.

27. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

28. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS

There were no questions from Local Residents.

29. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

30. FORWARD PLAN RELATING TO THE COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan relating to the Committee's Terms of Reference be noted.

31. URGENT ITEM - CCTV IN THE PARKWOOD AREA

The Chairman introduced the item which concerned the feasibility and provision of CCTV in the Parkwood Area following recent criminal activity and the resulting increased safety concerns of local residents. Specific reference was made to Somner Walk.

Support was expressed for the provision of CCTV within the Parkwood area, with a request made for further information to be provided to the Executive on the matter. The relevant portfolio belonged to Councillor Parfitt-Reid, Lead Member for Communities and Engagement.

RESOLVED: That a request be made for an officer's report be sent straight to the Executive in regards to the feasibility of extra CCTV in Parkwood.

32. UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND, LOCAL INVESTMENT PLAN

The Leader of the Council introduced the report and stated that the Council had been awarded £1.2 million through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. The Local Investment Plan (LIP) associated with the funding had to be submitted by the 1 August 2022 and the short-listed proposals were contained within appendix four to the report. The spending allocation across the next three years was outlined.

The Leader of the Council stated that the proposals were intended to positively enhance the Town Centre, attracting local residents and visitors

alongside the ambition to have a consistent events calendar. Increased lighting would improve the safety and security of the area, alongside greening that could be achieved in part through volunteer support. The links between the town centre and Lockmeadow complex would be improved.

The local Members of Parliament supported the proposals contained within the LIP.

In response to questions, the Leader of the Council highlighted the available transport options into the town centre alongside the easily accessible and high volume of Council owned car parks for visitors. It was stated that the available transport to and accessibility of the area would be included within the Council's Town Centre Strategy. The positive steps taken to address safety in the town centre were outlined.

The Committee expressed support for the proposed actions contained within the LIP.

RESOLVED: That the Leader of the Council be recommended to:

1. Approve the planned projects and actions as contained within Appendix four to the report, as the Local Investment Plan; and
2. Give delegated responsibility to the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance to submit the plan to government by 1 August 2022.

33. FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2022 - 2023

The Lead Member for Housing and Health introduced the report on behalf of the Lead Member for Environmental Services, who was unable to attend due to a bereavement.

The Lead Member for Housing and Health stated that the Council was required to produce a Food Service Plan, with the 2022-23 version covering a one-year period only as the Food standards Agency (FSA) intended to implement changes to the food enforcement system in 2023-24. The decision would be taken urgently as the Council were required to have a plan in place by 15 July 2022.

An update was provided on the types of enforcement action taken by the Council across 2021-22, with reference made to work undertaken in helping businesses re-open following the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown periods.

The Lead Member for Housing and Health drew specific attention to the numerous vacancies within the team, against the national shortage of food competent officers. The creation of border inspection authorities at Ashford and Dover had exacerbated the shortages. The steps taken to recruit to the service were outlined, including the additional work taken on by existing staff and the potential use of apprenticeships.

The Committee expressed their thanks to the officers for their hard work, particularly in light of the numerous staff vacancies.

RESOLVED: That the Lead Member for Housing and Health be recommended to approve the Food Service Plan 2022-23 attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

34. EXEMPT APPENDIX 2 TO ITEM 14 - FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2022-23

RESOLVED: That the item be considered alongside Item 14 – Food Service Plan 2022-23.

35. EXPRESSION OF CONDOLENCES

The Committee wished to extend their condolences to the Lead Member for Environmental Services, Councillor Round, following a family bereavement.

36. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.03 p.m.