

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE REMOTE MEETING OF MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD ON 30 SEPTEMBER 2020 ADJOURNED TO 5 OCTOBER 2020

Present: Councillor Mrs Ring (Mayor) and
30 Councillors Adkinson, Mrs Blackmore, Brice, Brindle,
September D Burton, M Burton, Chappell-Tay, Clark, Cox,
2020 Cuming, Daley, English, Fermor, Fissenden, Fort,
Garland, Garten, Mrs Gooch, Mrs Grigg, Harper,
Harvey, Harwood, Hastie, Hinder, Joy, Khadka,
Kimmance, Lewins, McKay, Mortimer, Munford,
Naghi, Newton, Parfitt-Reid, Perry, Powell, Purle,
Mrs Robertson, D Rose, M Rose, Round, J Sams,
T Sams, Spooner, Springett, Vizzard, Webb,
de Wiggondene-Sheppard, Wilby and Young

147. PRAYERS

Prayers were said by the Reverend Joyce Addison of St Martin's Church, Northumberland Road.

148. RECORDING OF PROCEEDINGS

Councillor McKay reserved his right to record the proceedings.

149. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Bartlett and Eves.

150. DISPENSATIONS

There were no applications for dispensations.

151. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

152. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

The following disclosures of lobbying were noted:

Item 9.	Petition – Housebuilding Targets and Infrastructure	Councillors M Burton, Chappell-Tay, Cox, Perry, Powell, J Sams, T Sams, de Wiggondene-Sheppard and Wilby
Item 15.	Oral Report of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure	Councillors D Burton, Cox, Garten, Mrs Gooch, Mrs Grigg, Munford,

	Committee held on 22 September 2020 – Local Development Scheme 2020-2022 (September 2020 Edition) and Maidstone Statement of Community Involvement September 2020	Parfitt-Reid, Perry, M Rose, M Round, J Sams, T Sams, de Wiggondene-Sheppard and Wilby
Item 16.	Notice of Motion – Anti-Idling Campaign	Councillors M Burton, Chappell-Tay, Cox, Garten, Kimmance, Perry, D Rose and Round
Item 17.	Report of the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance – Amendments to the Constitution	Councillors Cox, Mrs Gooch, Munford and Purle
Item 21.	Report of the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance – Call-In of Policy and Resources Committee Decisions on Property Acquisition 1 and Property Acquisition 2	Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Brice, M Burton, K Chappell-Tay, Cox, Garten, Kimmance, Newton, Parfitt-Reid, Perry, D Rose and Round

153. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That if Members wish to discuss the information contained in the exempt Appendix to the report of the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance relating to the Call-In of Policy and Resources Committee Decisions on Property Acquisition 1 and Property Acquisition 2, it will be necessary to exclude the public from the meeting because of the likely disclosure of exempt information having applied the Public Interest Test.

154. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD ON 15 JULY 2020

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Borough Council held on 15 July 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed.

155. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor said that the number of engagements was increasing, which was good, but people were being very cautious and this was understandable at this difficult time.

156. PETITION - HOUSEBUILDING TARGETS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr Steve Heeley presented a petition in the following terms on behalf of the Save Our Heathlands Action Group (SOHAG):

We the undersigned request our elected representatives in Maidstone Borough to:

- *Challenge and campaign against national Government's housebuilding targets.*
- *Rethink the building of Garden Communities. They are not an appropriate planning policy for the Borough of Maidstone, especially in places like Lenham Heath, Marden and Langley as perfect examples.*
- *Not accept new housebuilding levels that are unsustainable for the Borough of Maidstone.*
- *Complete a full infrastructure assessment before the Local Plan Review and ensure all historical infrastructure issues are rectified across the Borough before projects commence.*
- *Be transparent and engage Parish Councils and local communities before any final decisions are made with regards to planning and new developments in the area.*

In presenting the petition, Mr Heeley said that:

