

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Planning, Transport and Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 20 AUGUST 2013

Present: Councillors Collins (Chairman), Chittenden, Lusty, Ross, Springett, de Wiggondene and Mrs Wilson.

Also Present: Councillors English, Mrs Gooch, Nelson-Gracie and Councillor Paine

11. THE COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER WHETHER ALL ITEMS ON THE AGENDA SHOULD BE WEB-CAST.

RESOLVED: That all items on the agenda be webcast.

12. APOLOGIES.

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Munford, McLoughlin and Mrs Watson.

13. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Lusty was substituting for Councillor McLoughlin.

14. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS/WITNESSES

Councillors English, Gooch and Nelson-Gracie attended as Visiting Members in relation to agenda items 9 and 10.

Councillor Paine attended as Cabinet Member in relation to agenda items 9 and 10.

15. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Mrs Wilson be appointed as Vice-Chairman for the municipal year 2013-14.

16. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures.

17. TO CONSIDER WHETHER ANY ITEMS SHOULD BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBLE DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION.

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

18. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 JUNE 2013

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 June 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed.

19. PUBLIC CONSULTATION APPROACH FOR THE MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN

Emma Boshell, presented the report on the Public Consultation approach for the Maidstone Borough Council Local Plan.

The officer set out the ways in which the Council planned to consult as set out on pages 10-12 of the agenda report. She explained that all responses would be acknowledged but that an individual response could not be guaranteed.

In response to Members comments on the lack of public confidence in consultation responses being listened to and the possible negative impact of this on the public's response to the Local Plan consultation, the officer explained that the Planning Viewpoint Newsletter was produced, anyone who had responded to a consultation was included on a database and would receive a newsletter telling them how to get involved.

During the course of the discussion with officers and the Cabinet Member for Planning, Development and Transport the Committee made a number of suggestions on the consultation plan:

- With regards to the consultation methods in the Council's Consultation Plan: **Meetings with Parish Councils** – at meetings with designated Parish Councillors, these meetings should also include the relevant Borough and County Councillor(s) to ensure a comprehensive viewpoint is sought and provided
- With regards to the consultation methods in the Council's Consultation Plan: **Meetings with Parish Councils** - at meetings in non-parished areas with representatives from designated neighbourhood areas representative. These meetings should also included representatives from residents groups, as well as the relevant Borough and County Councillor(s) are included to ensure a comprehensive viewpoint is sought and provided;
- Where appropriate, officers find opportunities to link wards and parishes together at meetings as part of its consultation process;
- In order to overcome the perceived perception that developers representations are listened to ahead of those of residents; when the findings of the consultation are presented, the representations should be presented in a similar way to a planning application committee report i.e. clearly stating the number of representations made 'for' and 'against' with a comment from the developer; and

- It be communicated on the website and all forms of council communications that all representations will be considered but the council cannot guarantee that it will agree or disagree with individual representations; and
- That the public notice in relation to the Maidstone Borough Local Plan is placed in the Downs Mail as well as the Kent Messenger.

In addition, the Committee made the following requests for information:

- The number/percentage of people who attended meetings during the public consultation in 2011 be provided to the Committee; and
- Copies of the consultation documents be circulated to ALL members of the Council.

RESOLVED that:

- a) With regards to the consultation methods in the Council's Consultation Plan: **Meetings with Parish Councils** – at meetings with designated Parish Councillors, these meetings should also include the relevant Borough and County Councillor(s) to ensure a comprehensive viewpoint is sought and provided
- b) With regards to the consultation methods in the Council's Consultation Plan: **Meetings with Parish Councils** - at meetings in non-parished areas with representatives from designated neighbourhood areas representative. These meetings should also included representatives from residents groups, as well as the relevant Borough and County Councillor(s) are included to ensure a comprehensive viewpoint is sought and provided;
- c) Where appropriate, officers find opportunities to link wards and parishes together at meetings as part of its consultation process;
- d) In order to overcome the perceived perception that developers representations are listened to ahead of those of residents; when the findings of the consultation are presented, the representations should be presented in a similar way to a planning application committee report i.e. clearly stating the number of representations made 'for' and 'against' with a comment from the developer; and
- e) It be communicated on the website and all forms of council communications that all representations will be considered but the council cannot guarantee that it will agree or disagree with individual representations;
- f) That the public notice in relation to the Maidstone Borough Local Plan is placed in the Downs Mail as well as the Kent Messenger.
- g) The following information requests be provided:
 - i. The percentage of people attending meetings as part of the consultation process so far be provided to the Committee; and
 - ii. Copies of the consultation be circulated to ALL members of the Council.

20. MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Rob Jarman, Head of Development Management, presented the report on Maidstone Borough Council's Local Plan Development Management Policies.

The Chairman raised a question submitted to the Committee by a Member of the public, seeking clarification as to whether or not "the Council had considered the case for setting policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, as requested in paragraph 53 of the new National Planning Policy Framework? And, if so, what conclusion had it reached?" Mr Jarman confirmed that it had considered this and the policy was set out in line with the NPPF guidelines.

A Member of the Committee commented favourable on the inclusion of renewable energy sources in the policies. However, the importance of the environmental net gain of policies was stressed. It was felt that more thought needed to be given to this aspect.

The Committee discussed the possible conflict between providing affordable housing alongside the need for regeneration. It felt that thought should be given to ways in which to encourage land owners to bring forward Brownfield sites for regeneration in the borough.

Through its discussion with officers the Committee highlighted the following areas to be explored in more detail and given explicit reference within the development management policies:

- Windfarms
- Live work units and the expansion of existing units in rural areas; and
- Car Parking Standards

RESOLVED: That

- a) Further thought be given to the environmental net gain of Development Management Policies;
- b) Further thought and investigation be given to ways in which to incentivise the development of Brownfield sites for regeneration in the borough;
- c) The appropriate Development Management Policies be explored and developed to include explicit reference to, and criteria for, the following:
 - Windfarms
 - Live work units and the expansion of existing units in rural areas; and
 - Car Parking Standards.

21. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development updated the Committee on other areas within his portfolio, additional to the Local

Plan, which may be of interest to it. These included the Park and Ride Service and the Integrated Transport Strategy. The Cabinet Member also informed the Committee that he would report back to it on the Quality Bus Partnership.

The Committee felt that a written update from the Cabinet Member would be useful and suggested an all Member workshop on transport. It was also felt that basic planning training for all Members would be beneficial. Bob White from Kent County Council was suggested.

RESOLVED: That

- a) The Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development provide the Committee with a written update on all areas within his portfolio;
- b) The scrutiny officer investigate the suggested training requirements put forward to the Learning and Development team:
 - An all Member Transport Workshop; and
 - All Member Basic Planning training.

22. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 8.53 p.m.