

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2019

Present: Councillors Adkinson, D Burton (Chairman), Clark, English, Garten, Kimmance, Munford, Parfitt-Reid and de Wiggondene-Sheppard

Also Present: Councillor Purle

46. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Councillor Grigg
- Councillor McKay

47. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that the following Substitute Members were present:

- Councillor Kimmance for Councillor Grigg
- Councillor Adkinson for Councillor McKay

48. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

49. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Purle was present as a Visiting Member, and indicated that he wished to speak on Item 16. Town Centre Article 4 Directions and Item 17. Town Centre Opportunity Sites.

50. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

51. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

All Councillors stated that they had been lobbied on Item 16. Town Centre Article 4 Directions and Item 17. Town Centre Opportunity Sites.

All Councillors, except for Councillors Kimmance and Adkinson, stated that they had been lobbied on Item 13. Objections to Traffic Regulation Orders.

Councillor Munford stated that, in addition to Item 16 and Item 17, he had been lobbied on the following items:

- Item 15. Loose Neighbourhood Plan
- Item 19. Conservation Areas Work Programme

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

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

53. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 JULY 2019

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed.

54. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

55. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

56. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee was informed that Kent County Council (KCC) was undertaking pilot studies regarding 20mph speed limits. The findings were to be reported to the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board (JTB), and therefore the 20mph Speed Limit Review had been removed from the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure (SPI) Committee Work Programme. The Committee requested that a summary of the findings be reported to a future SPI Committee. This was to be considered by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman at the next Agenda Setting meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

57. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

RESOLVED: That the Reports of Outside Bodies be noted.

58. OBJECTIONS TO TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS

The Operations Engineer explained that the report identified proposed Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) that had received objections during formal consultation. At its meeting on 10 July 2019, the JTB had

recommended to the SPI Committee that all TROs except for the West End proposal be proceeded.

The Committee noted that the proposals emanated from a public consultation, held by Marden Parish Council, regarding parking issues.

RESOLVED: That:

1. The views of the public and the Joint Transportation Board members be considered.
2. The Joint Transportation Board recommendations to the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee, as set out in Appendix 1, be agreed as:
 - a) The proposals for West End are not proceeded.
 - b) The proposals for Pattenden Lane are proceeded.
 - c) The proposals for Church Green are proceeded.
 - d) The proposals for High Street are proceeded.
 - e) The proposals for Sovereign Way are proceeded.
 - f) The proposals for Sutton Forge are proceeded.
 - g) The proposals for Albion Road are proceeded.
 - h) The proposals for Chantry Road are proceeded.
3. The objectors be informed of the outcome and Kent County Council as the Highway Authority be recommended that the orders are made and implemented.

Voting: Unanimous

59. 1ST QUARTER BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Interim Head of Finance explained that, by the end of the financial year, an overspend of £459,000 was forecasted for the revenue budget. This was primarily due to a fall in income from Major Planning Applications and Parking Services. With regards to the capital budget, the Bridges Gyratory Scheme was on course to be delivered by 2019/20, while the Mall Bus Station Redevelopment Scheme was expected to slip to 2020/21. Therefore, a slippage of £1.336m was anticipated. The Information and Corporate Policy Officer highlighted that all KPIs attributable to the SPI Committee had achieved the Quarter 1 target and outlined the status of open enforcement cases.

The Committee commented that parking provision could be considered as a 24-hour operation. This approach had the potential to generate revenue during the day and then contribute to residential parking overnight.

In response to questions from the Committee, Officers said that:

- The income from Parking Services was a known pressure. This was to be taken into consideration during the annual financial planning exercise.
- An assessment of enforcement cases was to be incorporated into the Quarter 2 Budget and Performance Monitoring Report. This was to highlight whether the number of outstanding enforcement cases had increased or decreased compared to the previous quarter.
- The income from Major Planning Applications was expected to increase in 2021/22, following the Local Plan Review.
- Officers had identified a potential issue with the coding of income from planning applications. This was to be investigated and the findings were to be included in the Quarter 2 monitoring report.

