

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY
27 APRIL 2016

Present: Councillor Mrs Wilson (Chairman), and
Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Brice, Chittenden, Cox,
Garland, Joy, McKay, McLoughlin, Naghi, Newton,
Ross, Round, Sargeant and Mrs Stockell

188. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Munford.

189. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Newton was substituting for Councillor Munford.

190. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman advised that there was an urgent exempt report and urgent update from the Interim Director of Regeneration and Place and the Head of Finance and Resources – To consider a property acquisition.

There was also an urgent update to the Report of the Head of Policy and Communications – Annual Performance Plan 2015-18.

191. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

192. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members and Officers.

193. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

Councillor Mrs Wilson indicated that she had been lobbied in regard to Agenda Item 13 – Report of the Head of Commercial and Economic Development – Public Realm Phase Three.

194. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the items on Part II of the agenda be taken in private as proposed.

195. MINUTES (PART I) OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 MARCH 2016

RESOLVED: That the minutes (Part I) of the meeting held on 23 March 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed.

196. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

197. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (IF ANY)

There were no questions from members of the public.

198. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS - EQUALITIES OBJECTIVES UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Policy and Communications relating to the progress of the Equalities Objectives.

In response to a question from a Member, it was noted that the Council does run a scheme in the Gateway with Involve Kent where adults with special needs provide a voluntary service assisting customers. The Head of Policy and Communications undertook to provide further information to the Member on any other areas within the Council where a similar scheme operates.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the progress made on the Equality Objectives in the performance update against the identified actions and measurements, as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Head of Policy and Communications, be noted; and
- 2) That the Equality Objectives be reviewed annually and aligned with the strategic planning process.

Voting: For: 15 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

199. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY AND COMMUNICATIONS - ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN 2015 - 18

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Policy and Communications which detailed progress of key strategies, plans and performance indicators.

Members were also circulated an urgent update to the report.

It was noted that there were four areas where data was still awaited and this would be reported back to the Committee in June.

In response to questions from Members, it was noted that:-

- All contact from businesses is captured and entered onto a database, this could be in the form of advice for start up, training or enquiries on occupancy within the Business Terrace.
- A report on the Business Terrace would be coming to the June meeting of this Committee.
- The data for the Park and Ride did include the period when the Sittingbourne Road Park and Ride closed.
- This Council had volunteered to participate in some research that the LGA was carrying out on the impact of future changes to housing provision.
- The target for deposits of litter that fall below an acceptable level was requested by the Head of Service to add context and give grounding.
- The target for the number of non-car journeys made in Maidstone reflected the objectives of the ITS. However, the Head of Policy and Communications would come back to the Member concerned with further clarity.
- The data would be shown as raw data in the future rather than percentages and a comparison made with previous data
- The establishment of a base line for the engagement with Parishes will be finalised once the first survey had been undertaken. This would come back to the July Committee meeting as part of the Quarter 1 update.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the summary of overall performance for 2015/16 of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and the end of year corporate strategies and plans update as set out in Appendix 1 to the report of the Head of Policy and Communications be noted;
- 2) That updates on performance indicators where information is not available to report, but will be available in the future, be included as part of the Quarter 1 Performance Plan in July;
- 3) That the new set of Key Performance Indicators to support the delivery for the Strategic Plan 2015-20 which was refreshed in 2016, as set out in Appendix 2 to the report of the Head of Policy and Communications, be agreed; and
- 4) That an update is received at the July meeting of this Committee on engagement with Parish Councils.

Voting: For: 15 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

200. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMERCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - PUBLIC REALM PHASE THREE

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Commercial and Economic Development which related to the progress of Phase 3 of the public realm improvement project.

Members noted that Phase 3 would cover the north end of Week Street, from the entrance of Fremlin Walk to the junction with Station Road near Brenchley House, and the entire length of Gabriel's Hill from Jubilee Square down to the junction with Lower Stone Street.

The design team would be required to produce very early sketch designs that would be presented to Members.

In response to questions from Members, it was noted that:-

- The Council would not be notified if the Heritage Lottery Bid had been successful until January 2017
- Regular progress reports would be presented to Members
- New versions of the proposed layout would be due in the next couple of weeks and full attention will be given to the safety of all users
- The budget for the project was estimated

RESOLVED:

- 1) That approval be given to go out to tender for the appointment of a design team for Phase 3 – North end of Week Street and Gabriel's Hill subject to the agreement of the design brief as per the recommendations set out below;
- 2) That delegated authority be given to the Director of Regeneration and Place, in consultation with the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee; Communities, Housing and Environment Committee; and Policy and Resources Committee to agree the final design brief;
- 3) That a working group be formed for this project which will act as a sounding board for the design consultants. This group will consist of the chairs and vice-chairs of the Committees outlined in recommendation 2 above or their nominated substitutes;
- 4) That delegated authority be given to the Head of Mid Kent Legal Services to agree and enter into a contract with the successful bidder;

- 5) That the parallel piece of work commissioned to produce a Public Realm Policy for the town centre, as set out in paragraph 2.12 of the report of the Head of Commercial and Economic Development be noted, a draft of which will be presented to the relevant Committees in August 2016;
- 6) That approval be given to submit a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund and any other appropriate fund that may become available for the Townscape Heritage Fund, for Gabriel's Hill; and
- 7) That approval be given to finance the Public Realm Phase 3 project with estimated capital costs of £3.1m, which includes the design fees and HLF fees.

