

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2020**

**Present:** Councillors M Burton, Joy, Khadka, McKay, Mortimer(Chairman), Powell, Mrs Robertson, D Rose and Young

**Also Present:** Councillor Kimmance

72. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor M Rose.

73. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor McKay was present as Substitute Member for Councillor M Rose.

74. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

75. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor Kimmance was present as Visiting Member for Item 14 – Community Resilience Working with the Voluntary and Community Sector and Parish Councils.

76. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

77. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

78. EXEMPT ITEMS

**RESOLVED:** That all items be taken in public as proposed.

79. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 OCTOBER 2020

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 October 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed at a later date.

80. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

81. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

82. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

83. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

It was noted that a Heather House Update report would be presented to the Committee in January 2021, with the GP Provision Briefing Note delayed.

It was requested that a Planning Officer attend the 1 December 2020 Committee meeting for the presentation of the MBC Provided Gypsy and Traveller Sites report.

Two reports that concerned the RSPCA Guidance on Fireworks and Local Nature Reserves would be presented to the Committee when further information could be provided.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

84. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports of Outside Bodies.

85. COMMUNITY RESILIENCE WORKING WITH THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR AND PARISH COUNCILS

The Policy and Information Manager introduced the report following the important work of various community groups and Parish Councils during the covid-19 lockdown period. The Council wished to improve its working relationship with these organisations, with three learning objectives to achieve this outlined to the Committee.

A Local Compact was recommended to instil a robust framework against future emergencies. This would have resource implications for the Policy and Information Team, but as the Compact was an existing model, various best practice resources were available. A change to the Parish Charter to include an additional principle, or an expansion of the 'Leadership' principle, to outline the roles of both the Council and Parishes in conducting an emergency response was suggested. The increased dialogue between the Council and Parishes was highlighted, with a monthly newsletter, monitored parish inbox and joint webinars with Maidstone KALC and the Council's Leader and Deputy Leader noted.

The proposed development of a central repository of key contacts would be held and publicised by the Council for public use and include a point of contact from within the Council. The support provided by INVOLVE during the lockdown period was noted, however there were weaknesses in the Council's community support arrangements. The repository's development could be undertaken by the working group supporting the ongoing Access to Services Review to utilise Member knowledge of the groups operating within their ward.

The Committee recognised the positive work undertaken by Parish Councils, and voluntary, community and faith-based groups during the lockdown period. Concerns were expressed that the groups that operated within non-parished areas were not as well recognised within the proposals. The Head of Policy, Communications and Governance confirmed that an email inbox would be created for both Parish Councils and other community groups, to ensure a point of contact for both types of organisation within the Council.

There were concerns of duplication of work, as within the Service Level Agreement between the Council and INVOLVE, the latter were required to provide a composite list of all voluntary and community groups within the borough. The Head of Housing and Community Services was in discussions with INVOLVE to ascertain whether this agreement remained feasible given the organisational change and growth within the organisation in recent months. It was confirmed that many of the voluntary and community groups in operation were included within an original repository created by the Council at the beginning of the lockdown period.

**RESOLVED:** That

1. Local partners are consulted with the intention to develop a local compact for Maidstone which will include representative roles and mutual support in emergencies;
2. The Access to Services Review expand its remit to include building a repository of community organisations across the Borough;
3. The Parish Charter be amended subject to the agreement of Parish Councils to reflect their important role in emergencies;
4. The provision of Parish Council newsletters and joint webinars with KALC to ensure regular communication and feedback, be noted;
5. A short update report be presented to the Committee in February 2021; and
6. A progress update be presented to the Committee in April 2021.

86. DURATION OF MEETING

7.30 p.m. to 8.26 p.m.