

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE REGENERATION AND SUSTAINABLE  
COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 14 APRIL 2009**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Sherreard (Chairman)  
Councillors English, Batt, Beerling, FitzGerald, Nelson-Gracie, Paine, Ross and Thick

**APOLOGIES:** There were no apologies.

**135. Web-Casting**

Members agreed that they did not wish to discuss the exempt information in Agenda Item 15, 'Exempt Appendix to the Report of the Assistant Director of Environmental Services' and that all items on the agenda would therefore be webcast.

**Resolved:** That all items on the agenda be webcast.

**136. Notification of Substitute Members**

There were no substitute Members.

**137. Notification of Visiting Members**

It was noted that Councillors Chittenden and Vizzard were visiting Members with interests in Agenda Item 8, Call-In Park and Ride Establishment and Agenda Item 14, Call-In Park and Ride CCTV and that Councillor Chittenden wished to speak on these items.

**138. Disclosures by Members and Officers**

Councillor Beerling declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 10, 'Cabinet Member for Regeneration Progress During 2008/09' by virtue of his position as a Director of Maidstone Housing Trust.

**139. Exempt Items**

The Committee agreed that it did not wish to discuss the exempt information contained in Agenda Item 15, 'Exempt Appendix to the Report of the Assistant Director of Environmental Services'.

**Resolved:** That all items on the agenda be taken in public

**140. Amendment to Order of Business**

The Chairman proposed the following:

- Agenda Items 9, 'Cabinet Member for Environment Progress During 2008/09' and 10 'Cabinet Member for Regeneration Progress During 2008/09' be deferred to the meeting of the Committee on 30 June 2009;
- Agenda Item 12, 'Road Safety Report' be deferred to the meeting of the Committee on 23 April 2009 to allow more time for discussion; and
- Agenda Items 8, 'Call-In: Park and Ride Establishment', 14, 'Call-In: Park and Ride CCTV' and 15, 'Exempt Appendix to the Report of the Assistant Director of Environmental Services', be taken together.

The Committee agreed to these proposals.

**Resolved: That**

- a) Agenda Items 9, 'Cabinet Member for Environment Progress During 2008/09' and 10 'Cabinet Member for Regeneration Progress During 2008/09' be deferred to the meeting of the Committee on 30 June 2009;
- b) Agenda Item 12, 'Road Safety Report' be deferred to the meeting of the Committee on 23 April 2009; and
- c) Agenda Items 8, 'Call-In: Park and Ride Establishment', 14, 'Call-In: Park and Ride CCTV' and 15, 'Exempt Appendix to the Report of the Assistant Director of Environmental Services', be taken together.

**141. Minutes**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2009 be agreed as a correct record and duly signed by the Chairman.

**142. Call-In: Park and Ride Establishment and Park and Ride CCTV**

The Chairman invited Councillors Daley and Robertson to explain their reasons for calling in the decision of the Cabinet Member for Environment with regard to Park and Ride Establishment and Park and Ride CCTV.

Councillors Daley and Robertson felt that a substantial loss in the quality of the Park and Ride service would ensue if the seven Park and Ride attendants were replaced by two mobile attendants and CCTV. They considered that the role of the existing Park and Ride attendants was valuable, noting that it included duties such as meet and greet, customer information, security and service time monitoring. They therefore felt that CCTV was an insufficient replacement and should only be used to compliment the existing service. Councillors Daley and Robertson considered that the Willington Street Park and Ride Site would be significantly compromised by the removal of permanent attendants as it was enclosed by trees that could potentially be used as camouflage by vandals or car thieves. They were also concerned by the quality of CCTV coverage at night. Councillor Robertson highlighted that Park and Ride Officers from Cambridge, Canterbury, Salisbury, Oxfordshire and Derby

Councils considered CCTV to be inadequate on its own and noted that Cambridge City Council had proposed to increase the number of attendants at its Park and Ride sites from 15 to 17.

The Chairman invited the Cabinet Member for Environment, Councillor Mark Wooding, the Leader of the Council, Councillor Chris Garland, the Parking Services Manager, Mr Jeff Kitson, and the Surveillance Controller, Mr Chris Stewart, to respond to the reasons given for the call-in. Councillor Wooding began by stating that any decision that impacted upon the jobs and livelihood of individuals employed by the Council were not taken. He advised the Committee that it was a financial decision, as it was unsustainable to continue subsidising £429,000 to the Park and Ride Service. He highlighted to the Committee that an academic study had found that supervision at Park and Ride sites was considered one of the most important attributes by the customer. Attractiveness of the service had increased significantly with the use of cameras, whilst the additional presence of attendants also increased attractiveness, albeit to a much smaller extent. Councillor Wooding concluded that the report showed that CCTV was far more beneficial in providing supervision than attendants on site.

Councillor Wooding agreed that meet and greet was important, but noted that not all customers were currently greeted by the attendant due to the other tasks they undertook. He also highlighted that the bus driver was able to meet and greet customers. A member of the public advised the Committee that she felt that attendants were valuable as they were able to notify customers of delays or accidents, in addition to enhancing the security of the site. Councillor Wooding assured the Committee, and the member of public, that the mobile attendant would be able to attend a site to provide customer information if a particular issue arose, and noted that the bus driver, who was in direct contact with the mobile attendant, was also able to provide information to customers.