- *The petition had been signed by thousands of Maidstone residents calling upon the Council to rethink its plans on housebuilding.*
- *The SOHAG was opposed to the Council's proposed Garden Community at Lenham. However, through its work, the Group was finding that there was a lot of opposition to the overall planning approach in the Borough.*
- *Many of the people the Group had spoken to appeared resigned to the fact that the Council would carry on with its growth strategy without properly seeking the views of residents. The petitioners were calling upon Members to hear and listen to the voices of Maidstone residents who were saying "Enough is Enough".*
- *The petition was specifically asking Members to challenge and campaign against national Government's housebuilding targets and to rethink the building of Garden Communities as this was not considered to be a suitable planning policy approach for the Borough. The petitioners did not expect the Council to accept new housebuilding levels that are unsustainable for Maidstone and were asking the Council to be transparent and engage with Parish Councils and local communities before any final decisions are made regarding where new development goes.*
- *In terms of housebuilding targets, the petitioners were well aware that the Council had made attempts to challenge the targets imposed already but were underwhelmed by the action taken to date which had constituted a few letters to the Secretary of State and a meeting with Civil Servants. Instead they wanted loud and clear voices against national targets and were calling upon the Council to join forces with MPs across Kent and further afield and the Kent Association of Local Councils to amplify the opposition to these targets.*
- *In terms of Garden Communities, the petitioners were calling upon the Council to listen to the many residents who are opposed to this form of growth. Maidstone residents did not want new towns built in the countryside at the expense of hundreds of acres of greenfield land miles away from the main conurbations. Garden Communities were*

the right solution in the right place but were not the right solution for Maidstone. Existing Garden Communities such as Ebbsfleet in north Kent and Kingshill, West Malling were sites which had former uses and were being regenerated. Unfortunately, Maidstone did not have these types of sites. Instead, the Council seemed intent on building over the countryside and green space around existing rural villages such as Marden and Lenham. This was not what residents wanted.

- In recent weeks, the petitioners had seen and heard Members protecting their own backyards as part of the Local Plan review. It was not good enough to have such a blinkered approach.*
- The Council had made decades of poor decisions regarding the provision of the necessary infrastructure to deal with the growth of Maidstone town centre in a sustainable way. The solution was not to flood rural villages with houses just to get the numbers required. Rural centres like Lenham were already taking their fair share of new homes; over 1,000 in the next ten years almost doubling the size of the village. Urban and suburban parts of the Borough had got to do their fair share too and the Council needed to be serious about its infrastructure strategy to properly unlock growth.*
- The opposition to so many new homes across the Borough was because roads cannot cope with existing traffic. The town centre was congested, and this was exacerbated by the lack of a serious and credible transport strategy and ambition.*
- Finally, the petition was calling on the Council to be more transparent and properly engaged with Parish Councils and local communities. The petitioners understood the difficult decisions faced by the Council in agreeing a spatial strategy but considered that the current proposed solutions were not the answer. The petitioners were calling upon the Council to think again, particularly about the building of Garden Communities. Maidstone residents were saying "Enough is Enough" and it was hoped that Members would listen to and act upon these concerns.*

A factual briefing note prepared by the Officers was circulated to assist Members in the discussion on the petition.

During the discussion, Members made several points, including:

Residents were angry and that was understandable, but the Council was not the Highway Authority. Attacking the Borough Council for decisions taken on transport and road infrastructure was perhaps not hitting the right target.

The Council did not have a strategy for growth. The housing numbers had been imposed on this and all other Councils across the country by the Government. The issue should not really be who was to blame for this but what Members as politicians across the board in Maidstone and in other local authority areas did about it. The Council had been working with MPs and most MPs in Kent had made strong representations against the proposed changes in the Government's planning policy. The Council had been trying to work with them.

Turning to the details of the Local Plan, contrary to what had been asserted, the Council had not made decisions on Garden Communities or any other site allocations yet. The Council as a land promoter/developer had a view on a particular proposal but that was not a proposal that had been adopted by the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee at this time.

The debate had not closed, decisions had not been made. The Council had not closed off discussions with Parish Councils or with the public and was still engaged in them. The decisions would be made in the public arena; fully, clearly and transparently.

