

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 16 DECEMBER
2019**

Present: Councillors M Burton, Joy, Kimmance, Mortimer
(Chairman), Purle, D Rose, M Rose and Young

Also Present: Councillors Adkinson and Vizzard

47. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Khadka and Powell.

48. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Kimmance was substituting for Councillor Khadka.

49. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items but the Committee agreed that Item 15 – Mid Kent Environmental Health Annual Report 2018/19 should be withdrawn as the item had already been dealt with at a previous meeting.

50. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

It was noted that the following Councillors were present as Visiting Members:

- Councillor Adkinson, who indicated that he wished to speak on Item 13 – Local Nature Reserves – Feasibility Study; and
- Councillor Vizzard, who indicated that he wished to speak on Item 12 – Presentation on Age UK.

51. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

52. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

53. 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.

54. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 NOVEMBER 2019

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to M Rose being corrected to D Rose under Minute 33 – Disclosures of Lobbying.

Cllr Joy requested that her dissent at the moving of the meeting from 10 December 2019 to 16 December 2019 be recorded.

55. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

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

The Committee were updated on the situation with housing homeless people with pets and were informed that the Committee Chair and others would be getting together with officers to look over the arrangements once heads of terms were in place.

57. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee were informed that the Mobile CCTV Update had been moved to February, an additional report on Fees and Charges would be taken in January 2020 along with the Draft Budget proposals for 2020/21.

It was noted that the advertising and selling of pesticides item could be removed as this fell under the remit of Kent County Council and trading standards.

Two other reports were also due to be added. One on GP Provision and another on Fireworks.

The Committee also requested an update at the next meeting on the reports on the work programme that had dates of 'TBC'.

RESOLVED:

1. That the amended Committee Work Programme be noted; and
2. That an update be provided to the Committee on the status of the items on the work programme marked as 'TBC'.

58. PRESENTATION ON AGE UK BY COUNCILLOR B VIZZARD

Councillor Vizzard gave a presentation to the Committee on the work of Age UK including the breadth, detail and prices of services they offered. There was an outside body vacancy on the Board that Members could put themselves forward for.

In response to questions the Committee were informed that every employee and volunteer of Age UK was DBS checked. Age UK Maidstone was autonomous and 60% self funded and 40% grant funded, with back office support provided centrally. There had been a small increase in service prices, but this was kept to a minimum. The Board meetings were held once a month and ran from 8.30 a.m. to 12 noon.

The full presentation can be viewed via Council webcast on the Council's Youtube channel.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be noted.

59. LOCAL NATURE RESERVES- FEASIBILITY STUDY

The Heritage, Landscape and Design Team Leader presented the report on Local Nature reserve designations that asked the Committee to agree a programme for create new and extending existing Local nature Reserves. A priority list of areas for designation was provided, with priority based on a number of factors including the feasibility of delivery.

Several members provided direct experiences of managing and running areas that were up for designation and the Committee were informed that it was not necessarily difficult to get volunteers, that getting designation required a management plan to be in place and that the main startup costs would be if byelaws were required and ongoing costs would relate to enforcement.

The Committee were very supportive of the programme, seeing it as delivering on cross cutting issues helping address health, deprivation and inequality. It was however understood that funding would be the difficult decision for the programme with a reference going to Policy and Resources to fund the programme. It was noted that if Business Rate Retention projects came in under budget it would be possible to bid for those monies.

RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted and the programme for creating new, or extending existing, Local Nature Reserve sites outlined in 3.2, 3.3 and 3.4 of the report be agreed subject to funding and resources; and
2. That Policy and Resources Committee be recommended to consider the funding and resources to bring the agreed programme for Local Nature Reserves forward.

60. CHARGING FOR DISCRETIONARY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

The Mid Kent Environmental Health Manager presented the report on discretionary fees for Environmental health services. It was noted that the amounts of income were low, and that other Councils had been charging similar fees for about 2 years.

Questions were raised as to why the amount of contaminated land searches were so low given the number of land charges transactions that took place. The officer undertook to provide clarification on this point outside of the meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That the adoption of discretionary charges for pre-application planning advice on acoustic, air quality and contaminated land assessments be approved;
2. That the adoption of discretionary charges for Enhanced Contaminated Land reports be approved; and
3. That the adoption of discretionary charges for advice to business for food hygiene be approved.

61. MID KENT ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

This item was withdrawn.

62. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.58 p.m.