

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Community, Leisure Services and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 11 MARCH 2014

Present: Councillor Mrs Blackmore (Chairman), and Councillors Brindle, Mrs Gibson, Mrs Joy, McLoughlin, Munford, Mrs Parvin and Vizzard

Also Present: Councillors Hogg and Mrs Ring

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

RESOLVED: That all items on the agenda be webcast.

100. **ORDER OF THE AGENDA**

The Chairman asked the Committee if they agreed to take the agenda in the following order:

- Item 10 – Air Quality Action Plan Update
- Item 9 – Waste Update
- Item 12 – Maidstone Health Inequalities Action Plan
- Item 11 – Homelessness Strategy 2014-19

RESOLVED: That the agenda be taken in the following order:

- Item 10 – Air Quality Action Plan Update
- Item 9 – Waste Update
- Item 12 – Maidstone Health Inequalities Action Plan
- Item 11 – Homelessness Strategy 2014-19

101. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

It was noted that Councillor S McLoughlin was in attendance as a substitute for Councillor Yates.

102. **APOLOGIES**

It was noted apologies for absence were received from Councillors:

- Yates
- Mrs Mannering
- Mrs Grigg

- Mr J Wilson

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

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

104. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by members or staff.

105. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS/WITNESSES

Councillor Marion Ring, Cabinet Member of Environment was in attendance as a witness for Item 9 – Waste Update and Item 10 – Air Quality Action Plan and Item.

Councillor Mike Hogg was in attendance for Item 10 – Air Quality Action Plan.

Sean Carter, Chairman of South Maidstone Action for Roads and Transport (SMART) was in attendance for Item 10 – Air Quality Action Plan.

John Littlemore, Head of Housing was in attendance as a witness for Items 10, 11 and 12.

Jennifer Shepherd, Waste and Street Scene Manager was in attendance as a witness for Item 9 – Waste Update.

John Newington, Senior Pollution Officer was in attendance as a witness for Item 10.

Katie Latchford, Community Development Team Leader was in attendance as a witness for Item 12.

106. MINUTES OF 11 FEBRUARY 2014 (CRIME AND DISORDER OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE)

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting of the Crime and Disorder Overview and Scrutiny Committee 11 February 2014 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and duly signed.

107. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 JANUARY 2014

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2014 be approved as a correct record of the meeting and duly signed.

108. AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed Sean Carter, Chairman of the South Maidstone Action for Roads and Transport (SMART) to the meeting and welcomed any comments he may have on the Air Quality Action Plan.

The Chairman explained this item was to concentrate on air quality and not traffic, roads and transport which were within the remit of the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee – although it was acknowledged the two were closely linked.

John Newington, Senior Pollution Officer presented the action plan and gave an overview of the work carried out since the original action plan was developed in 2010.

Mr Newington explained the action plan had been developed in accordance with the Council's statutory duties under the Environment Act for local air quality management while working in partnership with others such as Medway Council.

The Chairman asked Mr Newington to comment on an email received from Robert Vaughan, Head of National and Local Air Quality, DEFRA, circulated to all members prior to the meeting. In particular his remarks regarding:

- European Commission having formally launched infraction proceedings against the UK for breach of nitrogen dioxide limits values under European Union Air Quality Directives, and;
- The Commission's aim to achieve full compliance with existing air quality standards by 2020 at the latest.

Mr Newington explained the Council's Air Quality Action Plan was aimed at helping and complimenting the UK Government's action plan to comply with European Union's Air Quality Directive.

The UK is divided into zones based on population figures and Maidstone falls within the South East Zone. The Council's contribution included developing an action plan, monitoring performance and reporting. Progress reports against the action plan were produce annually.

During lengthy discussion the following points and questions were raised:

- The infraction process will take several years but could result in the EU issuing fines of potentially £300m for every year the targets are not met by the UK. The Localism Bill states the UK Government had powers to pass the fines down to local authorities, however there may be difficulties establishing which authority is responsible for what;
- Kent County Council (KCC) no longer carry out traffic counts;

- There was a general perception no infrastructure changes to the transport systems in Maidstone had been made for some years. SMART offered some suggestions in a document available from Mr Carter, including:
 - Southern relief road
 - Shared space initiatives;
- Discussion around potential funding to support transport infrastructure were to be taken up by the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- The Committee suggested Mr Carter attended future Joint Transport Board meetings and Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings where issues around traffic and transport infrastructure were discussed fully;
- Concerns were raised over partner organisations not fulfilling their responsibilities around reducing air quality;
- Various schemes running in conjunction with KCC including walk to school, travel planning with schools, lift share, incentives for using pollution friendly vehicles. It was noted the issue was not just traffic but also behaviour change;
- The Committee asked for more information in the future on the grant aided publically accessible Electric Vehicle charging points due to be installed at The Mall, Mill Street car park and Maidstone Leisure Centre in conjunction with KCC and funding from Olev;
- Mr Newington advised Cllr Hogg on some of the possible improvements planned for the Wheatsheaf junction. These potentially could include:
 - Bus lanes
 - Support for green clean buses
 - Varying of travel times to avoid peak hourly pollution figures

Mr Newington also explained this would take time to implement and would welcome other ideas the team could investigate.