Voting: For: 15 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

201. REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE - RECRUITMENT OF A DIRECTOR OF MID KENT SERVICES

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive which sought authority to commence the process of recruitment and appointment to the post of Director of Mid Kent Services (MKS).

Members noted that the current Director of MKS had been seconded from his full time role at Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and his secondment ends 31st July 2016.

At its meeting on 17 December 2015 the MKS Board agreed that the post should be funded equally by all three Councils and that Maidstone Borough Council would be the employer, with the Chief Executive being the Line Manager.

A draft collaboration agreement had been prepared for the Councils to sign which sets out how they would cooperate to manage the post.

In response to questions from Members, it was noted that:-

- A temporary solution would be put in place should it not be possible to recruit by the time the current Director of Mid Kent Services' secondment ends
- The recruitment process would be undertaken by Members of this Council's Employment Committee
- A role in the interview process would be investigated for the other two Councils
- The Collaboration Agreement would be signed by all three Authorities before the recruitment process commences

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the post of Director of Mid Kent Services to be employed by Maidstone Borough Council be confirmed;
- 2) That the Chief Executive be authorised to commence the process of recruitment and appointment; and
- 3) That delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive to sign the collaboration agreement between the three Councils on behalf of Maidstone Borough Council and that this must be signed by all parties before the recruitment process commences.

Voting: For: 14 Against: 0 Abstentions: 1

202. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING**

RESOLVED: That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business because of the likely disclosure of exempt information for the reason specified having applied the Public Interest Test.

Head of Schedule 12A and Briefing Description

Minutes (Part II) of the meeting held on 23 March 2016	Para 3 – Information re business/financial affairs
Report of the Interim Director of Regeneration and Place – Business Plan for land and property Following its acquisition	Para 3 – Information re business/financial affairs
Report of the Head of Finance and Resources – Rivers Medway, Teise and Beult Flood Alleviation – Option Appraisal	Para 3 – Information re business/financial affairs
Joint Report of the Interim Director of Regeneration and Place – To consider a property acquisition	Para 3 – Information re business/financial affairs

203. **MINUTES (PART II) OF THE MEETING HELD ON 23 MARCH 2016**

RESOLVED: That the minutes (Part II) of the meeting held on 23 March 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed.

204. REPORT OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE - AMENDMENT TO BUSINESS PLAN FOR THE ACQUISITION OF LAND AND PROPERTY

The Committee considered the exempt report of the Interim Director of Regeneration and Place which set out an option to change the short term strategy for the site as detailed in the exempt report.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the change to the short term holding strategy be approved;
- 2) That delegated authority be given to the Director of Regeneration and Place in consultation with the Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee to make changes to the Business Plan that result in the same or better outcomes i.e. more cost effective, for Maidstone Borough Council and to revert to the original holding strategy if the preferred option as set out in paragraph 2.5 of the exempt report of the Interim Director of Regeneration and Place is not deliverable;
- 3) That delegated authority be given to the Head of Legal Services to negotiate and sign a lease(s) (together with any other associated documents) with a charity(s) or commercial organisation(s) for the short term use of the site.

Voting: For: 15 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

205. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE AND RESOURCES - RIVERS MEDWAY, TEISE AND BEULT FLOOD ALLEVIATION - OPTION APPRAISAL

The Committee considered the exempt report of the Head of Finance and Resources which set out the flood alleviation options assessed by the Environment Agency.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Council continues to engage with its flood alleviation partners to identify routes to deliver funding for all flood alleviation options currently modelled by the Environment Agency as well as proposed methods of protection as set out in Section 2.22 of the exempt report of the Head of Finance and Resources; and

Voting: For: 14 Against: 0 Abstentions: 1

- 2) That the Council requests that the Environment Agency does not commence public consultation on flood alleviation measures for the Rivers Medway, Teise and Beult until all the relevant information is available for the measures as set out in paragraph 2.22 and Appendix A to the exempt report of the Head of Finance and Resources and that before consultation commences, Maidstone Borough Council Members and Parish Councils are briefed.

Voting: For: 14 Against: 0 Abstentions: 1

206. JOINT REPORT OF THE INTERIM DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE AND THE HEAD OF FINANCE AND RESOURCES - TO CONSIDER A PROPERTY ACQUISITION

The Committee considered the joint exempt report of the Interim Director of Regeneration and Place and the Head of Finance and Resources which considered the wider economic benefits of the property acquisition and sought authority to conclude negotiations with the owners.

Members also considered an urgent update to the report.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Committee considers the wider economic benefits of the acquisition;
- 2) That the Head of Finance and Resources be granted delegated authority to conclude the negotiations with the owner; and
- 3) That the Head of Mid Kent Legal Services be authorised to complete the purchase on the terms as agreed by the Head of Finance and Resources.

Voting: For: 15 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

207. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 9.45 p.m.