Councillor Wooding stated that he felt that CCTV would be more effective in surveying Park and Ride sites as the height of the cameras would enable a larger area to be viewed at any one time. The Committee acknowledged that a determined thief would avoid detection irrespective of supervision from cameras or attendants. Mr Kitson informed the Committee that there had been approximately five to ten reported incidents of damage to vehicles in Park and Ride car parks in 2008/09 and that only one incident had been witnessed by an attendant. He also highlighted that the camera design was such that it prevented detection of the direction the camera was facing. Councillor Wooding advised the Committee that the Park and Ride site would also benefit from central two way contact points in cases of emergency. In response to a question from the Committee, Mr Stewart advised Members that the cameras would be monitored by the Council's control room with links to the Police control room. A site survey had already been conducted by officers that had determined that CCTV was suitable on all of the sites. Mr Stewart highlighted that the London Road site already had a camera and the three additional cameras would be positioned across the three sites as required. The Committee was concerned that the CCTV cameras would not survey

the whole of each site and therefore requested an operational report on CCTV camera coverage. In response to concerns over night-time coverage, Members were informed that the sites were sufficiently lit and that the cameras were able to operate in low light level conditions. A Councillor queried the effect of a power cut on the surveillance of sites and was advised by Mr Stewart this would lead to no CCTV coverage, as was the case with town centre CCTV.

Councillor Garland highlighted to the Committee that Park and Ride had been identified as the Council's tool for dealing with congestion and that he did not feel the proposal would compromise the service. He felt that it was important to develop the Park and Ride Service into a sustainable asset. Councillor Wooding acknowledged that the proposal was not necessarily the most desirable option, but highlighted that it would ensure that Park and Ride remained economically viable. The Committee agreed the Service needed to remain financially sustainable and noted that Planning Policy had initiated work on this. Members agreed that this work should be accelerated.

The Committee was informed that one mobile attendant would be on duty until midday and would hand over to the other mobile attendant in the afternoon until closing. A Councillor queried the potential impact of periods of sickness or annual leave and was advised that the Operations Team would provide support in the event of short periods of absence. Mr Kitson advised Members that the attendant would be utilised to have more periods of 'active time' to carry out the duties than the existing permanent attendants.

Concern was raised with regard to the level of pre-decision consultation and research. Mr Kitson advised the Committee that he had consulted a number of groups but public consultation had not taken place. Councillor Wooding highlighted that recent place survey results had shown that the public considered Park and Ride as one of the least important areas requiring attention, being ranked 15 out of 16. Members were, however, assured that the service would continue to be monitored and that any deficiencies would be addressed. The Committee agreed that a report on customer satisfaction, levels of crime and staffing arrangements should be submitted to the Committee six months after the implementation of the decision.

Mr Kitson advised the Committee that the actual bus service times would continue to be monitored in real time using global positioning and that the monitoring could also be enhanced by mobile attendant monitoring. Councillor Wooding also assured the Committee that the number of Park and Ride Attendants would not reduce until after the CCTV was operational.

The Committee voted to take no action with regard to the Park and Ride Establishment Decision, with 6 votes for this and 3 abstentions. The Committee voted to take no action with regard to the Park and Ride CCTV decision, with 8 votes for and 1 vote against. Councillor FitzGerald requested that it be noted he voted against.

**Resolved: That**

- a) A review of customer satisfaction, levels of crime and staffing arrangements, with regard to the new Park and Ride structure, be reported to the Committee six months after the implementation of the decision;
- b) An operational report on the Park and Ride CCTV camera coverage at each site be submitted to the Committee six months after the implementation of the decision; and
- c) Planning Policy be urged to expedite the work on the sustainable funding of Park and Ride.

The meeting was adjourned from 8.45pm to 8.52pm.

**143. Enforcement of Planning Conditions and Compliance with Section 106 Agreements Report**

Members considered the Enforcement of Planning Conditions and Compliance with Section 106 Agreements Report and agreed that the report should be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration subject to the following amendments:

- That the report be amended to include a statement regarding Section 278 of the Highways Act;
- Section 5.3 be amended to 'Planning breaches are not criminal acts with the exception of unauthorised advertisements or works to listed buildings *or in areas of conservation*'; and
- Section 8.4 be amended to include the following recommendation '*That the Committee supports the commitment and development of enabling committees*'.

**Resolved:** That the Enforcement of Planning Conditions and Compliance with Section 106 Agreements Report be submitted to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration subject to the following amendments:

- a) That the report be amended to include a statement regarding Section 278 of the Highways Act;
- b) Section 5.3 be amended to 'Planning breaches are not criminal acts with the exception of unauthorised advertisements or works to listed buildings *or in areas of conservation*'; and
- c) Section 8.4 be amended to include the following recommendation '*That the Committee supports the commitment and development of enabling committees*'.

**144. 2009/10 Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme**

The Chairman highlighted the forthcoming work programming workshop on 27 May 2009 to the Committee and it was agreed that Members would

contact the Overview and Scrutiny team with further work programme suggestions. A Councillor suggested that a Social Housing review should be considered as a topic at the workshop.

**Resolved: That**

- a) The Committee contact the Overview and Scrutiny Team with work programme suggestions for the work programming workshop on 27 May 2009; and
- b) A Social Housing Review be considered as part of the 2009/10 Work programming workshop.

**145. Duration of Meeting**

6.30 p.m. to 9.10 p.m.