- Cllr Hogg commented the traffic issues faced by SMART were similar to issues faced by other areas of Maidstone borough. He asked Mr Carter if other areas could join SMART. Mr Carter confirmed SMART welcomed other areas of the borough to join their group and confirmed Tovil may join the group as they had similar problems;

RESOLVED: That

- 1 The Community, Leisure Services and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the contents of the Air Quality Action

Plan update and made the following comments to the Cabinet Member for the Environment:

- a. Information on the usage of the grant aided publically accessible Electric Vehicle charging points be provided in future updates;
- 2 Mr Carter, Chairman of South Maidstone Action for Roads and Transport be invited to attend future meetings of the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee;
- 3 That dates for the meetings of the Joint Transport Board be sent to Mr Carter;
- 4 That a letter is drafted by the Chairman of the Communities, Leisure Services and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the final agreed letter sent to local Members of European Parliament to ask for support for funding solutions to help Maidstone Borough Council and its partners reach the targets for air quality by 2020.

109. WASTE UPDATE

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Ring, Cabinet Member for Environment and Jennifer Shepherd, Waste and Street Scene Manager to the meeting.

Mrs Shepherd gave the committee an update on the new waste collection contract and reported real improvements in performance.

Successes include:

- Waste collections in Maidstone returned to very good levels after a difficult start after the changes in collections;
- Complaints were down to a lower level than before the change in contract
- Reduction in total waste arisings of 11.76% - the target set was 10%
- 50% recycling target – with the inclusion of glass and some plastics and the expected increase in garden waste between March and July it was expected the Council could achieve this target.
- The uptake in kitchen waste had reduced from 80% to 60% and this was believed to be as a result of residents being more aware of the food they threw away
- Food waste – ‘Love Food, Hate Waste’ campaign event on 15 March on Jubilee Square, Maidstone.

Mrs Shepherd explained where the Council could go from here.

Increase the recycling target to 60% and reduce the % of waste arisings. Mrs Shepherd suggested this could be achieved by:

- Reducing the number of collections – to encourage recycling

- Recycle street waste
- Sorting sweep arisings
- Increase the use of the bulky waste service and sort and recycle collections.

During lengthy discussion and questioning the Committee raised the following concerns and comments:

- Fly tipping – occurred mainly where the bulky collections were made and was mostly made up of commercial waste as businesses were not able to take their waste to the Tovil Household Waste and Recycling Centre provided by Kent County Council;
- The cost of the food waste caddy liners – the Committee agreed other alternative methods could be used. Mrs Shepherd confirmed the waste event on 15 March was used as an opportunity to ask residents if the liners make a difference. She also confirmed her team would look at alternative ways of making cost efficiencies;
- The promotion of composting resulting in increased numbers of rats. Mrs Shepherd explained advice on composting was offered to residents and there did not appear to be an increase in the number of rats as a result of increased composting;
- Sharps and clinical waste collection - Councillor Ring explained was carried out on an ad hoc basis. Residents registered with the Council via their doctor. When they needed a collection they phone the Council and the sharps were collected within 24 hours.

The Committee congratulated Mrs Shepherd and her team on the work carried out and the progress made with waste collection.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee noted the update provided in the Scrutiny Committee Recommendation Action and Implementation Plan;
2. That the Committee noted the progress made following the report to the Strategic Leadership and Corporate Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding complaints following the start of the new contract;
3. That the Committee noted the progress made regarding the objectives set out in the Council's Waste Strategy 2010-2015;
4. That the Committee recommended figures on the usage of the Bulky Waste and Freighter Service be collected in order to support any recommendations made for this service.

110. MAIDSTONE HEALTH INEQUALITIES ACTION PLAN

The Chairman welcomed John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Community Services and Katie Latchford, Community Development Team Leader to the meeting.

Mrs Latchford gave the Committee an overview of the updated Action Plan, explaining this was the second time this document had been presented to the Committee.

Mrs Latchford explained the priorities had not changed significantly. The document had been made more accessible and now had more specific targets which fitted in with the local Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) targets.

Mrs Latchford confirmed the plan would be refreshed annually to ensure it continues to be relevant.

