

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MINUTES OF THE LEISURE AND PROSPERITY OVERVIEW  
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY  
22 FEBRUARY 2011**

**PRESENT:** Councillor Paine (Chairman)  
Councillors Burton, Mrs Joy, Nelson-Gracie, Pickett  
and Mrs Smith

**19. The Committee to consider whether all items on the agenda should be web-cast**

**Resolved:** That all items on the agenda be web-cast.

**20. Apologies**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs Gibson.

**21. Notification of Substitute Members**

There were no substitute Members.

**22. Notification of Visiting Members**

It was noted that Councillor English was a visiting Member, interested in agenda item 9.

**23. Disclosures by Members and Officers:**

It was noted that Councillor Burton declared a personal interest in agenda items 10 by virtue of his membership of the Marden Business Forum.

**24. 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.

**25. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 25 January 2011**

**Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2011 be agreed as a correct record and duly signed by the Chairman.

**26. LSP Thematic Quarterly Performance Report**

The Chairman welcomed Zena Cooke, Director of Regeneration and Communities, Sarah Robson, Community Partnerships Manager and John Taylor, Chairman of Economic Development and Regeneration LSP

Delivery Group to the meeting, and invited them to present the delivery group update to the Committee.

Ms Cooke summarised that Overview and Scrutiny played an important role in holding the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) to account, the update informed the Committee of the progress made by the group and its planned future activity.

Ms Cooke explained that the LSP Board had five delivery groups, and that the past twelve months had seen radical changes in the way they approached issues. Over the past year the sub groups and their memberships had been established as well as the priorities and outcomes they were seeking to achieve. The priorities, outcomes and actions will be considered by the LSP Board in March 2011. In answer to a question Ms Cooke stated that this structure was different to the previous LSP, which had been considered too large to operate effectively.

The Chairman asked how the membership was formed, and whether there were any funding issues. Ms Cooke informed the Committee that in each delivery group there are representatives from throughout the Borough that hold influential roles in different sectors and gave examples, indicating that this was considered to be the LSP's strength. She explained that each group had a support officer from within the Council, along with a Cabinet Member to ensure continuity. The Chairman of each delivery group was not from the Council in order to promote better partnership working and ownership and by default that Chairman is then a Member of the LSP Board. Ms Cooke stated that the LSP does not hold a budget. However, at the end of last financial year they had received approximately £250,000 as an LSP in Performance Reward Grant. The Board decided to use this to fund community based projects. Ms Cooke highlighted that there were few bids relative to economic development and regeneration, however the 'Time Banking' project in Parkwood had made a successful bid and received funding. In answer to a question Ms Cooke informed the Committee that 'resource mapping' had been undertaken to collate information and identify public sector spending across the Borough. A final draft of this had recently been received and a workshop will be held to validate the information and then used to support the Board in discussions to decide where to direct spending over the next twelve months and beyond.

In answer to a question, Mr Taylor informed the Committee that many businesses including Invicta Chamber of Commerce, Network Rail, KCC, MBC, are required to work together to create a strong influence over rail services in Maidstone. The Chairman asked for Mr Taylor's opinion on whether Maidstone was well placed to get out of the recession. Mr Taylor informed the Committee that in comparison to the rest of Kent a recent report from the Federation of Small Businesses indicated that Maidstone was doing well. A further document related to this from the Chamber of Commerce showing statistics from surveys was scheduled for the meeting of the Chamber Board on Thursday 24 February 2011, after which time the Council will receive it. The Committee welcomed this and suggested the Leader of the Council should be made aware of this information.

The Committee agreed to receive quarterly updates from the LSP on the progress and outcomes from the Economic Development Regeneration Delivery Group, and for the Committee to consider liaising with the LSP for ideas for the 2011/12 future work programme.

**Resolved:** That the officers and Mr Taylor be thanked for the information and it be recommended that:

- a) The LSP Economic Development and Regeneration Delivery Group provide quarterly updates to the Committee; and
- b) The document from the Invicta Chamber of Commerce be circulated to the Committee following the meeting of the Chamber Board on Thursday 24 February 2011.

## **27. Demographic & Transport Data Check**

The Chairman welcomed Mr Darren Bridgett, Principal Planning Officer (Policy) and Mrs Flo Churchill, Interim Head of Core Strategy Development to the meeting, and invited them to present the report.

