

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 26 JULY 2023

Attendees:

Committee Members:	Councillors Burton (Chairman), Cooper, Garten, Parfitt-Reid and Russell
Visiting Members:	Councillors English, Harper, Jeffery and Munford

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Perry.

2. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

The Chairman stated that there were two urgent updates, one for Item 18 – Strategic CIL Assessments and Spend, and one for Item 21 – Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan Update and Cost for Achieving Net Zero 2023.

3. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

The following Councillors were present for Item 12 – Report of the Water Management Cycle Working Group (Overview and Scrutiny) – Water Management Cycle:

Councillors English, Harper, and Jeffery were present for:

- Item 12 – Report of the Water Management Cycle Working Group (Overview and Scrutiny) – Water Management Cycle;
- Item 13 – Response to the Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Safety in the Town Centre;
- Item 14 – Matters Referred to the Executive by Another Committee – Reference from Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee – Notice of Motion Town Centre Strategy;
- Item 18 – Strategic CIL Assessments & Spend; and
- Item 21 – Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan Update and Cost for Achieving Net Zero 2023

Councillor Harper was also present for:

- Item 20 – Corporate Planning Timetable;
- Item 23 – Medium Term Financial Strategy 2024-2029; and
- Item 24 – Archbishop’s Palace

Councillor Munford was present for Item 18 – Strategic CIL Assessments & Spend

4. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS OR OFFICERS

Councillor Cooper stated, in relation to Item 18 Strategic CIL Assessments and Spend, that he used to Worship at St Faith's Church. This was not an OSI or DPI and he intended to speak and vote.

Councillor Garten stated, in relation to Item 12 – Report of the Water Management Cycle Working Group (Overview and Scrutiny) – Water Management Cycle, and Item 13 – Response to the Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Safety in the Town Centre, that he had been a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee that had made the recommendations to the Cabinet. This was not an OSI or DPI and he intended to speak and vote.

5. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

Councillor Cooper stated that he had been lobbied on Item 18 Strategic CIL Assessments and Spend, and Item 21 – Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan Update and Cost.

Councillor Parfitt-Reid stated that she had been lobbied on Item 18 Strategic CIL Assessments and Spend.

6. TO CONSIDER WHETHER ANY ITEMS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE DUE TO THE POSSIBLE DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public, unless there was a need to disclose information contained in the Exempt Appendix to Item 24 – Archbishop's Palace.

7. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 APRIL 2023

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 April 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

8. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were none.

9. QUESTIONS FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS TO THE LEADER OR INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER (AS APPROPRIATE)

There were none.

10. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE LEADER OR INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER (AS APPROPRIATE)

There were none.

11. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CABINET FOR RECONSIDERATION

There were none.

12. REPORT OF THE WATER MANAGEMENT CYCLE WORKING GROUP (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY) - WATER MANAGEMENT CYCLE

Councillor English, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, presented the Committee's report on the Water Management Cycle. The report was the first part of the Committee's major piece of work into the topic, with the second part to be prepared in the coming months. The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee thanked all those who had contributed to the work. The report covered a number of areas that would require work with a number of stakeholders, and changes to the approach through development control. The report also contained recommendations that would address biodiversity, flood management and adaptation to climate change.

Councillor Jeffery addressed the Committee as a Visiting Member.

In response to questions it was noted that the Environment Agency had not responded and taken part in part one of the work, and efforts continued to be made informally by members and officers to engage them in them in it. There was £100k expenditure included in the recommendations, with the expectation of an allocation through the Council's budget, though there were potential external sources of funding that could help to deliver the actions.

RESOLVED: That

1. The report of the Water Management Cycle Working Group (Overview and Scrutiny Committee) be received; and
2. A substantive response to the report be provided via the completion of a SCRAIP report.

13. RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - SAFETY IN THE TOWN CENTRE

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Health introduced the Cabinet's response to the Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Safety in the Town Centre. She stated that she supported the response on the papers, and welcomed Councillors spending time with officers in relation to Public Spaces Protection Orders and seeing the level of work that goes in to keeping the town centre safe.

Councillor English addressed the meeting on behalf of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, he thanked the Cabinet for the response and highlighted that some good had already come from the work. Following a meeting of the Community Rail Partnership there had already been improvements to the policing of fare evasion, linked to anti-social behaviour.

Councillors Harper and Jeffery addressed the meeting as Visiting Members.

In response to questions it was highlighted that the Safety in the Town Centre work also formed useful context for developing the Town Centre Strategy, and that the Council's regular residents surveys included gathering views on anti-social behaviour. It was also noted that the work of the Safer Maidstone Partnership included a strategic assessment of crime and disorder in the borough, with a specific priority focussed on the town centre. In response to a question about road safety, particularly in relation to pedestrianised areas of the High Street, it was noted that this was not within the scope of the Overview and

Scrutiny Committee report, but that it was part of the data informed work on the Town Centre Strategy.

