

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**MINUTES OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENT TASK
AND FINISH SCRUTINY PANEL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY
20 MARCH 2012**

PRESENT: Councillor Burton (Chairman)
Councillors Ash, English, Paine, Springett and
Mrs Wilson

69. The Committee to consider whether all items on the agenda should be web-cast.

Resolved: That all items on the agenda be webcast.

70. Apologies.

Apologies were received from Councillors Harwood and Fitzgerald.

71. Notification of Substitute Members

There were no Substitute Members.

72. Notification of Visiting Members

There were no visiting members.

73. Disclosures by Members and Officers

There were no disclosures.

74. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information.

Resolved: That all items be taken in public as proposed.

75. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 21 February 2012

Resolved: That subject to a spelling amendment on Item 68 Future work Programme, the minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2012 be agreed as a correct record of the meeting and duly signed by the Chairman.

76. Core Strategy Progress Update

The Chairman informed the Committee that due to unforeseen circumstances that the Interim Head of Core Strategy Development; Flo Churchill was unable to attend the meeting. However; she had prepared a brief written update on the Core Strategy (Appendix A).

A Member informed the Committee that one of the issues that arose from the Core Strategy Members Working Group was that there was too narrow a focus on the Local Development Framework to the exclusion of everything else. The Committee were told that this did not make the Core Strategy any less important but that it was vital that parallel work was undertaken on special areas such as housing and employment to ensure that the Council was in the best possible position.

The Panel noted that advice was being sought from Council on the inclusion of Strategic Sites and expressed their interest in the outcome. It was suggested that if the locations of strategic sites remained unknown that it is difficult obtain accurate advice or identify addition parallel work streams.

Members were reminded that there was an all Member workshop 21st March on the representations that had been received on the Core Strategy. The Panel noted that workshop would allow wider issues to be raised

The Panel noted that the new regulations governing Neighbourhood Planning were due to come into force on 6 April 2012 and that a paper was due to Cabinet Away Day in March. The Panel concurred that this would expand their understanding and requested that an item on the new regulations.

A Member queried if the previous recommendation of the Panel on the size of Gypsy and Traveller sites had been taken into consideration when the decision was made. The Performance & Scrutiny Officer informed the Panel that the outcome was due back to Panel at the next meeting.

Resolved:

a) That an item on the new Neighbourhood Planning regulations was to be requested.

77. Integrated Transport Strategy Progress Update

The Chair welcomed Jonathan Morris, Principal Transport Planning Officer to the meeting.

Mr Morris informed the Panel that the research and data collection was progressing well and it was expected that this stage would be completed by the end of the following week. It was explained to the Panel that the deadline had slipped by a week, due to issues with the transport modelling. The Panel noted that the cost benefit analysis on the scenarios was due to be completed next week also.

Mr Morris told the Panel that Business Community workshop had been held with partners including Town Centre Management. He expressed disappointment with the turnout but stated despite this the workshop had been constructive and in particular it has informed the Economic Impact Assessment on local businesses undertaken by JMP. The minutes of this

meeting have been circulated. The panel questioned how with a low turnout, particularly from the rural area, that so few could have such a large influence.

Members asked if there were any early indications from the traffic modelling work. Mr Morris responded that the data was still being checked and that he was reluctant to give any indication at this stage as there was still data outstanding. Mr Morris added that there had been some unexpected results hence the need for additional data verification and extension in timeframe.

The Panel queried 'unexpected results', Mr Morris informed them that some of the data had initially thrown up journeys that seemed unlikely for example journeys originating from Birmingham. The Panel questioned if their previous concerns around the definition of destination and route data had been taken on board. Mr Morris informed them that it had and that for the purpose of accurately identifying journey origin and destination Maidstone had been divided in 40 zones.

The Panel expressed their concern regarding the timeframes and reminded Mr Morris of the need for Member's to have their input. Mr Morris agreed that a date was needed to discuss the conclusions from the analysis to move forward, Mr Morris stated that this was a decision for Sue Whiteside, Spatial Policy Team Leader.

The Panel questioned the credibility of the data considering the unexpected results. Mr Morris agreed that the outputs of the data analysis would only be as good as the initial data input. He went on to reassure the panel that the consultants engaged, Jacobs, JMP and himself were all experts in this area and that the model which had been used was developed by Jacobs and was being used by KCC and throughout Kent.

A Member questioned where the baseline, detailed data came from. Mr Morris informed the panel that it was gathered from a variety of sources including Kent Highways, data from the AMPR system and survey data.

The Panel noted that there were three options currently being discussed and queried why it appeared from the titles of the scenarios that the focus of two out of the three was on Park and Ride. Mr Morris explained to the Panel that although the titles did suggest this each scenario had wider implications that would reduce congestion. For example bus lanes would not be solely used by Park and Ride service but also general buses and could also double up as car sharing lanes. The panel noted that Maidstone had some of the lowest vehicle occupancy rates in the country.

It was queried by the Panel where the funding would come from and if funding viability was being taken into consideration. Mr Morris told the panel that this would form part of the viability testing for the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and that the cost benefit analysis would allow prioritisation to take place prior to decisions being made. The Panel concluded that the cost benefit analysis should be taken

into account ongoing affordability of the scenarios. Mr Morris confirmed this would be the case.

A Member highlighted that although on street parking was discussed at the Business transport Workshop that this was not reflected in the minutes of the meeting. Member's agreed that the minutes should be amended to reflect this. The Panel discussed the Member workshops and commented that although these were not formal meetings they believed that the outputs were being used as evidence and were informing the development of the Integrated Transport Strategy. The Panel recommended that the recording of workshops be looked into as there was currently no formal way of agreeing or correcting records from these meetings.

A Member stressed the need for the timetable and procedures to be in the right order so that the Parking Standards can be fed through into the Parking Strategy and in turn the Integrated Transport Strategy so that issues arising out of the Parking Standards can be addressed.

It was resolved that:

- a) The minutes of the Business Transport Workshop be amended to reflect the discussions around on street car parking in the town centre; and
- b) Procedures for the recording and minuting of workshops be looked into as there was currently no formal way of agreeing or correcting records from these meetings.

78. Future Work Programme

The Performance and Scrutiny Officer informed the Panel that the next meeting would be the last of year. The Officer confirmed that the relevant Officers had been contacted regarding an update on the Water Cycle Strategy.

The Panel concluded that the outstanding data for the Integrated Transport Strategy was due to be received prior to the next meeting and requested a written update from the Principal Transport Officer for April's meeting.

Resolved that:

- a) The Principal Transport officer be asked to provide a written update for the next meeting of the Task & Finish Panel in April.