

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE REGENERATION & ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 23 JULY 2012**

**PRESENT:**

Councillors Beerling, Black, Burton (Chair), Cox,  
Cuming, Newton, Paterson and Stockell

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

**It was resolved that** all items be webcast.

**11. Apologies.**

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs Springett.

**12. Notification of Substitute Members.**

Councillor Mrs Stockell substituted for Councillor Mrs Springett.

**13. Notification of Visiting Members.**

Councillors Ash, Chittenden, Daley, De Wiggondene, English, Garland, Gooch, Greer, Lusty, Mortimer D, Paine, Ring, Robertson, Mrs Robertson, Vizzard and Mrs Wilson were present as Visiting Members with interest in:

Item 8 Core Strategy: Public Participation;  
Item 9 Core Strategy: Strategic Development Sites;  
Item 10: Draft Integrated Transport Strategy; and  
Item 11: Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

**14. Disclosures by Members and Officers:**

Councillors Burton and Newton declared a personal interest in item 9 by virtue of their residency in the local area.

The Committee all made disclosures of lobbying in relation to:

Item 8 – Core strategy: Public Participation;  
Item 9 – Core Strategy: Strategic Development Site Allocations;  
Item 10 – Draft Integrated Transport Strategy; and  
Item 11 – Infrastructure Delivery Plan Update.

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

It was agreed to take all items in public as proposed.

## **16. Minutes of the meeting held on 28 May 2012**

It was resolved that the minutes of the 28 May 2012 were deferred until the meeting on 31 July 2012.

## **17. Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for Core Strategy Public Participation Key Issues and Responses**

Following an overview of the report from the Head of Planning, Rob Jarman and Principal Planning Officer, Sarah Anderton in response to questions on the deliverability of the Core Strategy, it was explained to Members that Maidstone Council needs to prioritise what they expect developers to deliver.

Members asked for clarification over consultation with neighbouring districts and were informed that at least one meeting had been held with officers from Tonbridge and Malling. It was noted by the Committee that the Duty to Cooperate was new for all authorities but felt that further consultation should be undertaken with neighbouring districts.

Both Members from the Committee and Visiting Members raised concerns over development at Junction 8 Woodcut Farm, some felt that there was little evidence to support development at this site and that any development would impact on the North Downs area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. There was also concern on how this would impact on the Council's reputation considering the amount of resources that went into the Kent International Gateway (KIG) appeal and the development may detract from regeneration in the Town Centre. It was explained to the Committee that the Woodcut Farm was the preferred site as the representations received showed schemes working with the existing topography and had direct access from Ashford road so would require less supporting infrastructure. In relation to detracting from the Town Centre the Committee was assured that if a planning application came forward the applicant and Officers would need to show that there was nothing suitable in the Town Centre or allocated in the Strategy. It was noted that other uses for the site such as tourism had been looked into but there was no market for this at present and that the largest building that would be allowed on the site was half the size of those that were proposed for KIG. The Committee recommended the rewording of recommendation two of the report.

### **It was resolved that:**

1. That consultation with neighbouring districts be undertaken as per the legislation
2. That recommendation 2 of the public participation report be amended to say:  
Reject Junction 8 of the M20 motorway as a Strategic Development Site location for industrial and warehouse development, together with premium office development and

do not allocate land for development in the Core Strategy to be guided by an approved development brief.

**18. Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for Core Strategy Strategic Development Site Allocations**

Following an overview of the Report from the Head of Planning, Rob Jarman and Principal Planning Officer, Sarah Anderton, Members asked if the current agenda was still realistic considering the changes that had been highlighted by the Officers who responded that overall nothing fundamental had changed and that the agenda was still achievable.

The Committee queried the change from providing estimated jobs figures to employment allocated space in metres squared. It was explained by the Officers that it was harder to measure and target job numbers than allocating floor space. Members agreed it would be useful to have estimated jobs figures provided alongside the allocated floor space.

**It was resolved** that approximate figures for jobs are provided in the document alongside employment square footage.

**19. Cabinet, Council or Committee Report for Draft Joint Integrated Transport Strategy**

The Head of Planning, Rob Jarman and Paul Lulham from Kent County Council (KCC) Highways, provided an overview of the report.

Members discussed the report and agreed that the proposals needed extensive consultation and suggested that Cabinet put in place a methodology for public consultation.

There was concern expressed by the Committee that there would not be enough funding available to support the proposals outlined in the draft Strategy, namely that Maidstone would have new housing but these would in effect be islands without the appropriate infrastructure to support them. It was explained that the Draft Integrated Transport Strategy had been developed in partnership with KCC. The strategy was a 14 year plan and emphasised the need to prioritise infrastructure delivery. It was noted that some of the funding for infrastructure would come from Community Infrastructure Levy.

Members expressed apprehensions over the proposed bus lane along the A274, believing that this would make the area unattractive, ruining the landscape and could be detrimental to the Borough. The Committee requested that this option be re-assessed. They noted that this was a multi model transport strategy with the aims of improving the town centre, public realm and making public transport a more attractive option.

**It was resolved that:**

- a) the option to install a bus lane on the A274 be re-assessed; and
- b) Cabinet put in place a methodology for public consultation.

**20. Infrastructure Delivery Plan Update**

**It was resolved that** the report on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan Update be deferred to the next meeting of the Regeneration and Economic Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 31 July 2012.

**21. Forward Plan of Key Decisions and Future Work Programme**

**It was resolved that** the Forward Plan of Key Decisions and Future Work Programme be deferred to the next meeting of the regeneration and Economic Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee.