

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Policy and Resources Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 5 DECEMBER 2018

Present: Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Boughton, Clark, Cox (Chairman), Field, Mrs Gooch, Harvey, McLoughlin, Newton, Perry, Springett and Mrs Wilson

123. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies were received by Councillor Mortimer.

Councillor Boughton sent apologies for lateness.

124. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Wilson was present as a substitute for Councillor Mortimer.

Note: Councillor Boughton arrived during consideration of this item at 6.33 pm

125. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman informed the Committee that he had decided to accept a report on Reference from Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee – Loose Neighbourhood Plan Consultation Response (Regulation 16) as an urgent item. The Chairman explained that the reason for urgency was that this item had been referred by the Committee that had met the previous evening, and the consultation response was due to close before the Policy and Resources Committee was due to meet again.

Note: Councillor Springett arrived at 6.36 pm, and Councillor Blackmore arrived at 6.40 pm, during consideration of this item.

126. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no visiting members.

127. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Councillor Clark declared that he had already responded to the Loose Neighbourhood Plan Consultation as a local business owner.

128. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

129. TO CONSIDER WHETHER ANY ITEMS SHOULD BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBLE DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION.

RESOLVED: That item 15. Enforcement Proceedings be taken in private due to the possible disclosure of exempt information.

130. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

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

There were no questions from members of the public.

132. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme is noted.

133. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports of Outside Bodies.

134. COUNCIL TAX BASE AND COLLECTION FUND ADJUSTMENT

Mr Mark Green, the Director of Finance and Business Improvement, presented a report outlining the Council Tax Base and Collection Fund Adjustment.

Mr Green explained that the authority was required to provide projections on the Council Tax base each year. The Council Tax Base figure equated to the number of residential properties in the borough that were liable to pay Council Tax, taking into account other factors that may affect the Council Tax Base including the issuing of various allowances and the proportion of non-collection. The calculation of this figure allowed the Council, and other precepting authorities, to make future financial projections. The Committee noted that in 2018/19 the growth in the Council Tax base was predicted to be 2%, but the actual growth was 1.82%.

Alongside the Council Tax Base, an adjustment was required to the Council's Collection Fund. The Collection Fund was the fund the Council was required to maintain to ensure any variances between the predicted and actual collection of Council Tax was reflected in the payments made to the various precepting authorities.

In response to a question from the Committee, Mr Green confirmed that the Council was not allowed to hold a contingency fund in the event of over distributing the collection fund. However as precepting authorities

tended to remain the same year to year, it was possible to recover any over allocation through subsequent distributions of the fund.

The Committee requested that an updated appendix showing the Parish Council Tax Base, including a further column with the previous year's data in, be circulated to members following the meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. Pursuant to this report and in accordance with the Local Authority (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by this Authority as its Council Tax Base for the year 2019/20 will be 62,033.4;
2. In accordance with the Local Authority (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by this Authority as the Council Tax Base for each parish area for the year 2019/20 will be as identified in Appendix 2 to this report.
3. The 2018/19 Council Tax projection and proposed distribution detailed in Appendix 3 of this report is agreed.

Voting: Unanimous

135. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR UPDATE QUARTER 2, P&R

Mr Green updated the Committee on the performance of its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). 12 out of the 13 KPIs were at green status, having exceeded their targets. The only KPI which had not achieved its target related to Housing Preventions, and the reason for this was that the methodology had changed since the new Homelessness Reduction Act had come into force which restricted what activity could be counted as a prevention.

In response to a question from the Committee, Mr William Cornall, Director of Regeneration and Place, stated that he would check what type of roads the KPI relating to litter picking on high speed roads covered and circulate this information to members following the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the summary of performance for Quarter 2 of 2018/19 for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) be noted.

136. REFERENCE FROM STRATEGIC PLANNING, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE - LOOSE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN CONSULTATION RESPONSE (REGULATION 16)

Mr Sam Bailey, the Democratic and Administration Services Manager, explained that the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee had referred an element of their report concerning the Loose Neighbourhood Plan Consultation to the Policy and Resources Committee

for comment. The element of the consultation response report referred was that of the proposed response of the Council as landowner, which dealt with the designation of land known as Field to the rear of Herts Crescent and McAlpine Close as Local Green Space, which Mr Green would submit under his delegated authority.

The Committee debated the proposed response and raised the following:

- Any designations of green space should be supported on principle as there was a shortage of green space in the borough. Enhanced protection for green space was required to protect it from development.
- There were different grades of local green space, it may not be beneficial to place protected status onto this land as it may be that the Council will want to use it for other purposes in the future, depending on the grade of the land.
- It was important to ensure that any objection made was consistent with the approach the Council had taken previously. It was important to understand whether the Council had raised objections to designation of its land as local green space in other Neighbourhood Plan consultations.

Mr Green confirmed that he would take into account the comments made by the Committee and the completed response would be circulated by email once he had exercised his delegated authority on this matter.

RESOLVED:

That the Director of Finance and Business Improvement takes into account the comments of the Policy and Resources Committee when exercising his delegated authority in relation to the Maidstone Borough Council response to the Loose Neighbourhood Plan as a landowner.

Voting: Unanimous

137. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That the press and the public be excluded from the meeting due to the possible disclosure of confidential information for the reasons outlined in the report, having taken into account the public interest test.

138. ENFORCEMENT PROCEEDINGS

Mr William Cornall, Director of Regeneration and Place, outlined an enforcement issue to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the report is noted.

139. DURATION OF MEETING

6.31 pm to 7.54pm