

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2015

Present: Councillor Burton (Chairman), and
Councillors Burton, English, Mrs Gooch, Mrs Grigg,
D Mortimer, Paine, Springett, de Wiggondene and
Mrs Wilson

Also Present: Councillors Perry, Mrs Ring, Round,
J Sams, Sargeant and Mrs Stockell

91. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

It was noted that apologies had been received from Councillor Harwood.

It was noted that Councillor de Wiggondene would be delayed in arriving.

92. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

It was noted that Councillor D Mortimer was substituting for Councillor Harwood.

Councillor Stockell substituted for Councillor de Wiggondene until his arrival at 6.45 p.m.

93. **URGENT ITEMS**

The Chairman stated that, in his opinion, the following should be taken as urgent items for the reasons specified:

- The update report of the Head of Planning and Development – Landscapes of Local Value, as it contained further information relating to the applications to be considered at the meeting.
- The report of the Head of Planning and Development – Revisions to 'Planning Policy for Traveller Sites', due to a revision of national planning guidance that came into force after the agenda had been published.

94. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

Councillors, Perry, Round, J Sams and Stockell indicated their wish to speak on item 13 – Landscapes of Local Value.

Councillor Willis attended the meeting to speak on item 15 – Maidstone Borough Local Plan Transport Policies but was not present at this stage of the proceedings.

Councillor Ring reserved her right to speak on any item on the agenda.

Councillor Sargeant was in attendance as an observer.

95. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

96. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

All Committee members declared they had been lobbied on items 13 and 15 of the agenda.

97. 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.

98. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 AUGUST 2015 ADJOURNED TO 19 AUGUST 2015

The accuracy of the wording of minute no. 70 was questioned. As this related to an item in which the Chairman had previously disclosed an interest, and in the absence of the Vice-Chairman, it was moved, seconded and

RESOLVED: That Councillor Springett be elected Chairman for the discussion of the accuracy of minute no. 70.

The Chairman left the room at 6.55 p.m. and Councillor Springett took the chair.

RESOLVED: That minute no. 70 of the meeting held on 18 August 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed subject to the decision being amended to read:

That draft policy H1(10) South of Sutton Road, Langley be approved for Regulation 18 public consultation in accordance with the policy wording set out in Appendix 3 of the Urgent Update dated 18 August 2015, to include an indicative figure of up to 800 units with amended wording stating that the red and white striped area, shown on the Option A Site Plan in Appendix III of the report dated 18 August 2015, be used only as open green space.

For – 6 Against – 0 Abstain - 2

The Chairman re-entered the room and took the chair at 7.03 p.m.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 August 2015 adjourned to 19 August 2015 (excluding minute no. 70 which was previously amended and approved) be approved as a correct record and signed.

99. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

100. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

101. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR NOTING

A Member put forward a wish to see the Passenger Operators Group reactivated. The Chairman advised that he would discuss with the Vice-Chairman and report back to the next meeting.

The Chairman suggested that it would be helpful for the Committee if the work programme also featured the timetable for the local plan alongside upcoming items.

RESOLVED: That the Committee's Work Programme be noted.

102. BUDGET MONITORING 2015-16 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2016-17 ONWARDS

Paul Riley, Head of Finance and Resources, introduced the report and advised that there was a stable base to the Committee's budget despite pressures, however further efficiencies would be required. It was explained that efficiencies should be focused on delivering against the Council's priorities. It was suggested that a budget working group for the Committee would allow Members to discuss all budgetary and capital options informally with Officers, with the results then reported back to Committee for consideration.

Members requested additional training on the budget to aid discussion of financial matters, and were also in agreement that the majority of those present at a meeting of the Working Group should not withhold a suggestion from going forward.

It was moved, seconded and:

RESOLVED: That the recommendation to make a reference to Policy and Resources Committee confirming agreement with the decision of Policy and Resources Committee on the strategic revenue projection and the capital programme, in so far as it affects the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transport Committee, be deferred until Members of the Committee have undertaken training on the budget.