During some discussion and questioning the following points were raised:

- Sufficient resources for the delivery of the action plan was raised as a concern. It was confirmed the action plan would be delivered by the Community Development Team who are very enthusiastic and are working at a local level with partner organisations;
- Provisions for care in older life as residents are living longer, the Committee agreed to add this to the Committees Future Work Plan as part of a wider review of Older Persons Services;
- It was noted Priority 2 of the action plan focused on risk taking, but there was no specific action focussing on 14-25 year and the misuse of alcohol;
- The targets shown on page 106 were difficult to understand. Mrs Latchford agreed to share the methodology with Committee members who were interested;
- Concerns over the ability to provide for the number of dementia sufferers in Maidstone. The current figure of 2118 expected to double in the next 30 years. The Committee agreed to add this to the Committees Future Work Plan as part of a wider review of Older Persons Services;
- The use of specific examples of people who do not traditionally engage with services to access health professionals.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee considered the information presented in the Health Inequalities Action Plan and made the following

recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services:

- a) That an action is included in the plan focussing on alcohol misuse in the 14-25 year old age group;
- b) That where the action plan refers to 'hard to reach groups' it should use the phrase 'hard to reach and vulnerable groups' rather than giving specific examples of who the groups were;
- c) That the refresh of the action plan comes back to the Communities, Leisure Services and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.

111. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2014-19

John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Community services presented the draft strategy.

Mr Littlemore explained the draft strategy was a result of the Homelessness Review presented to the Committee in October/November of 2013.

Mr Littlemore confirmed this was the first draft of the strategy and included the progress made with rough sleepers. The document was work in progress and he welcomed help and comments from the Committee in shaping the final document.

During some discussion the following points were raised:

- The increased number of homeless is worrying;
- The long delay in identifying a need and the actual provision could mean the needs change before provision is delivered;
- Parents not willing to accommodate and what action can be taken to encourage them to allow their children to live with them. It was discussed this was partly due to the changes brought in with the Welfare Reforms. Help is being offered in the form of mediation and managed moves;
- Termination of shorthold tenancies – there has been a trend over the past 12-18 months with private landlords moving away from tenants claiming benefits. Because of the Welfare Reforms these tenants were considered to be a high risk;
- Point 1.7.3 of the covering report regarding the Equality Impact Needs Assessment. Mr Littlemore confirmed this would be completed once the final draft of the strategy was agreed to allow for any identified adjustments to be made before the strategy is finalised.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee made the following comment to the Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services on the Homelessness Strategy 2014-19:

- a. That the Action Plan for the Homelessness Strategy be developed once the strategy is finalised.

112. ACCESSING MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES BEFORE THE POINT OF CRISIS - REVIEW REPORT

RESOLVED: That:

1. The Committee considered the Accessing Mental Health Services Before the point of Crisis Review Report and agreed the re-draft of the report recommendations tabled at the meeting, and were as follows:

- a) That from July 2014 a joint mental health services meeting be held on a six monthly basis between Maidstone Borough Council, Kent County Council and the West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group to communicate and share information to ensure mental health and mental health services remain an on-going priority. This group to develop an action plan to include the following:
 - a. That a single point of access to mental health services is developed providing access to all cases of mental health and not just the more severe cases;
 - b. That the Maidstone Borough Council Community Development Team ensure there is continued engagement between the West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group, Kent County Council Public Health and the Community, Charitable and Voluntary sectors and Maidstone Borough Council to ensure mental health services are commissioned on a well-informed basis;
 - c. That the plausibility of a central county self-assessment team or unit for mental health be investigated with a view to providing a cost effective and viable service for Kent;
 - d. Building on the success of the Street Triage Pilot, that the above group work with Kent Police and NHS Mental Health Teams to provide access to a 24 hour mental health service advice line for all police officers;

- e. That the Community Development Team promote the Live it Well website as a priority via its communication channels to ensure its profile is raised and maintained.
 - b) That Maidstone Borough Council's Community Development Team ensure professionals and the community can access information on child and adolescent mental health services provided by NHS Kent and Sussex via the Council's website 'In the Stone' and the borough update;
 - c) That the Maidstone Borough Council Community Development Team continue to support the Suicide Awareness for Everyone (SAFE) project via funding and their various communication channels, for example 'In the Stone' website;
 - d) That Maidstone Borough Council's Community Development team together with their partners encourage prevention and early intervention in mental health and well-being by developing a pilot project aimed at primary school children and their parents to develop coping strategies when moving to secondary school;
 - e) That a letter of support from the Chairman of the Communities, Leisure Services and Environment is send to Patrick Leeson, Corporate Director of Education, Learning and Skills at Kent County Council supporting the 'Coping and Resilience Strategy' and 'Early Intervention and Prevention Strategy' being adapted to include children of primary school age and PSHE programmes raising awareness of mental health and well-being in schools.
2. The Committee approved the report and recommended it be submitted to the proper officer for consideration by the Executive once the re-drafted recommendations are added.

113. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: That

- 1. The agenda for the meeting of 8 April 2014 include Evaluations of Cabinet Member Priorities for 2013/14 Municipal Year;
- 2. The following items be added to the Future Work Programme for 2014/15:
 - a. Dementia care and Care Home provision included under the Older Persons Service review;
 - b. A Night Time Economy review;
 - c. The annual refresh of the Health Inequalities Action Plan.

The meeting ended at 21:29hrs.