RESOLVED: That the completed Overview and Scrutiny Committee Recommended Action and Implementation Plan be agreed as the formal response to the Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on Safety in the Town Centre.

14. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE EXECUTIVE BY ANOTHER COMMITTEE - REFERENCE FROM PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE - NOTICE OF MOTION TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

Councillors English, Harper and Jeffery addressed the meeting as Visiting Members.

It was noted that Councillor working groups, including town centre ward councillors, had begun meeting in accordance with the planned engagement work for the Town Centre Strategy, and that this had obviated the need for the Motion.

RESOLVED: That action be taken on the motion.

15. ANY MATTER RELATING TO A SERIOUS SERVICE FAILURE OR NUISANCE

There were none.

16. RECEIPT OF WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

There were none.

17. CABINET FORWARD PLAN

There was a minor correction to note that the 4th Quarter Financial Report was for all Cabinet Members not just the Cabinet Member for Housing Health.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

18. STRATEGIC CIL ASSESSMENTS & SPEND

RESOLVED:

1. That Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding that has been collected is allocated (as minima) to the following strategic projects for the period to 31 March 2025:

- M20 Junction 7 Upgrade - £1,836,729 in Strategic CIL monies, subject to appropriate due diligence by the Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
- Heather House Community Centre Redevelopment - £956,420
- St Faith's Community Centre Redevelopment - £250,000; and

2. That a report evaluating the CIL process, including the proposed prospectus for the next round of funding, be added to the Forward Plan for a Cabinet meeting in the Autumn 2023.

(See Record of Decision)

19. COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

RESOLVED: That the refreshed Communication and Engagement Strategy and Action Plan for 2023/24 at Appendices 1 and 2 of the report be approved.

(See Record of Decision)

20. CORPORATE PLANNING TIMETABLE

RESOLVED: That the Strategic Plan not be reviewed in 23/24 and the corporate planning timetable at 3.3 of the report be approved.

(See Record of Decision)

21. BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION PLAN UPDATE AND COST FOR ACHIEVING NET ZERO 2023

RESOLVED: That

1. The Action Plan implementation updates and indicative costs of achieving net zero by 2030 for the Council's operations be noted and that implementation of the Action Plan be expedited selectively;
2. Delegated authority be given to the Biodiversity and Climate Change Manager to submit a bid to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme for funding to facilitate decarbonisation of key Council properties;
3. A report on the succession of the Quality Bus Partnership and a provisional timetable for the work on the revised Integrated Transport Strategy be produced for the next ordinary meeting of Cabinet; and
4. The comments from the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee relating to Urban Heat Islands be noted.

(See Record of Decision)

22. 4TH QUARTER FINANCIAL UPDATE AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

RESOLVED: That the

1. Revenue position as at the end of Quarter 4 for 2022/23, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances have been identified, be noted;
2. Capital position at the end of Quarter 4 for 2022/23 be noted;

3. Performance position as at Quarter 4 for 2022/23, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant issues have been identified, be noted;
4. Proposed new KPIs for 2023/24 be approved;
5. Risk Update, attached at Appendix 3 to the report be noted;
6. Recovery & Renewal Update, attached at Appendix 4 to the report be noted;
7. UK Shared Prosperity Fund update, attached at Appendix 5 to the report be noted; and
8. Uncollectable Business Rates (NNDR) listed at Appendix 6 to the report be approved for write-off.

(See Record of Decision)

23. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2024-2029

RESOLVED: That

1. The issues and risks associated with updating the Medium Term Financial Strategy be noted;
2. The assumptions described in this report for planning purposes and to establish the remit for detailed budget development be noted, in particular the assumptions set out in paragraphs 2.21 (Council Tax increases), 2.30 (Fees and Charges) and 2.40 (Housing Investment Fund) be noted; and
3. The proposed approach outlined to development of an updated Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2024/25 – 2028/29 and a budget for 2024/25 be approved.

(See Record of Decision)

24. ARCHBISHOP'S PALACE

RESOLVED: That

1. Option 2 of the report, namely to develop plans for use of the Palace as a wedding and events venue be agreed.
2. Delegated authority be given to the Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services to select and appoint professional advisers to develop the plans, enter into contracts for applicable services as necessary, and to invite offers from potential operators for a conditional agreement for lease; and
3. Delegated authority be given to the Head of Legal Services to negotiate and complete all necessary legal formalities arising from the purchase of services and invitation for offers as set out above.

(See Record of Decision)

25. DURATION OF MEETING

5.30 p.m. to 8.52 p.m.

Note: The Committee adjourned between 6.12 p.m. to 6.17 p.m.