

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

SPATIAL PLANNING STRATEGY ADVISORY GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 OCTOBER 2012

Present: **Councillor Lusty (Chairman), and
Councillors Burton, Mrs Gooch, Harwood and Moss**

Also Present: **Councillors Paine and Paterson**

14. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

15. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

16. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillors Paine and Paterson indicated their wish to speak on Agenda Item 8 – Statement of Community Involvement Consultation Draft 2012.

17. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

18. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

All Members disclosed they have been lobbied on Agenda Item 8 – Statement of Community Involvement Consultation Draft 2012.

19. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the Items on the Agenda be taken in public as proposed.

20. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 July 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed.

21. STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT CONSULTATION DRAFT 2012

The Group considered the report of the Director of Change, Planning and the Environment regarding the public consultation draft of the Statement of Community Involvement 2012 (“Statement”).

The Group were informed that following publication of the Agenda and representations received, there were proposed amendments to the Statement and these were circulated to Members at the meeting.

The Chairman felt it appropriate to consider and discuss each section of the Statement in turn and Members agreed.

1. Introduction

Members felt it was important to expand on why we are engaging with the community and the genuine ability for the community to influence the "big picture" and shape policy.

Officers proposed that there should be more reference to developers to ensure they also have an opportunity to engage at the early stages of policy making.

The proposed amendments by Officers to paragraphs 1.5, 1.6 and 1.7 were agreed.

2. Key principles of community involvement

Paragraph 2.3 – Members raised concern that the list did not include the urban community or neighbourhood forums. It was also felt appropriate that those who have identified a neighbourhood plan area should become statutory consultees.

Paragraph 2.4 – Members felt it was appropriate to add a further bullet point under this paragraph saying "providing an opportunity to shape an influence local plan policies and the geographical plan of future development".

3. Maidstone Local Planning Policy Framework

Members asked questions of Officers regarding, inter alia, the database, data protection, clarification of minimum level, the methodology of how we consult and consistency.

4. Planning applications

Members made the following proposals:-

Paragraph 4.7 – add reference to Maidstone Borough Council where development briefs are being prepared.

Paragraph 4.8 - Insert a flow chart to illustrate the planning application process and include reference to the Planning Duty Officer and The Gateway.

Paragraph 4.9 – amend text to read 'For major proposals, in many cases more than one meeting will be required. Once the *principle of* development ~~proposal~~ has been established, local ward members and local

parish council members will be invited to take part in the pre-application discussions’.

Paragraph 4.10 – include reference to the Planning Duty Officer, The Gateway and the fee for the validation checking service.

Tables 4.1 and 4.2 – amend text to read ‘Where possible, speak at Planning Committee in line with the Council’s ~~procedures~~ *constitution*’.

Table 4.3 – query surrounding whether appeal decisions can be obtained directly from the Planning Inspectorate. Officer to check with PINS.

5. Glossary

Members made the following proposals:-

Café conversations – amend text to read ‘Informal engagement with the community at any ~~an early~~ stage in the plan making process to gain and understanding of local issues’.

Hard to reach groups – amend text to read ‘Groups of people who are traditionally more difficult to target during consultation exercises, for example ~~the elderly, disabled and gypsies and travellers~~ *older people, gypsy and traveller communities and people with a disability*.’

Localism – amend text to read ‘*An approach which* introduces many changes to the planning system including the revocation of regional strategies, the return of local plans and the introduction of neighbourhood plans’.

Neighbourhood planning – amend text to read ‘Neighbourhood ~~plans~~ *ning*’.

RESOLVED:

1. That the following amendments to the Statement of Community Involvement 2012 Consultation Draft be agreed:-
 - i) Section 1 – to add
 - a) An explanation of why the Council is engaging with the community and the development industry, with emphasis placed on how they can shape policies and the geographical pattern of future development (bringing forward some key points from paragraph 2.4).
 - b) Specific reference to the development industry.
 - c) The differentiation between ‘consulting’ statutory bodies and ‘notifying’ members of the public of a planning application. The difference being the Council expects a response from statutory bodies whereas this involvement is voluntary for members of the public.
 - ii) Section 1 – to amend
 - a) Paragraph 1.5 and sub-title to read as follows:-

“How does the SCI fit in with the Development management and plan making process?”

All planning applications are subject to a period of public consultation and the SCI sets out how and when members of the public can get involved and how they can find out about a decision. In addition, applicants or their agents are encouraged to approach and include the local community to discuss development procedures the Council will follow to involve the community in planning applications.

The following flow chart sets out how the SCI fits in with the plan making process.”

- b) Paragraph 1.6 as follows:-
“The *local plan* makes up part of - c) Paragraph 1.7 as follows:-
“The local planning policy framework is made up of *the* local plans and supplementary planning documents. *In some local authorities there may be more than one local plan, for example Maidstone will have two: the Core Strategy and the Development Delivery local plans.* The local plan (formerly *known as* development plan documents) is the plan for the future development of Maidstone. *The Core Strategy is the principal local plan* and this document..... ”
- iii) Section 2 – to add
- a) the following community groups to the bulleted list:
 - § The urban community.
 - § Individuals.
 - § Neighbourhood forums (where a Neighbourhood Plan area is identified).
 - b) The following bullet point to paragraph 2.4
 - providing an opportunity to shape an influence local plan policies and the geographical plan of future development.
- iv) Section 4
- a) Insert a flow chart to illustrate the planning application process.
 - b) Paragraph 4.7 – add reference to Maidstone Borough Council where development briefs are being prepared.
 - c) Paragraph 4.8 – include reference to the Planning Duty Officer and The Gateway.
 - d) Paragraph 4.9 – amend text to read ‘For major proposals, in many cases more than one meeting will be required. Once the *principle of* development ~~proposal~~ has been established, local ward members and local parish council members will be invited to take part in the pre-application discussions’.

- e) Paragraph 4.10 – include reference to the Planning Duty Officer, The Gateway and the fee for the validation checking service.
- f) Tables 4.1 and 4.2 – amend text to read ‘Where possible, speak at Planning Committee in line with the Council’s ~~procedures~~ constitution’ and “Notification letters will be sent to adjoining neighbours, ~~where appropriate~~”
- g) Table 4.3 – query surrounding whether appeal decisions can be obtained directly from the Planning Inspectorate. Officer to check with PINS.

v) Section 5

- a) Café conversations – amend text to read ‘Informal engagement with the community at any ~~an early~~ stage in the plan making process to gain and understanding of local issues’.
- b) Hard to reach groups – amend text to read ‘Groups of people who are traditionally more difficult to target during consultation exercises, for example ~~the elderly, disabled and gypsies and travellers~~ older people, gypsy and traveller communities and people with a disability.
- c) Localism – amend text to read ‘An approach which introduces many changes to the planning system including the revocation of regional strategies, the return of local plans and the introduction of neighbourhood plans’.
- d) Neighbourhood planning – amend text to read ‘Neighbourhood planning’.

2. That the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development be recommended to approve the draft Statement of Community Involvement 2012, subject to the above amendments, for public consultation.

22. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 8.05 p.m.