Fully support the petition on behalf of the people of Maidstone.

Fully support the petition which had arisen out of the frustration felt by residents all over the Borough about housing development without the supporting infrastructure. There was concern that the houses being built were unaffordable and did not reflect the needs/changing requirements of real family situations. For example, in Harrietsham, Lenham and other areas almost all of the houses being built at the moment were larger properties, but starter homes and properties suitable for downsizing were required and they needed to be built near to the services that would support the people who would be living there. The petition reflected residents' view that these larger properties and Garden Communities were not the answer. The Council was being over-reliant on Garden Communities in its strategic planning.

Residents' groups and Parish Councils were combining and united in their opposition. The petition was not about "nimbyism" – it represented collective disquiet about the whole process. There was a need for community engagement and transparency, to share information and to listen to Parish Councils and local residents.

Under recent changes to the planning laws sent out for consultation, the Government was proposing changes to the standard methodology used to calculate housing need resulting in a new national total of 337,000 homes a year. Under the current methodology the Council was required to build 1,214 houses per year. Under the new methodology proposed by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, which was presently subject to consultation and might change, this number increased to 1,569 houses per year. Together with others, the Council was challenging the existing and proposed new Government imposed housebuilding requirements, but the Government was being very firm.

The Council was also in the process of amending the timeline for its current Local Plan Review in an attempt to avoid increased housing requirements for the maximum time.

As part of the Council's Call for Sites exercise, there was a prospectus dedicated to the submission of proposals from landowners/developers for a Garden Community and various proposals were put forward which were considered.

It was now necessary for everyone to work together towards the various stages of the Local Plan Review process and to ensure the delivery of houses supported by the necessary infrastructure.

The Local Plan was more than just housing, it was also about the infrastructure required to support it including medical facilities, open space, libraries and employment. A holistic approach was required.

Whilst Parish Councils were very welcome to contact Members, a lot of Members represented Wards in the urban area of the Borough which did not have the benefit of Parish Councils and, possibly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, did not have such active residents' groups. There was a need to ensure that urban views did not go unheard.

There was also a need to consider the other changes the Government was considering to the current planning system.

No decisions had been made yet. Garden Communities were currently being assessed. It was necessary to go through the process to provide the evidence to demonstrate a sound Plan whilst at the same time lobbying the Government for a reduction in the housebuilding targets.

Members were all defending their areas and certainly looking at the evidence in relation to the sites coming forward. Ebbsfleet was a development where the whole planning process was taken away from Dartford Borough Council.

There would be an opportunity to engage with residents through Regulation 18b of the current Local Plan Review. If the Council moved straight to Regulation 19, it would be for the Inspector to go through evidence that he/she might not necessarily be familiar with as a potentially non-resident.

Always thought the Council was probably not competent to deliver the supposed benefits of a Garden Community without all the obvious adverse impacts. Always objected to the way the Council approached these matters but must object to the statement that the urban and sub-urban areas need to take their fair share.

That was not what the petition said, and it was not what people had signed up to. It ignored the fact that urban and suburban Maidstone had taken the lion's share of development for years. No wish to see the countryside needlessly churned up and the Council did need to be pushing back on the Government's targets, but, to be clear, the town was literally choking and should not be used as an easy solution. The town had done its bit. Most of the brownfield sites had been used because the town had borne the brunt for twenty years; so no more please.

Every sympathy with the petitioners, but there was no more space left in the urban/suburban areas to build. Infrastructure was needed to support new development and people to support that infrastructure.

People thought that signing the petition would make a difference, but if the Council did not comply with the requirements, there would be an Inspector who did it for the Council.

As far as aware all national parties acknowledged the same level of housebuilding. The alternative which it was thought the petition was asking the Council to consider was that the Council would not accept the new housebuilding levels because it did not think it was right for the Borough. However, it was necessary to weigh up the consequences and the consequences were that it would not stop development. It would come; it would be developer-led, market-led, approved by an Inspector piecemeal. The Council had to decide whether it would be appropriate to respond to what the residents were saying across the Borough, but what a price would be paid. Would welcome another petition asking residents whether they wanted the Council to let the market take over or try and keep some sort of control of the process locally.

