

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, MAIDSTONE ON 24 APRIL 2013

Present: Councillor Nelson-Gracie (The Mayor) and Councillors Barned, Beerling, Black, Mrs Blackmore, Brindle, Burton, Butler, Chittenden, Collins, Cox, Cuming, Daley, Garland, Mrs Gibson, Mrs Gooch, Greer, Mrs Grigg, Mrs Hinder, Hogg, Hotson, Mrs Joy, Lusty, Mrs Mannering, McKay, McLoughlin, Moriarty, B Mortimer, Moss, Munford, Naghi, Newton, Paine, Parvin, Mrs Parvin, Paterson, Pickett, Mrs Ring, Mrs Robertson, Ross, Springett, Mrs Stockell, Thick, Vizzard, Warner, de Wiggondene, J.A. Wilson, Mrs Wilson and Yates

119. MINUTE'S SILENCE

The Council stood in silence for one minute in memory of Baroness Thatcher who died on 8 April 2013.

120. PRAYERS

Prayers were said by the Reverend Canon Chris Morgan-Jones.

121. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Ash, English, Harwood, D Mortimer, Sams and Mrs Watson.

122. DISPENSATIONS

There were no applications for dispensations.

123. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

124. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

125. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the items on the agenda be taken in public as proposed.

126. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD ON 27 FEBRUARY 2013

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Borough Council held on 27 February 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed.

127. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no announcements.

128. PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

129. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Question to the Leader of the Council

Mr Fergus Wilson asked the following question of the Leader of the Council:-

"Is Maidstone Borough Council intending to erect a statue to Baroness Thatcher in the town centre?"

"If not I would propose to Maidstone Borough Council that it does so".

The Leader of the Council responded to the question.

Councillor Mrs Wilson, the Leader of the Opposition, and Councillor Mrs Gooch, the Leader of the Independent Group, then responded to the question.

Mr Wilson asked the following supplementary question of the Leader of the Council:-

"To ascertain whether members of the public in the Borough of Maidstone would be in favour of the erection of a statue to Baroness Thatcher in the town centre, would it be possible to run a referendum in tandem with the local elections in May next year?"

The Leader of the Council responded to the question.

Councillor Mrs Wilson, the Leader of the Opposition, and Councillor Mrs Gooch, the Leader of the Independent Group, then responded to the question.

To listen to the responses to these questions, please follow this link:-

<http://webcasts.umcdn.com/mbc036/interface>

130. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

There were no questions from Members of the Council.

131. CURRENT ISSUES - REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL,
RESPONSE OF THE GROUP LEADERS AND QUESTIONS FROM COUNCIL
MEMBERS

The Leader of the Council submitted his report on current issues.

After the Leader of the Council had submitted his report, Councillor Mrs Wilson, the Leader of the Opposition, and Councillor Mrs Gooch, the Leader of the Independent Group, responded to the issues raised.

A number of Members asked questions of the Leader of the Council on the issues raised in his speech.

132. MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

It was moved by Councillor Garland, seconded by Councillor Paine, that the recommendation of the Cabinet relating to the revocation of the moratorium on the release of greenfield housing sites allocated in the Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan 2000 be approved.

RESOLVED: That the moratorium on the release of greenfield housing sites allocated in the Maidstone Borough-Wide Local Plan 2000 be revoked because the reasons for the moratorium no longer apply.

133. CABINET AND ENHANCED SCRUTINY MODEL

It was moved by Councillor Mrs Blackmore, seconded by Councillor Mrs Gooch, that the recommendations of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee relating to the implementation of the Cabinet with Enhanced Scrutiny model of governance be approved subject to the following amendments:-

Recommendation a)

Add the words "As of the Annual Council Meeting 2013", before the word "Option" to read:-

"As of the Annual Council Meeting 2013, Option B be agreed with four Overview and Scrutiny Committees with nine Members each, meeting on a calendar monthly cycle for the 2013/14 Municipal Year. Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee to monitor and review this."

Recommendation b)

Delete the word "Cabinet" and insert the words "The Leader" to read:-

"The Leader should revisit the Cabinet portfolios to avoid overlap, for example Cobtree and Maidstone Leisure Centre between the Economic and

Commercial Development and Community and Leisure Services portfolios.”

Recommendation w)

Add the words “The Chief Executive, as part of the review of structure, be recommended to agree that” before the word “Scrutiny” to read:-

“The Chief Executive, as part of the review of structure, be recommended to agree that Scrutiny remain with Policy because there is a natural synergy between the two services and closer matching of skills than in Democratic Services.”

Recommendation x)

Add the words “if appropriate” after the word “and” to read:-

“Any amendments to the Constitution necessitated by the approval of recommendations a-w are drafted by the appropriate Officers and, if appropriate, reported back to the next meeting of Council for approval.”

With the agreement of the mover and the seconder and the remainder of the Council, recommendation **s)** relating to pre-meetings was deleted from the motion and the remaining recommendations were reordered alphabetically.

RESOLVED: That:-

- a) As of the Annual Council Meeting 2013, Option B be agreed with four Overview and Scrutiny Committees with nine Members each, meeting on a calendar monthly cycle for the 2013/14 Municipal Year. Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee to monitor and review this.
- b) The Leader should revisit the Cabinet portfolios to avoid overlap, for example Cobtree and Maidstone Leisure Centre between the Economic and Commercial Development and Community and Leisure Services portfolios.
- c) The Spatial Planning Strategy Advisory Group and the Housing Consultative Board be subsumed into Scrutiny to avoid duplication and strengthen the scrutiny process.
- d) A phased approach be taken to the induction for new Members.
- e) Information supplied to new Members should be accessible including contact details for key staff and information on the services provided by the Council and who to contact regarding those services and alignment to Cabinet Portfolios.
- f) A glossary of acronyms and terminology and a Frequently Asked Questions list be made available to all Members using the expertise of current Members to identify common areas.

- g) The development needs for Scrutiny and an appropriate programme be developed by the Overview and Scrutiny Chairmen and the Scrutiny Team. This could include an annual event with other Councils and use of Parliamentary Outreach support.
- h) All new Members should attend a Scrutiny Committee meeting as part of the induction process.
- i) Mentoring of Members be encouraged.
- j) Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee should identify development needs at the beginning of the year and then on a quarterly basis via the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.
- k) Cabinet Members should attend Committee meetings to present completed Scrutiny Committee Recommendation Action Improvement Plans and the action that will be taken following recommendations.
- l) The Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee should meet quarterly and monitor Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommendations as part of its role.
- m) Cabinet Member decision reports be amended so they contain contact details for the Cabinet Member and Officer.
- n) Cabinet Members should make themselves available to discuss forthcoming decisions with Members.
- o) The decision notice for Cabinet Member decisions should contain a section summarising any views put forward by other Members on the decision and how these have been taken into account in the decision.
- p) Overview and Scrutiny Chairmen be encouraged to include Visiting Members at Committee meetings.
- q) Cabinet Members should seek to involve Scrutiny pre-decision wherever possible.
- r) Party/Group Leaders should continue to improve the appointment process to Overview and Scrutiny Committees to encourage the right Members.
- s) Cabinet Members should attend Scrutiny at three points during the year to discuss their portfolio and progress made.
- t) Each Overview and Scrutiny Committee should meet individually to set its work programme with the relevant Cabinet Members invited to give their forward plan for the year ahead.
- u) The Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee should meet following the individual Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings to review the

work programmes to address overlap and identify opportunities for joint working.

- v) The Chief Executive, as part of the review of structure, be recommended to agree that Scrutiny remain with Policy because there is a natural synergy between the two services and closer matching of skills than in Democratic Services.
- w) Any amendments to the Constitution necessitated by the approval of recommendations a-v be drafted by the appropriate Officers and, if appropriate, reported back to the next meeting of Council for approval.

134. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.45 p.m.