

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 29 JULY 2021

Present: Councillors Mrs Blackmore, Burton (Chairman), Cooke, Cooper, Cox, English, Harper, Joy, Khadka, Kimmance, Munford, Parfitt-Reid, Perry, Purle and Mrs Ring

Also Present: Councillor J Sams

44. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Brice, Hastie and Round.

45. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

The following substitutions were noted:

- Councillor Cooper for Councillor Round
- Councillor Joy for Councillor Hastie
- Councillor Purle for Councillor Brice.

46. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

47. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

Councillor J Sams was present as a Visiting Member for Item 11 – Question from Members to the Chairman.

48. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

49. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

50. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

RESOLVED: That Item 13 – Property Acquisition be taken in private due to the possible disclosure of exempt information, having applied the public interest test.

51. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 JULY 2021

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting (Parts I and II) held on 21 July 2021 be agreed as a correct record and signed.

52. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

53. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

54. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There was one question from a Member to the Chairman.

Question from Councillor J Sams to the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee

At the recent full council meeting you gave assurances and said "I am not aware of any instance where briefing has been denied." On Monday of this week some members had a briefing on this councils Heathlands proposal. Both myself and the other Ward member are substitute members. The chief executive confirmed that substitutes were precluded. Do you now feel that your statement was therefore actually correct?

The Chairman responded to the question.

Councillor J Sams asked the following supplementary question:

'Would you agree with me that all Councillors on this Committee and Substitutes who may serve on the Committee, there are three tonight and there were two last time, should have access to the full information to be able to make an informed decision. Obviously when they are at that Committee meeting, they would have a need to know?'

The Chairman responded to the supplementary question.

The full responses were recorded on the webcast and made available to view on the Maidstone Borough Council website. The question-and-answer session took place between minutes 6:20 to 9:40 of the recording.

To access the webcast, please use the link below:

[Policy and Resources Committee - 29/07/2021 - YouTube](#)

Note: Councillor Blackmore arrived at 6.36 p.m. at the item's conclusion.

55. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Chief Executive highlighted that the Town Centre Strategy and Financial Hardship reports arose from the Recovery and Renewal Plan, so there would not be a separate report on the plan at the September 2021 meeting. A further report on the Recovery and Renewal Plan would be presented in October 2021.

RESOLVED: That the amended Committee Work Programme be noted.

56. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING

RESOLVED: That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business because of the likely disclosure of exempt information for the reasons specified, having applied the public interest test:

Head of Schedule 12A and Brief Description

Property Acquisition	3 – Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)
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57. PROPERTY ACQUISITION

The Director of Finance and Business Improvement introduced the report, and referenced the options as outlined in the report. The benefits of the preferred option were emphasised.

The Committee sought and received assurances over the process for establishing the condition of the building and expressed support for the preferred option and felt that it contributed to the local area and the Council's financial security and viability.

RESOLVED: That

1. Option 2 as outlined in the report, be agreed;
2. Delegated authority be given to the Director of Finance and Business Improvement to negotiate and agree terms for the acquisition of the property with the owner and to complete the acquisition on agreed terms at an agreed target purchase price;
3. Up to the agreed purchase price be borrowed from the Public Works Loan Board to contribute towards the funding of the acquisition;
4. Delegated authority be given to the Director of Finance and Business Improvement to undertake a procurement process for the selection and appointment of managing agents for the property and to procure, award and enter into such contracts for any services,

including building and environmental surveys, covenant review and repair and maintenance contracts as necessary;

5. Delegated authority be given to the Head of Legal Services to negotiate and complete the lease and all necessary legal formalities, agreements and deeds arising from or ancillary to the acquisition of the property and the appointment of managing agents for the property and contracts for the services on the terms agreed by the Director of Finance and Business Improvement or to appoint such solicitors to complete such legal formalities and documents if considered necessary; and
6. The Director of Finance and Business Improvement be granted delegated authority to grant such leases, accept surrenders and to enter into such property transactions in respect of any part of the property on terms to be agreed in order to maximise the economic benefits from the property and that the Head of Legal Services be authorised to complete the necessary legal formalities and all deeds agreements arising from or ancillary to such property transactions.

Note: Councillor Cooper joined the meeting at 6.44 p.m. during the item's consideration.

58. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.26 p.m.