At the conclusion of the debate Mr Heeley was given the opportunity to respond to the issues raised.

Before losing connectivity, Mr Heeley said that he thought the debate had been useful and that he would like to see the Council discussing these issues more openly.

In accordance with the Council's Constitution, the petition, having been debated by the Council, was referred, together with the views expressed in the debate, to the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee as the appropriate decision-making body.

157. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Question to the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee from Mr Stuart Jeffery

It is now almost 18 months since the Council declared a climate and ecological emergency and 15 months since the Council agreed to develop an action plan. The plan was due to be presented at April's Policy and Resources Committee but was understandably deferred until June. There have been three Policy and Resources Committees since June and still no sign of a plan. Given that the climate and ecological emergencies dwarf the Covid pandemic why is the Council not giving it its full attention?

The Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee responded to the question.

Mr Jeffery asked the following supplementary question of the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee:

What will you tell your grandchildren when they ask why you didn't do everything enough quickly enough and why you didn't do everything possible to stop the climate ecological catastrophe?

The Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee responded to the question.

Question to the Chairman of the Democracy and General Purposes Committee from Ms Geraldine Brown

Will the Democracy and General Purposes Committee work with Group Leaders to ensure that next year's election arrangements, particularly so-called "purdah", and, as necessary, the Constitution are revised to ensure that the Local Development Scheme suffers minimal inconvenience and lost time arising from the election period?

The Chairman of the Democracy and General Purposes Committee responded to the question.

Ms Brown asked the following supplementary question of the Chairman of the Democracy and General Purposes Committee:

With Officers trying to pull out all the stops to achieve early Regulation 19 consultation, do you not think that Members, particularly Group Leaders, should try as hard as they can to find a solution and remove the possible impediment for the benefit of residents?

The Chairman of the Democracy and General Purposes Committee responded to the question.

Question to the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee from Mr Peter Coulling

In your view, do you think this Council is assured that our Borough will not have to absorb 5,000 extra dwellings in the period up to 2037, if a new algorithm comes into force?

The Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee responded to the question.

Mr Coulling asked the following supplementary question of the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee:

Does that mean when we get to agenda item 15 (Oral Report of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee held on 22 September 2020 – Local Development Scheme 2020-2022 (September 2020 Edition) and Maidstone Statement of Community Involvement September 2020), you will really express your concerns that the proposed Local Development Scheme leaves us very exposed as a Borough in January, February and probably a good part of March if the algorithm changes and that the Local Development Scheme is just not quick enough/agile enough and is not really covering our risk?

The Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee responded to the question.

Question to the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee from Mr Peter Titchener

What role, and with what legal standing and weight, will existing Neighbourhood Plans and also those nearing completion play in the current Local Plan Review?

The Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee responded to the question.

Mr Titchener asked the following supplementary question of the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee:

What concerns me about Neighbourhood Plans is that there are Parishes that have spent a lot of money in producing them and there are Parishes currently spending a lot of money producing draft Neighbourhood Plans. If they are to be set aside what does that say about the weight Maidstone Borough Council gives to local opinion because I was hoping to hear that if you are going to give the same weight to the current Neighbourhood Plans, then the green list will be amended to exclude any sites that conflict with those Neighbourhood Plans?

The Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee responded to the question.

Question to the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee from Mr John Horne

Will you recommend to the Strategic Planning & Infrastructure Committee that it requires Officers to list, describe and give an estimated impact of every reasonable constraint that could be applied to the Housing Needs figure to derive a lower Housing Target for the Local Plan Review?

The Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee responded to the question.

Mr Horne asked the following supplementary question of the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee:

The Government is stating that local circumstances should be applied to the algorithm for housing numbers. Does that mean that you will expect Officers not to repeat the equivalent of what the previous Leader said that during development of the current Local Plan the 23 constraints had been examined and none applied?

The Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee responded to the question.

Question to the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee from Mr John Hughes

As transport is such a major problem in the Borough, can you give residents an assurance that the key outcomes of the review of the Integrated Transport Strategy will be available to inform the Local Plan Review Preferred Strategy consultation in December 2020 if this proposal is agreed by the Borough Council?

The Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee responded to the question.

Mr Hughes asked the following supplementary question of the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee:

As the Integrated Transport Strategy is such a critical evidence base and strategic base for the Local Plan Review, isn't it very difficult to come up with alternative strategies if you haven't got some clear indications from that review of the Integrated Transport Strategy?

The Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee responded to the question.

Question to the Chairman of the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee from Mr Gary Thomas

On the assumption that the proposed new algorithm for Housing Numbers does not take effect for our Borough, what figure for employment needs are you pursuing as part of the Local Plan Review, recognising that a good proportion of new dwellings is likely to be purchased by those working outside our Borough?

The Chairman of the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee responded to the question.

Mr Thomas asked the following supplementary question of the Chairman of the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee:

Have you done any actual surveys to see where the purchasers of houses in the numerous new developments have moved from, including from London, whilst retaining London-based jobs?

The Chairman of the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee responded to the question.

Question to the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee from Ms Donna Greenan

Please can you tell me what Maidstone Borough Council's response will be to the Department for Transport's current consultation 'Pavement Parking: Options for Change'?

The Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee responded to the question.

Ms Greenan asked the following supplementary question of the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee:

While the consultation is taking place, what steps are the Council currently taking to highlight the dangers of pavement parking to vulnerable residents through local newsletters and social media usage?

The Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee responded to the question.

To listen to the answers to these questions, please follow this link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EuOxZmRnLcA&t=12918s>

158. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL TO THE CHAIRMEN OF COMMITTEES

There were no questions from Members of the Council to the Chairmen of Committees.

159. CURRENT ISSUES - REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL, RESPONSE OF THE GROUP LEADERS AND QUESTIONS FROM COUNCIL MEMBERS

Councillor Cox, the Leader of the Council, submitted his report on current issues.

After the Leader of the Council had submitted his report, Councillor Perry, the Leader of the Conservative Group, Councillor Mrs Gooch, the Leader of the Independent Group, Councillor McKay, the Leader of the Labour Group, and Councillor Powell, the Leader of the Independent Maidstone Group, responded to the issues raised.

There were no questions from Members regarding the issues raised by the Leader of the Council and the other Group Leaders in their speeches.

160. REPORT OF THE COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 25 AUGUST 2020 - REQUEST TO REDUCE THE NUMBER OF NOMINATIVE TRUSTEE POSITIONS FROM THE CUTBUSH AND CORRALL CHARITY (INCORPORATING THE QUESTED ALMSHOUSE CHARITY)

It was moved by Councillor Mortimer, seconded by Councillor Powell, that the recommendation of the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee relating to a request by the Cutbush and Corral Charity (incorporating the Quested Almshouse Charity) to reduce the number of Council appointed Nominative Trustees from four to two be approved.

RESOLVED: That the request by the Cutbush and Corrall Charity (incorporating the Quested Almshouse Charity) to reduce the number of Council appointed Nominative Trustees from four to two be approved.

161. REPORT OF THE AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2020 - AUDIT, GOVERNANCE AND STANDARDS COMMITTEE - ANNUAL REPORT TO COUNCIL 2019/20

It was moved by Councillor Harvey, seconded by Councillor Adkinson, that the recommendation of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee relating to its Annual Report to Council 2019/20 be approved.

RESOLVED: That the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee Annual Report 2019/20, attached as Appendix A to the report of the Committee, be noted.