For – 9 Against – 0 Abstain – 0

It was noted that at the time of the meeting, the Planning Support Shared Service fell within the remit of Policy and Resources Committee due to the level of spend required. A report on the impact of this on the Committee's budget was requested for inclusion on the agenda of the next formal meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That the outturn for 2014/15 and the position for 2015/16 as at the end of June 2015 be noted.

For – 9 Against – 0 Abstain - 0

2. That the Committee requests an informal meeting with relevant officers to discuss budget pressures and opportunities to provide savings to support the medium term financial strategy and that the suggestions of that informal meeting be reported to the next meeting of the Committee for consideration.

For – 9 Against – 0 Abstain - 0

3. That the Committee also requests that potential capital projects be informally discussed at that meeting and that the suggestions of that informal meeting be reported to the next meeting of the Committee for consideration.

For – 9 Against – 0 Abstain - 0

103. LANDSCAPES OF LOCAL VALUE

Steve Clarke, Principle Planning Officer, tabled an update report to that included on the agenda on Landscapes of Local Value (LLV) which presented two amended recommendations.

A Harrietsham resident, Mrs Chinnery, had emailed with regard to this issue but this had been omitted from the papers. Mrs Chinnery, invited to do so by the Chairman, provided a summary of her email to the Committee.

The Committee heard that:

- The four areas agreed at the previous Committee were the Greensand Ridge, Len Valley, Loose Valley and Medway Valley.
- The setting of the Kent Area of Natural Beauty (AONB) was not recommended for inclusion as an LLV due to the already present duty to improve the setting and for development to have regard to the effect on the setting.

- Ashford Borough Council’s proposal not to include LLVs in their local plan impacted on the consideration of the Lenham Vale, as this area would only then be recognised as such on the part within Maidstone BC’s jurisdiction.
- The Low Weald was not recommended for inclusion as an LLV due to the area not being considered sufficiently distinct from the land to the south, and lacking in specific topographical characteristics.

During discussion the following points were made, among others:

- The view from the Greensand Ridge, one of the reasons for its consideration as an LLV, was of the Low Weald.
- The designation special landscape area (SLA) did not prevent development within an area. LLVs likewise did not prevent development but recognised distinctive landscapes which were not otherwise protected.
- ENV 28 was a strong policy but it could be put to one side where benefits outweighed harm in an application. This created concern that the same could happen to Policy SP5.
- If policy SP5 was robust then there would be no need for LLVs.
- Some neighbouring authorities may have felt no need to include LLVs, as areas of their boroughs already fell within AONBs or green belt.

Councillor Willis entered the meeting as a visiting Member at 8.15 p.m.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee’s commitment to an SP5 policy that contains Landscapes of Local Value be noted.

For – 6 Against – 2 Abstain - 1

2. That the amendments to draft policy SP5 and its supporting text set out at Appendix Two to the urgent update report of the Head of Planning and Development be approved for further public consultation (Regulation 18 consultation) subject to the following further amendments:

Paragraph 5.72 first sentence to read: ‘The foreground of the AONB and the wider setting is taken to include the land which sits at and beyond the foot of the scarp slope of the North Downs and the wider views thereof.’

Paragraph 5.78 to read: ‘The Low Weald covers a significant proportion of the countryside, in the rural southern half of the Borough. The Low Weald is recognised as having distinctive

landscape features: the field patterns, many of which are medieval in character, hedgerows, stands of trees, ponds and streams and buildings of character should be protected, maintained and enhanced where appropriate. The necessary protection for the area of the Low Weald outside the boundaries of the rural service centres as defined on the policies map is provided under the criteria of policy SP5.'

Criterion 5 sentence to read: 'The distinctive character of the Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and its setting, the setting of the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the extent and openness of the Metropolitan Green Belt will be rigorously protected, maintained and enhanced where appropriate;'

Criterion 6 sentence to read: 'The Greensand Ridge, Medway Valley, Len Valley and Loose Valley, as defined on the policies map, will be protected, maintained and enhanced where appropriate as landscapes of local value;'

For – 9 Against – 0 Abstain - 0

3. That the revised Appendix A Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2014 Consultation Issues and Responses to Policy SP(6) Landscapes of Local Value as set out in the urgent update be approved.

