

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 26 JUNE
2019**

Present: Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Brice, Chappell-Tay, Clark, Cox (Chairman), English, Garten, Mrs Gooch, Joy, McKay, Mortimer, Newton, Purle, Round and Springett

13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies were received from Councillors M Burton, Harvey and Perry.

14. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that the following members were present as substitute members:

- Councillor Brice for Councillor Perry
- Councillor Garten for Councillor M Burton
- Councillor Mrs Joy for Councillor Harvey

15. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

16. CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chairman informed the Committee that he intended to make a change to the order of business by taking Agenda Item 17 before Agenda Item 16 as the resolutions made for the Business Rates Retention (Pilot) Additional Projects would have a bearing on the considerations for the Revenue and Capital Outturn.

17. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no visiting members.

18. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

19. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

The following Members of the Committee stated that they had been lobbied on Agenda Item 17 – Business Rates Retention (Pilot) Additional Projects:-

Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Chappell-Tay, Clark, Cox, English, Gooch, Round and Springett.

20. EXEMPT ITEMS

The Chairman stated that he intended to take the Part II minutes alongside the Part I minutes in the public domain providing there were no questions.

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

21. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 24 APRIL 2019

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2019 be agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed.

22. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 MAY 2019

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2019 be agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed.

23. MINUTES (PART I) AND (PART II) OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 MAY 2019

RESOLVED: That the minutes (Part I and Part II) of the meeting held on 22 May 2019 be agreed as an accurate record of the meeting and signed.

24. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

25. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

26. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Work Programme and made no changes.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme is noted.

27. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2018/19 - Q4 UPDATE

The Head of Policy, Communications and Governance introduced the report which set out the performance for Quarter 4 2018/19 Key

Performance Indicators. It was noted that:

- Highlights included performance across the Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all priority with strong performance in relation to litter and detritus ratings, the percentage of fly tips which resulted in enforcement action and number of fly tips assessed and cleared.
- Information had now been received from Kent County Council for February and March for household waste recycling and performance is 47.77% for the quarter and 51.4% for the year so just missing target and second best in Kent (Feb-March less garden waste which affects the tonnage).
- Strong performance in planning and housing 3 targets were rated as red these include the number of households housed through the housing register and the number of applications where housing duty has ended.

The Head of Policy, Communications and Governance drew Members' attention to the list of new Strategic Key Performance Indicators outlined in the report which had been developed following a recommendation by the Committee in April to have a short list of Strategic Indicators to be presented quarterly along with any indicators from other committees by exception only.

In response to questions from Members, Officers advised that:-

- Supplementary guidance for the policy on affordable housing was being produced and once completed would go out for consultation.
- The Director of Environment and Place was not aware of direct targeting by London boroughs to buy up apartments in Maidstone for their social housing needs. However, if the Member concerned could give him some examples then he could investigate further.
- The Chief Executive advised that a task and finish group had been set up with other authorities to share experiences on out of area placements of vulnerable people. She offered to provide a Members Briefing on this.
- The Head of Public Realm and Environment would be asked to come up with proposals to align de-littering of rural roads with other agencies, such as de-littering straight after the verges have been trimmed and then email the Committee.
- The Head of Housing and Community Services would be asked to circulate the data on the number of people being presented as homeless to the Committee by email.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) The summary of performance for Quarter 4 of 2018/19 for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) be noted.
- 2) The draft strategic indicators for 2019/20 as detailed in paragraph 4.5 of the report of the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance be agreed

Voting: For: Unanimous

28. BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE REVIEW

The Head of Policy, Communications and Governance introduced a report on Bio-diversity and Climate Change Review which set out an approach to undertaking the review.

It was noted that Kent County Council (KCC) had produced a motion on Climate Change and Central Government had also announced their commitment to greenhouse gas emissions in the United Kingdom being cut to almost zero by 2050.

The Committee were of the view that the report should be deferred to enable Officers to consider the approaches of other authorities and central government before coming back with a more informed report to the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be deferred until the next meeting of the Committee to enable a fuller review to be undertaken which would consider what other bodies are committing to under climate change.

Voting: For: Unanimous

29. BUSINESS RATES RETENTION (PILOT) ADDITIONAL PROJECTS

The Committee considered the report on Business Rates Retention (Pilot) Additional Projects which detailed the income generated from Business Rates growth and retained locally as part of the Business Rates Retention pilot in 2018/19.

The Director of Finance and Improvement advised that :-

- There were 13 projects originally funded from the Business Rates Retention (Pilot) Pool in 2018/19.
- A shortlist of 15 further projects (totalling £700,000) had been drawn up by the Corporate Leadership Team for 2019/20 and considered by Councillors at a Workshop held in June 2019.
- A revised list of 13 projects totalling £667,950 was detailed in the report for consideration.

Councillor Garten re-entered the room at 19.48 p.m. during the discussion on this item.

Councillor Mrs Joy put forward a proposal for St Philip's Community Hall which was adjacent to the Church in which she requested that £17,000 be approved to match-fund the amount already raised by the community for the refurbishment of the toilet facilities.