162. ORAL REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE HELD ON 22 SEPTEMBER 2020 - LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2020-2022 (SEPTEMBER 2020 EDITION) AND MAIDSTONE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SEPTEMBER 2020

At the invitation of the Mayor, Councillor Geraldine Brown, the Chairman of the Maidstone Area Committee of the Kent Association of Local Councils, and Councillor Peter Coulling, a member of the Co-ordinating Team including the Maidstone Area Committee of the Kent Association of Local Councils, Maidstone CPRE, the Bearsted and Thurnham Society and the Joint Parishes Group, addressed the Council, urging Members to further accelerate the timetable to Regulation 19 consultation to attempt to avoid the risk of increased housing numbers being applied to the Borough.

Councillor D Burton then presented the report of the meeting of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee held on 22 September 2020.

It was moved by Councillor D Burton, seconded by Councillor Mrs Grigg,

1. That the Local Development Scheme 2020-2022 (September 2020 edition), attached as Appendix 1 to the report to the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee, be approved.
2. That the Maidstone Statement of Community Involvement (September 2020), attached as Appendix 2 to the report to the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee, be approved.
3. That the Statement of Community Involvement Covid-19 Temporary Addendum (May 2020) adopted by the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee on 9 June 2020 as an Addendum to the Maidstone Statement of Community Involvement (September 2020) be approved.

4. That the Head of Planning and Development be granted delegated powers to reverse the changes within the Maidstone Statement of Community Involvement Covid-19 Temporary Addendum (May 2020) adopted by the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee on 9 June 2020 as soon as Covid-19 restrictions allow.

In moving the recommendations, Councillor D Burton wished to make clear that they did not necessarily reflect his personal views.

Amendment moved by Councillor Garten, seconded by Councillor Perry, that the Council proceed directly to Regulation 19 consultation in February 2021 and adopt the Local Development Scheme 2020-2022 displayed at the meeting.

When put to the vote, the amendment was lost.

The original motion was then put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Local Development Scheme 2020-2022 (September 2020 edition), attached as Appendix 1 to the report to the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee, be approved.
2. That the Maidstone Statement of Community Involvement (September 2020), attached as Appendix 2 to the report to the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee, be approved.
3. That the Statement of Community Involvement Covid-19 Temporary Addendum (May 2020) adopted by the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee on 9 June 2020 as an Addendum to the Maidstone Statement of Community Involvement (September 2020) be approved.
4. That the Head of Planning and Development be granted delegated powers to reverse the changes within the Maidstone Statement of Community Involvement Covid-19 Temporary Addendum (May 2020) adopted by the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee on 9 June 2020 as soon as Covid-19 restrictions allow.

Councillor Garten requested that his dissent be recorded.

Councillor D Burton said that although the outcome of the vote might not be the preference of all Members, he was sure that they would work to deliver the timetable agreed by the Council and do their best to achieve the best outcome for Maidstone.

163. NOTICE OF MOTION - ANTI-IDLING CAMPAIGN

Notice of the following motion had been given by Councillor Adkinson, seconded by Councillor Harper:

Following the question to Council by a member of the public at its meeting on 15 July 2020, and whilst welcoming the findings of Maidstone Borough Council's 2020 air quality Annual Status Report, it is disappointing to note that the provisions of Regulation 12 of The Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (England) Regulations 2002 have still not been implemented by Maidstone Borough Council.

These provisions are even more relevant today as the country slowly emerges from lockdown due to Covid-19.

Schools are back, but social distancing rules and understandable anxiety of parents have meant that fewer journeys to schools are being made by public transport. It is estimated that you would need at least 5 times the number of buses the UK currently has to enable safe social distancing. Therefore, there are now more cars on our already polluted roads than ever before – all pumping out noxious fumes.

Idling is detrimental to the modern automotive engine, but even more seriously idling engines are adding to already bad air pollution. Air pollution is linked to poor recovery and higher infection rates of Covid-19 due to damage caused to the lungs.

This Council therefore resolves to ensure that the provisions of Regulation 12 of The Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (England) Regulations 2002 are enacted immediately, with appropriate publicity, training of enforcement officers, engagement with local businesses, bus and taxi operators and presentations in schools as has been done in the London-wide Idling Action's #enginesoff campaign.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 18.5, the motion, having been moved and seconded, was referred to the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee.

