

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL
HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, MAIDSTONE
ON 10 APRIL 2019

Present: Councillor Naghi (The Mayor) and
Councillors Adkinson, Bartlett, Mrs Blackmore,
Boughton, Brice, D Burton, Chappell-Tay, Clark, Cox,
Cuming, Daley, English, Fort, Garten, Mrs Gooch, Mrs
Grigg, Harper, Harvey, Hastie, Hinder, Mrs Hinder,
Mrs Joy, Kimmance, Lewins, McKay, McLoughlin,
Mortimer, Newton, Parfitt-Reid, Perry, Powell, Purle,
Mrs Robertson, Rose, Round, J Sams, T Sams,
Spooner, Mrs Stockell, Vizzard, Webb,
de Wiggondene-Sheppard and Mrs Wilson

130. PRAYERS

Prayers were said by the Reverend Canon Ian Parrish.

131. MINUTE'S SILENCE

The Council stood in silence for one minute in memory of John Verrall and Hugh Laing, former Members of the Borough Council, who had passed away recently.

132. RECORDING OF PROCEEDINGS

Councillor McKay reserved his right to record the proceedings.

133. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors M Burton, Fermor, Field, Fissenden, Garland, Greer, Harwood, Munford, Mrs Ring, Springett and Wilby.

134. DISPENSATIONS

There were no applications for dispensations.

135. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

136. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

137. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the items on the agenda be taken in public as proposed.

138. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD ON 27 FEBRUARY 2019

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Borough Council held on 27 February 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed subject to the addition of the following note after the resolution in Minute 121 (Report of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 23 January 2019 – Council Tax Long Term Empty Property Premium):

Note: Councillor Hastie left the meeting after consideration of this item.

139. MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor updated Members on recent and forthcoming engagements and thanked them for their support.

The Mayor said that he would like to take the opportunity to wish all the very best to those Members who would be seeking re-election on 2 May 2019 and to thank those Councillors who would be standing down for their services over the years.

The Mayor then called upon Councillor Cox who wished to pay tribute to Councillor Mrs Wilson who had served as a Borough Councillor for over 20 years and would not be seeking re-election on 2 May 2019. After Councillor Cox had spoken, the other Group Leaders (Councillors Perry, Mrs Gooch, McKay and Powell) paid tribute.

Councillor Mrs Wilson responded to the sentiments expressed in the speeches.

The Mayor then wished Councillor Mrs Wilson all the very best for the future.

The Mayor then called upon Councillor Perry who wished to pay tribute to Councillors Greer and Mrs Stockell, long serving Members of the Borough Council, and Councillor Boughton all of whom would not be seeking re-election on 2 May 2019.

After Councillor Perry had spoken, the other Group Leaders (Councillors Cox, Mrs Gooch, McKay and Powell) paid tribute.

Councillors Mrs Stockell and Boughton responded to the sentiments expressed in the speeches. Councillor Greer had submitted his apologies for non-attendance.

Note: Councillor Rose entered the meeting during the Mayor's announcements (6.50 p.m.).

140. PETITIONS

Councillor Harper presented a petition in the following terms:

We support the implementation of a 20mph speed limit across Fant in the roads bounded by Tonbridge Road and the River Medway. We believe that this will make our environment safer for all residents and people who travel through our communities.

In presenting the petition, Councillor Harper said that:

- The petition was self-explanatory. Discussions had been taking place within the Council about 20 mph speed limits in residential areas for a long time. The petition had grown out of the frustrations of the residents of Fant about the need for action. It was hoped that the petition would help the Council to press for 20 mph speed limits in residential areas in the discussions at the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board.
- The arguments in terms of safety for the elderly, children and people with disabilities were well known, but most casualties were motorists in areas where traffic travelled too fast on unsuitable roads.
- Fant also suffered from rat running, and residents believed that a 20 mph speed limit would discourage rat running from Glebe Lane to the gyratory system in the town centre. Only nine roads led into Fant. It was a well-defined community and one which was eminently suited to introducing this type of speed control, so perhaps the Council might want to look at Fant as a 20 mph speed area pilot study.

A factual briefing note prepared by the Officers with input from KCC Highways was circulated to assist Members in the discussion on the petition.

During the discussion, Members made a number of points, including:

- Strongly support the petition, but this is not just about Fant. There are many other areas in the Borough including a number of rural village centres which could benefit from 20 mph speed limits. A wider debate is required as the petition raises issues across the Borough, including High Street, North and East Wards and parts of Staplehurst, Headcorn, Harrietsham and Lenham.
- In Fant there is nowhere to park so 20 mph speed limits and parking issues need to be looked at in parallel. As part of the Local Plan review, consideration should be given to ways to solve parking problems in urban areas.
- There are many wards where similar petitions might be forthcoming so the scope of any review should be opened up to enable other areas to contribute. A speed survey has already been undertaken in

Staplehurst and some serious speed incidents were recorded. Fant residents should consider undertaking a survey to support their case.

