

Reference from Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee – Notice of Motion – Town Centre Strategy

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
PIED PAC	7 June 2023
Cabinet	28 July 2023

Wards affected	All, with particular impact for Bridge, High Street, East, Fant and North Wards.
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Executive Summary

At its meeting on the 7 June 2023, the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee (PIED PAC) considered the motion moved and seconded at the Council meeting held on 19 April 2023. The Motion concerned the Town Centre Strategy, and the Mayor referred the matter to the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Policy Advisory Committee (matter now covered by the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee).

The PIED PAC's consideration of the motion is outlined within this reference.

This report makes the following recommendation:

That the Cabinet consider the motion relating to the Town Centre Strategy.

Reference from Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee – Motion on Notice – Town Centre Strategy

1. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

1.1 At its meeting on the 7 June 2023, the PIED PAC considered the Motion on Notice – Town Centre Strategy, as moved and seconded at the Council Meeting held on 19 April 2023.

1.2 The original motion is outlined below:

The Council is currently preparing a new Town Centre Strategy to guide the development of Maidstone for the next 10/30 years. As the report of 4 April 2023 to the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Policy Advisory Committee stated, all party consensus is essential to this project as it will clearly span multiple administrations over that time. Whilst a number of subject stakeholder Groups have been established there is one key group missing. There is no formal stakeholder consultation group set up for the representatives of the residents most closely affected, those in the current wards of Bridge, East, Fant, High Street and North. This can be addressed by establishing a formal stakeholder consultation group of the Councillors for these areas. The needs of residents close to the Town Centre are of a different nature to those who only visit it periodically, it is where local residents go for local shopping needs as well as their local pubs and restaurants and for local leisure and sports needs. It is a Town Centre for where they live on a daily basis rather than visit as a destination.

It is therefore resolved that:

- 1. The Council continues with the Town Centre Strategy on the basis of obtaining all party support; and*
- 2. A Consultation Stakeholder Group of Town Centre Councillors for the current wards of Bridge, East, Fant, High Street and North be established so they can represent the needs of the local communities in and adjacent to the Town Centre area.*

1.3 The (draft) minute of the item's consideration is outlined below:

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development introduced the reference, outlining the previously agreed governance arrangements for the Town Centre Strategy which included the formation of a Town Centre User Group (the Group). The Group would include Elected Members from Wards in the local vicinity of the Town Centre and was expected to meet for the first time in June 2023. An additional stakeholder group was not required, given the engagement that would take place with the Group alongside the previous input with Members through Town Centre Walk-about, and the ongoing engagement with Political Group Leaders.

The Chief Executive emphasised that Members would have many opportunities to be involved in the Town Centre Strategy and associated delivery plan's development; there would be an extensive period of engagement before the Strategy was formally adopted; this is currently planned to occur by the end of the calendar year. Reassurance was given that the Group had been created in recognition of the role of the town centre for people who live there or in the surrounding areas to the Town Centre, as well as those that visit the area.

The seconder of the original motion at Council supported the engagement being undertaken through the Group and with political group leaders.

The Committee felt that no further recommendations on the reference were required, as since the motion was originally considered by Full Council the Group had been formed and was meeting in the near future.

RESOLVED: That

1. *It be noted that the seconder of the motion supports the Town Centre User Group and welcomes that it has been convened; and*
2. *The Committee does not have any further recommendations to the Cabinet.*

2. ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED AND WHY NOT RECOMMENDED

2.1 Not Applicable.

3. REPORT APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Briefing Note, Motion on Town Centre Strategy.

4. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 19 April 2023: [Your Councillors - Maidstone Borough Council](#)

Agenda for the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee held on 7 June 2023: [Your Councillors - Maidstone Borough Council](#)