Note: Councillor Daley left the meeting during consideration of this item (10.00 p.m.).

164. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY, COMMUNICATIONS AND GOVERNANCE - AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

It was moved by Councillor Mrs Gooch, seconded by Councillor Mrs Joy, that the proposed amendments to the Constitution set out in Appendix 1 to the report of the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance, including changes to the requirements in relation to Planning and Licensing training, the Planning Referrals process and Seat Allocations be approved.

RESOLVED: That the proposed amendments to the Constitution set out in Appendix 1 to the report of the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance, including changes to the requirements in relation to Planning and Licensing training, the Planning Referrals process and Seat Allocations, be approved.

165. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY, COMMUNICATIONS AND GOVERNANCE
- REVIEW OF ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES

It was moved by Councillor Cox, seconded by Councillor Mrs Gooch:

1. That the allocation of seats on Committees be as set out in amended Appendix 1 to the report of the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance which has been circulated separately.
2. That the wishes of the Group Leaders with regard to membership of Committees, as set out in the schedule circulated separately, be accepted.

Amendment moved by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Cuming, that the proposed seat allocations be amended to reflect the original seat allocations agreed in May 2019 and that the wishes of Group Leaders regarding the membership of Committees be agreed following the meeting.

This amendment was not put to the vote. Section 17 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 provides for exceptions to the political balance requirements. The Council can amend the political balance of a Committee provided that notice of the intention to give such consideration has been given to all Members of the Council and that when the alternative arrangements are put to the vote at the Council meeting, no Member of the Council votes against them. Councillor English indicated that he formally objected to the amendment.

The original motion was then put to the vote and carried.

RESOLVED:

1. That the allocation of seats on Committees be as set out in amended Appendix 1 to the report of the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance which has been circulated separately.
2. That the wishes of the Group Leaders with regard to membership of Committees, as set out in the schedule circulated separately, be accepted.

Note:

Councillors Fort and Newton left the meeting before the voting on this item.

Councillors J and T Sams left the meeting during consideration of this item (10.15 p.m.).

166. LONG MEETING

Prior to 10.30 p.m., at the conclusion of the voting on the report of the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance relating to the Review of

Allocation of Seats on Committees, the Council considered whether to adjourn at 10.30 p.m. or to continue until 11.00 p.m. if necessary.

RESOLVED: That the meeting should continue until 11.00 p.m. if necessary.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL ACTING AS CORPORATE TRUSTEE OF THE CHARITY KNOWN AS THE COBTREE MANOR ESTATE

167. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY, COMMUNICATIONS AND GOVERNANCE - REVIEW OF ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES

It was moved by Councillor Cox, seconded by Councillor Purle, that the recommendations set out in the report of the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance be approved.

RESOLVED:

1. That it be noted that there is no impact on the seats on the Cobtree Manor Estate Charity Committee as a result of the review which has been undertaken.
2. That the wishes of Group Leaders with regard to the membership of the Committee be accepted.

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL ACTING AS CORPORATE TRUSTEE OF THE QUEEN'S OWN ROYAL WEST KENT REGIMENT MUSEUM TRUST

168. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY, COMMUNICATIONS AND GOVERNANCE - REVIEW OF ALLOCATION OF SEATS ON COMMITTEES

It was moved by Councillor Cox, seconded by Councillor D Rose, that the recommendations set out in the report of the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance be approved.

RESOLVED:

1. That it be noted that there is no impact on the seats on the Queen's Own Royal West Kent Regiment Museum Trust Committee as a result of the review which has been undertaken.
2. That the wishes of Group Leaders with regard to the membership of the Committee be accepted.

169. ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

At 10.35 p.m., the Mayor adjourned the meeting until a date to be determined by the Proper Officer in consultation with the Mayor and Group Leaders when the remaining items on the agenda will be discussed.

170. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 10.35 p.m.