- The 30 mph speed limit in residential areas should be reduced to 20 mph but should be enforceable and accompanied by some form of traffic calming infrastructure.
- Most cars are very inefficient when travelling at 20 mph so if 20 mph zones were to be rolled out over a wider area there could be an impact on air pollution. Speed limits need to be enforced and traffic calming measures should be provided to reduce traffic speeds.
- Traffic calming is required to make the lower speed limit self-enforcing. Lower speed limits reduce traffic fatalities and serious injuries so action is required now.
- In terms of traffic calming infrastructure, other methods such as chicanes would be better than speed humps.
- There are many country roads in the Borough which could benefit from 20 mph speed limits, but an effective enforcement regime is required.
- Consideration should be given to ways to change speed behaviour, but in addition to education and publicity other speed reduction measures are required.
- The support of Kent County Council and the Police is required for 20 mph speed limits and schemes need to be enforceable. 20mph limits are most appropriate for roads where average speeds are already low.
- Traffic calming measures are required in Buckland Hill which is used by huge numbers of children during the morning and afternoon school rush hours.
- Members should lobby for speed limiter technology in cars.
- Driving at lower speeds is less efficient, produces more pollution and increases respiratory problems.
- There is a need to work with Kent County Council regarding the implementation of 20mph speed limits on residential roads across the Borough. Slowing down traffic speeds to 20 mph reduces fatalities and improves quality of life. Innovative solutions are needed to reduce traffic speed and tackle parking problems.

The petition and the points raised during the discussion were referred to the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board for consideration.

141. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

142. 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.

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

The Leader of the Council submitted his report on current issues. The Leader of the Council took the opportunity to wish the Deputy Mayor, Councillor Mrs Ring, a speedy return to good health.

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.

A number of Members then asked questions of the Leader of the Council and the Leader of the Labour Group on the issues raised in their speeches.

Note: Councillor Mrs Wilson left the meeting during consideration of this item (8.12 p.m.), but returned shortly afterwards (8.19 p.m.).

144. REPORT OF THE DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE HELD ON 13 MARCH 2019 - COMMITTEE STRUCTURE REVIEW

It was moved by Councillor Mrs Wilson, seconded by Councillor Mrs Gooch, that the recommendations of the Democracy Committee relating to the Committee Structure Review be approved subject to:

A. The amendment of recommendation 1 to read:

That the Committee Structure Review report, attached as Appendix 1 to the report of the Democracy Committee, be agreed subject to the amendment of references to the membership of the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board to reflect the actual Borough Council membership (9 Councillors); AND

B. The amendment of recommendation 2 to read:

That the draft Constitutional Changes, attached as Appendix 3 to the report of the Democracy Committee, be agreed subject to the addition of the following:

2.2.6 LICENSING COMMITTEE

Membership: 13 Councillors

Amendment, moved by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Webb, that the recommendations of the Democracy Committee relating to the Committee Structure Review, as amended, be approved subject to the further amendment of recommendation 2 to read:

That the draft Constitutional Changes, attached as Appendix 3 to the report of the Democracy Committee, be agreed subject to:

A. The addition of the following:

2.2.6 LICENSING COMMITTEE

Membership: 13 Councillors

AND

B. The following amendment to the functions of the Policy and Resources Committee and the delegation of those functions:

2.2.1 POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

FUNCTIONS	DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS
<p><u>b) To review annually the performance of the Chief Executive and Directors, to agree targets for the coming financial year, and agree any corrective action which may be required relating to the previous financial year.</u></p>	<p>Panel comprising 5 Councillors (to include the Group Leaders of the 5 largest parties)</p>

The mover and the seconder of the original motion indicated that they accepted this change to the motion.

The substantive motion was then put to the vote.

SUBSTANTIVE MOTION CARRIED

RESOLVED: That

1. The Committee Structure Review report, attached as Appendix 1 to the report of the Democracy Committee, be agreed subject to the amendment of references to the membership of the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board to reflect the actual Borough Council membership (9 Councillors).
2. The draft Constitutional Changes, attached as Appendix 3 to the report of the Democracy Committee, be agreed subject to:

- A. The addition of the following:

2.2.6 LICENSING COMMITTEE

Membership: 13 Councillors

AND

- B. The following amendment to the functions of the Policy and Resources Committee and the delegation of those functions:

2.2.1 POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

FUNCTIONS	DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS
<u>b) To review annually the performance of the Chief Executive and Directors, to agree targets for the coming financial year, and agree any corrective action which may be required relating to the previous financial year.</u>	Panel comprising 5 Councillors (to include the Group Leaders of the 5 largest parties)

Note: During consideration of the next agenda item (Report of the Democracy Committee proposing amendments to the terms of reference of the Planning Committee), a Member expressed concern that although he had indicated that he wished to speak on recommendation 10 of the Committee Structure Review report relating to report styles and, in particular, the proposal that the cross-cutting issues and implications section be included at the front of reports, he had not been given the opportunity to speak. The Mayor apologised for his mistake in failing to call upon the Member to speak.