Councillor English asked that funding be given for Conservation Area Appraisals/Conservation Management Plan.

Councillor Mrs Blackmore requested that funding be given to the Sense of Place review that the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee wished to undertake.

In response to a question from a Member, the Director of Finance and Business Improvement advised that the Urban Trees bid was separate to the Climate Change Commission as the Urban Trees project would attract match funding from central government. The Director of Finance and Business Improvement undertook to investigate whether the monies would include the ongoing maintenance and replacement of the trees.

The Committee expressed their concern about the amount of the bid for the Arterial Route Improvements (A20) and felt that this should be reduced by 50% and Officers be asked to revisit their proposals with a view to utilising other initiatives that could be provided at minimal cost and ensuring that other bodies were held to account to carry out work on their own areas rather than the Council undertaking the works for them.

The Chief Executive advised that information would be included in the quarterly budget report for July on how the Council could work with stakeholders who could access funding and voluntary labour to take forward some of the works.

The Leader undertook to make contact with Vinters Park Nature Reserve to see if there was anything that they needed funding for from that particular bid proposal.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) The funding for the projects set out in Appendix 1 to the report of the Director of Finance and Business Improvement be approved subject to the inclusion of the additional proposals agreed at the meeting and the reduction of 50% to the bid for the Arterial Route Improvements (A20) as follows:-

Arterial Route Improvements (A20) - £74,000
CCTV Live Monitoring (Waste Collection) - £30,000
Go Green Go Wild (Community Fund) - £20,000
Lower High Street Master Plan - £80,000
Archbishop's Palace Options Appraisal - £60,000
Phoenix Park Regeneration - £75,000
Invicta Park Planning Guidance - £15,000
Inclusion Through Enterprise - £67,500

Cycle Parking Infrastructure - £60,000
Floodlighting for Jubilee Field, Staplehurst - £36,000
Domestic Abuse Awareness - £6,200
Climate Change Commission - £40,000
Urban Trees - £50,000
St Philip's Community Centre - £17,000
Sense of Place - £22,000
Conservation Area Appraisals/Conservation Management Plan -
£24,000

- 2) If there was a shortfall in resources from the Financial Sustainability Fund, that it delegates authority to the Director of Finance and Business Improvement, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee, to identify funds from within unallocated resources for the agreed projects.

Voting: For: Unanimous

30. REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN 2018/19

The Director of Finance and Business Improvement presented a report which provided an overview of the revenue and capital budgets and outturn at the end of 2018/19.

The Committee noted that:-

- The Council's budget had ended 2018/19 with an overall positive variance of £154,000 against its revenue budget.
- There had been an overall spend of £15.9 million against the planned capital programme during 2018/19 compared with a revised estimate of £23.9 million. Any unspent resources that would be required in subsequent years would be carried forward.
- The balance on the general fund at 31st March 2019 had increased by £2.5 million which had been mainly due to additional resources from Business Rates.
- Collection Rates had been narrowly missed for both Council Tax and Business Rates.
- The overall growth in Business Rates measured against the Council's baseline was £3.041 million, with an overall Pooling/Benefit for Maidstone of £3.086 million achieved.
- The Council held investments totalling £15.014 million at 31st March 2019.

In response to questions from Members, the Director of Finance and Business Services advised that:-

- The number of write-offs had increased slightly.
- The company name would be included for future write-offs.
- If Officers found that companies had re-emerged after going into liquidation, then this would be reported to the appropriate authorities.
- The Communities, Housing and Environment Committee had fully considered the future provision of CCTV and had recognised the importance of it in preventing crime and disorder.

The Committee asked for their appreciation to be noted for the way the report had been set out.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) The revenue position of the Council at the end of 2018/19 as set out within the Revenue and Capital Outturn report at Appendix 1 be noted.

Voting: For: Unanimous

- 2) The Committee agrees to the earmarking of reserves as set out in Appendix 1 of the report of the Director of Finance and Business Improvement.

Voting: For: Unanimous

- 3) The outturn and slippage within the capital programme in 2018/19, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report of the Director of Finance and Business Improvement be noted.

Voting: For: Unanimous

- 4) The performance of the Collection Fund and the level of balances as at 31st March 2019 be noted.

Voting: For: Unanimous

- 5) The performance in relation to the Treasury Management Strategy for the year be noted.

Voting: For: Unanimous

- 6) The report detailed the performance of Maidstone Property Holdings Ltd be noted.

Voting: For: Unanimous

- 7) The £150,000 of the capital slippage for Communities, Housing and Environment Committee be allocated for the upgrade and relocation

of CCTV equipment as set out in paragraph 1.5 of the report of the Director of Finance and Business Improvement.

Voting: For: 14 Against: 1

Councillor Garten asked for his dissent to be noted.

- 8) The write-off of non-domestic rates as set out in Appendix 2 of the report of the Director of Finance and Business Improvement be approved.

Voting: For: Unanimous

31. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 8.55 p.m.