Check voting

4. That the plan attached at Appendix Two to the urgent update report be approved for further public consultation (Regulation 18 consultation).

For – 9 Against – 0 Abstain – 0

104. MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN: 5 YEAR HOUSING LAND SUPPLY

Sarah Anderton, Principal Planning Officer, introduced an update report setting out that, against a need to demonstrate delivery of 5 years housing land supply at 1 April 2015, the Council has 3.3 years.

In response to questions it was explained that:

- The latest figures demonstrated an improvement on the 2014 figure of 2.1 years.
- It was common practice to calculate the housing land supply in April, and a further mid-year review would prove resource intensive.
- After the next Regulation 18 consultation the position on the five year housing supply figure would be clearer.

The Committee requested that officers keep a watching brief on the housing land supply and report back at the earliest opportunity once the five year supply is achieved.

RESOLVED: That the Council's 3.3 years' supply of housing land as of 1 April 2015 be noted.

For – 9 Against – 0 Abstain – 0

105. MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN TRANSPORT POLICIES

Steve Clarke, Principal Planning Officer, presented the report on policies DM13 (Sustainable Transport), DM14 (Public Transport) and DM15 (Park and Ride) as well as PKR (1) (Linton Crossroads) and PKR1 (2) (Old Sittingbourne Road).

Members were advised that:

- The recommendations of the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board had been broadly supported, and in addition Officers were requested to carry out further work on transport policy development.
- Although the VISUM modelling indicated some benefits arising from the proposed Leeds-Langley Bypass, there were a number of uncertainties which undermined the feasibility of its implementation pre-2031.
- The owners of the land on which the existing Park and Ride at Eclipse Park near junction 7 was positioned had indicated the land would no longer be available for this purpose. The Park and Ride proposed for Linton presented transport benefits, but it was felt that the potential impact on the Greensand Ridge outweighed these.

The following points were raised during discussion:

- Modal shift (towards walking, cycling and sustainable transport) would be essential, but the proposed transport strategies as recommended by the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board and supported by the previous meeting of the Committee were a good starting point.
- A Leeds-Langley bypass should be considered in light of new developments which will entail a greater number of vehicles in the area. The feasibility would be dependent upon the development of a firm evidence base.
- The proposed site at Linton Crossroads would be re-designated as open countryside if not used as land for Park and Ride. Although the site was described as being situated in an urban area, it was explained that the urban area may have been extended to include the site as used as Park and Ride. A report clarifying this would be brought to a future meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That the officer responses to the representations submitted during public consultation on the draft Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2014 for policies DM13 (Sustainable Transport), DM14 (Public Transport) and DM15 (Park and Ride), set out in Appendix One be approved.

For – 8 Against – 0 Abstain - 1

2. That the officer responses to the representations submitted during public consultation on the draft Maidstone Borough Local Plan 2014 for policies PKR1(1) (Linton Crossroads) and PKR1(2) (Old Sittingbourne Road) set out at Appendix Two be approved.

For – 7 Against – 0 Abstain - 2

3. That the proposed changes to the supporting text (which include reference to the Leeds Langley Relief Road) and the criteria for policies DM13 (Sustainable Transport) and DM14 (Public Transport) set out at Appendix Four to the report be approved for Regulation 19 Consultation.

For – 7 Against – 2 Abstain - 0

4. The proposed changes to Policy DM15 (Park and Ride) deleting reference to the park & ride sites at Linton Crossroads and Old Sittingbourne Road set out at Appendix Five to the report and the deletion of policy PKR1 and as consequence PKR1(1) and PKR1(2) as set out at paragraphs 4.21, 4.23 and at paragraphs 4.57 to 4.62 within the report be approved for further Regulation 18 Consultation.

For – 7 Against – 1 Abstain - 1

5. That Officers be directed to continue the preparation of a revised draft Integrated Transport Strategy in conjunction with Kent County Council which reflects recommendation 3 and 4 above and that the completed draft should be reported for consideration to a subsequent meeting of this Committee and the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board, with an early draft to be provided to the November meeting of the Committee.

For – 8 Against – 1 Abstain – 0

106. DURATION OF MEETING

6.33 p.m. to 10.11 p.m.