The Chief Executive confirmed that there was no facility for the Council to amend its earlier decision at this meeting, but Members might wish to reflect in due course on the effectiveness of the new arrangements.

As a consequence, an item will be included in the Democracy and General Purposes Committee Work Programme to review the effectiveness of the new arrangements in six months' time.

145. REPORT OF THE DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE HELD ON 13 MARCH 2019 - PLANNING COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

It was moved by Councillor Mrs Wilson, seconded by Councillor Mrs Gooch, that the recommendation of the Democracy Committee relating to the Planning Committee Terms of Reference be approved.

During the discussion, it was confirmed that provision would be made in the Democracy and General Purposes Committee work programme for a

review of the operation of the amended Terms of Reference in six months' time.

RESOLVED: That the Planning Committee Terms of Reference, attached as Appendix 1 to the report of the Democracy Committee, be approved.

146. REPORT OF THE COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE ACTING AS THE CRIME AND DISORDER COMMITTEE HELD ON 19 MARCH 2019 - COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN 2019-22

It was moved by Councillor Mortimer, seconded by Councillor Powell, that the recommendation of the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee acting as the Crime and Disorder Committee relating to the adoption of the Maidstone Community Safety Partnership Plan 2019-22 be approved.

RESOLVED: That the Maidstone Community Safety Partnership Plan 2019-22, attached as Appendix A to the report of the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee acting as the Crime and Disorder Committee, be adopted.

147. ORAL REPORT OF THE HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE HELD ON 2 APRIL 2019

There was no report from the Heritage, Culture and Leisure Committee on this occasion.

148. NOTICE OF MOTION - CLIMATE CHANGE

The following motion was moved by Councillor Harper, seconded by Councillor McKay:

This Council notes with concern the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report on global climate change impacts and the recent Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) reports on global species and habitat loss.

Further to this, Council:

(1) Declares its recognition of global climate and biodiversity emergencies;

(2) Requests the Policy & Resources Committee to:

- undertake a short review of MBC governance policies and progress aimed at addressing locally these twin threats and to report on findings;*
- consider a target date of 2030 for the whole of the Borough of Maidstone to be carbon neutral;*

- *consider how the Council can strengthen local protection and enhancement of species, habitats and ecosystems services under available powers;*

(3) Requests the Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer stating the concern of the Council with respect to the above, the likely national impact on the economy and on the wellbeing of citizens, and requesting government funding be made available to implement swift appropriate actions in response.

The Mayor said that he considered it to be convenient and conducive to the despatch of business that the motion be dealt with at the meeting, and that a factual briefing note had been circulated.

Amendment moved by Councillor Perry, seconded by Councillor Brice, that the motion be amended as follows:

Paragraph 2 – Sub-section 2 – first bullet point – put a full stop after “findings” and add the following sentence:

“This would include, inter alia, a review of the current provision of electric charging points throughout the Borough and bring forward an ambitious plan to make Maidstone Borough the friendliest place in the country for driving electric or hybrid vehicles.”

Paragraph 2 – Sub-section 3 - include at the beginning of the proposed letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer the following additional sentence:

“This Council welcomes the Chancellor’s recent announcement that a “future homes standard” will mandate the end of fossil-fuel heating systems so as to “lower carbon and lower fuel bills too.”

The mover and the seconder of the original motion indicated that they accepted these changes to the motion.

The substantive motion was then put to the vote.

SUBSTANTIVE MOTION CARRIED

RESOLVED: That this Council notes with concern the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report on global climate change impacts and the recent Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) reports on global species and habitat loss.

Further to this, Council:

- (1) Declares its recognition of global climate and biodiversity emergencies;

(2) Requests the Policy & Resources Committee to:

- undertake a short review of MBC governance policies and progress aimed at addressing locally these twin threats and to report on findings. This would include, inter alia, a review of the current provision of electric charging points throughout the Borough and bring forward an ambitious plan to make Maidstone Borough the friendliest place in the country for driving electric or hybrid vehicles.
- consider a target date of 2030 for the whole of the Borough of Maidstone to be carbon neutral;
- consider how the Council can strengthen local protection and enhancement of species, habitats and ecosystems services under available powers;

(3) Requests the Chief Executive to (a) write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer stating the concern of the Council with respect to the above, the likely national impact on the economy and on the wellbeing of citizens, and requesting government funding be made available to implement swift appropriate actions in response and (b) include at the beginning of the proposed letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer the following additional sentence:

“This Council welcomes the Chancellor’s recent announcement that a “future homes standard” will mandate the end of fossil-fuel heating systems so as to “lower carbon and lower fuel bills too.”

Note: Councillors Mrs Blackmore left the meeting prior to consideration of this motion (8:40 p.m.) and Councillors J and T Sams left the meeting during consideration of the motion (8.42 p.m.).

149. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 8.55 p.m.