RESOLVED: That:

1. The Revenue position at the end of the Quarter 1 and the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances have been identified, be noted.
2. The Capital position at the end of Quarter 1 be noted.
3. The Summary of Performance for Quarter 1 for Key Performance Indicators be noted.

60. LOOSE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Planning Policy Officer informed the Committee that the Loose Neighbourhood Plan was subject to a referendum vote on 8 August 2019. Following a successful referendum, the Council had a statutory duty to make the Neighbourhood Plan unless it considered that to do so would breach, or otherwise be incompatible with, any EU obligation or any of the convention rights.

The Committee commended the work and congratulated Loose Parish Council.

RESOLVED: That:

1. The result of the referendum held on 8th August 2019 on the Loose Neighbourhood Plan be noted.
2. Council be recommended to make the Loose Neighbourhood Plan.

Voting: Unanimous

61. TOWN CENTRE ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS

The Head of Planning and Development explained that non-immediate Article 4 Directions were proposed in order to remove permitted development rights on sites identified as good office stock. A similar report had been considered by the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee on 11 September 2018, and the Head of Planning and Development addressed the concerns previously raised by the Committee. It was stated that the requirement to submit a planning application resulted in opportunities to agree S106/CIL funding with developers. Furthermore, negotiations could take place with developers to enhance the quality of development designs.

Councillor Purle spoke on the item as a Visiting Member.

The Committee commented that:

- The further development of policies and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) needed to be considered. This ensured that the Planning Committee was able to control developments effectively.
- Pre-application discussions between the Council and developers were mutually beneficial. These conversations did not typically take place if office to residential conversions were made under permitted development rights.
- The assessment of potential sites where further Article 4 Directions could be made would benefit from a quantitative assessment of occupancy rates.
- The timescales for further exploratory work needed to be clearly defined.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Head of Planning and Development said that:

- The total number of office to residential completions totalled 691. This significantly exceeded the target of 350. These developments, however, were one-bed or studio apartments. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) required the development of a variety of housing types, such as family housing.
- A vibrant town required a balance of uses, such as residential, leisure and work provision. Protecting good office stock ensured that employment opportunities, and employment land, was protected.
- The NPPF stated that Article 4 Directions needed to be necessary. Therefore, an Article 4 Direction could not be applied to all office

stock in the Borough. Instead, the best office stock needed to be identified as suitable for an Article 4 Direction.

RESOLVED: That:

1. A non-immediate Article 4 Direction is made on the following sites; County Gate, Medway Bridge House, 23 – 29 Albion Place, Sterling House, Maidstone House, Romney House, Gail House, Kestrel House, Knightrider Chambers, County House (Earl Street), 62 Earl Street, 66 Earl Street, 72 King Street and Clarendon Place.
2. The Head of Planning and Development exercise delegated authority to confirm the directions, in consultation with the Head of Legal Services, following statutory consultation on the made directions.
3. Exploratory work is initiated on making further Article 4 Directions on office sites both within and outside of the Town Centre, with a report to be added to the work programme for a future meeting of this committee, with the earliest opportunity for this report to be identified in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

Voting: For – 7 Against – 2 Abstentions – 0

Note: Councillor Garten requested that his dissent be noted.

62. TOWN CENTRE OPPORTUNITY SITES

The Head of Planning and Development advised the Committee that the planning guidelines aimed to enhance the Council's ability to proactively shape the Town Centre through masterplanning. The documentation was illustrative and designed to encourage proposals for development on the sites. If finalised, the documents had the status of a "material consideration" when deciding planning applications or appeals.

Councillor Purle spoke on the item as a Visiting Member.

In response to a question from the Committee, the Head of Planning and Development replied that the documents were designed to assist developers who planned to submit proposals for the sites. The documents highlighted the desired level of quality for the developments but did not insist upon specific plans or designs.

The Committee suggested improvements to the documents but recognised that the scope of the topic was broad. It was therefore proposed that Councillors submit comments to the Head of Planning and Development, in order for a report to be considered at the next appropriate SPI Committee, which would address the specific concerns raised.

RESOLVED: That:

1. Members and Substitute Members of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee communicate key points for consideration to the Head of Planning and Development by 25 September 2019.
2. The Head of Planning and Development submit a report, to the next appropriate Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee meeting, addressing the points raised by Members and Substitute Members of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee.

Voting: Unanimous

63. MAIDSTONE DRAFT AFFORDABLE AND LOCAL NEEDS HOUSING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

The Strategic Planning Manager informed the Committee that SPDs provided further detail, advice or guidance on policies in an adopted Local Plan. The Draft Affordable and Local Needs Housing SPD was intended to facilitate the delivery of affordable homes in the Borough, within the parameters of adopted policies. Prior to the drafting of the SPD, consultation was undertaken with developers and registered providers, while a working group took place with Councillors. In accordance with statutory requirements, a consultation statement had been produced. This summarised the main issues raised by consultees and explained how the issues had been addressed in the SPD.

The Committee commented that:

- It was concerned about the use of median figures in the document.
- Housing Cooperatives were to be included in the consultation.
- Although some of the content and data in the draft SPD was out of date, such as the costs of purchasing and renting housing, it was possible to address these issues during consultation on the draft document.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Strategic Planning Manager said that:

- The current policies in the adopted Local Plan were based on a Strategic Market Assessment from 2014. If the SPD was to contain headline figures from the Strategic Market Assessment, this information could be refreshed during the Local Plan Review.
- An introductory paragraph was to be inserted to recognise population diversity and highlight that some data was taken from sources that had not recently been refreshed.
- All comments submitted during the consultation were to be considered. The document was to be adjusted following the analysis of consultation responses to ensure it was representative.

RESOLVED: That:

1. The draft Affordable and Local Needs Housing Supplementary Planning Document and accompanying consultation statement be agreed for public consultation.
2. Delegated authority be granted to the Head of Planning and Development to finalise the document for publication.

Voting: Unanimous

64. CONSERVATION AREAS WORK PROGRAMME

The Principal Conservation Officer explained that the re-establishment of a programme for the preparation of conservation area appraisals and management plans was proposed for a two-year period. There were 41 designated Conservation Areas in Maidstone Borough, of which 13 had an appraisal, management plan, or both. A prioritised list for producing appraisals and management plans had been compiled, including high priority actions from existing management plans.

The Committee commented that it was beneficial for Officers to proactively share a framework with parties who were interested in assisting with the development of Conservation Area appraisals. Furthermore, it was suggested that Officers consider whether the rationale for work, such as the proposal for Yalding, was still applicable and reprioritise the allocation of resource if appropriate.

RESOLVED: That:

1. The work programme and priorities for conservation area appraisal and management plans for the period 2019 to 2021, set out in paragraph 2.10, be agreed.
2. Delegated authority be granted to the Head of Planning and Development to effect proposed boundary alterations to Boughton Monchelsea The Green and The Quarries Conservation Areas, following consultation with affected bodies and landowners.
3. Early work be undertaken to issue a framework/template to interested parties who are able to assist in developing Conservation Area appraisal plans.
4. Officers are asked to consider opportunities to vary priorities where events have overtaken them.

Voting: Unanimous

65. NOMINATIONS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Democratic Services Officer informed the Committee that a nomination had been received for an upcoming Council Representative

position on the Parking & Traffic Regulations Outside London Adjudication Joint Committee (PATROLAJC). If an appointment was made, the term of office was to commence on 3 November 2019 and end on 2 November 2023.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Clive English be appointed as a Council Representative on PATROLAJC.

Voting: For – 8 Against – 0 Abstentions – 1

66. DURATION OF MEETING

6.33 p.m. to 9.39 p.m.