Mr Bridgett presented his report to the Committee highlighting the three sets of projections as mentioned on page 13 of the agenda. In answer to a question Mr Bridgett informed the Committee that the figures are updated as soon as the information is available, enabling the calculations to be as accurate as possible. It was not clear if any trends had been spotted over a period of time, but that accuracy had been maintained. In response to a request Mr Bridgett agreed to circulate an example of the calculation used to improve Members understanding. The Committee also enquired if further information was available regarding the variance between the expected and delivered housing rates. Mr Bridgett confirmed that this information would be available via Kent County Council and agreed to circulate this to the Committee.

The Committee asked how robust the decision was when it was based on statistics alone. Mr Bridgett informed the Committee that it was difficult to include all of the other factors involved, however the Economic Development Strategy and Employment Land Review was being updated which played a major part in the process. In time, the 2011 Census information would be used as part of the calculations. However this information will begin to be released over a two year period starting the end of 2011, after the Core Strategy document has been through the publication consultation (regulation 27).

The Committee enquired about the information used in the calculation, and gave examples of the 'Travel to Work' scheme and Eastern European seasonal workers. Mr Bridgett informed the Committee that both permanent and seasonal workers may not have been included, and that the travel to work statistics comparing Maidstone to the South East and

National figures would need to be clarified. The Committee agreed that this should be presented to the Committee within this municipal year.

Mrs Churchill, gave a presentation to the Committee on the transport data (attached at Appendix A).

Ms Churchill informed the Committee that although Jacobs had been commissioned to address any transport issues raised, this was at a cost of £10,000 per model which took four weeks to complete. She highlighted that there are two types of modelling used, Strategic-level transport model (e.g. the Core Strategy) and the Site-level transport model (this is much more detailed, but due of the level of detail, this will not work over a wider area such as the entire borough).

In answer to a question Ms Churchill stated that they would look at ways to reduce parking within the Borough to encourage cycling and walking, and that there is no policy in place to support this, although it is stated in Government Guidance. Ms Churchill confirmed that a previous model will be used as an example for the workshop scheduled for Thursday 3 March 2011. All Members would be invited to attend the work shop in order to fully understand the process.

**Resolved:** That the officers be thanked for the information and it be recommended that:

- a) Mr Bridgett liaises with the Overview and Scrutiny Officer to ensure the appropriate spreadsheet containing an example of how calculations are used is circulated to the Committee;
- b) Information regarding the variance between the expected and delivered housing rates be obtained and circulated to Members during this Municipal Year;
- c) Travel to work statistics comparing Maidstone to the South East and National figures would be clarified and circulated to Members; and
- d) Clarification on the Eastern European seasonal workers statistics be circulated to Members.

## **28. Future Work Programme**

The Committee considered the future work programme, it was noted that the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter performance monitoring report and the rural economy will be considered at the next meeting.

The Chairman reminded the Committee that as part of the rural economy review, a Rural Business Survey would be undertaken by Members and requested that they return their results to the Overview and Scrutiny Officer by the end of March 2011.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer reminded the Committee that the following events were scheduled; 14 March, Rural Economy Tour meeting in the Gateway Reception at 9.15am; and 22 March, 4pm at the Museum

for a tour of the East Wing with Simon Lace, Museum and Heritage Manager.

The Committee discussed the possibility of changing the schedule for the rural economy tour so that a discussion with members from the Marden Business Forum could take place over lunch. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer informed the Committee that Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Councillor Malcolm Greer and Interim Head of Core Strategy Development, Mrs Churchill had agreed to accompany Members on the Rural Tour, and was seeking confirmation from two beneficial Council officers who would hopefully attend. The Committee suggested that space permitting the shadow Cabinet Member, Councillor Tony Harwood should be invited.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer offered to circulate information following previous Scrutiny meetings to aid with research for the Committee.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer informed the Committee of the progress made towards the rural economy review, and reminded both the Committee and members of the public of the contact number to use for providing further information.

**Resolved:** That:

- a) Members will meet in the Gateway Reception on 14 March at 9.15am for the rural economy tour;
- b) The information from previous Scrutiny meetings relating to the rural economy would be circulated; and
- c) The work programme be noted.

## **29. Duration of Meeting**

6.30pm to 8.33pm.

# Minute Item 27

## Leisure and Prosperity Overview and Scrutiny Committee

22<sup>nd</sup> February 2011

### Transportation Modelling Background Note

#### Background

- 1.1 Maidstone Borough Council has commissioned Jacobs to create a multi-modal transport model to assist in the assessment of transport strategies to address issues raised by future development growth aspirations in the Core Strategy.

#### The Visum Model

- 1.2 Jacobs have used the Visum Model which is a sophisticated travel demand modelling tool which uses software to replicate real world transportation systems. Visum models are used to simulate actual travel patterns and existing demand conditions. Travel demand is generated using land use data and socio economic data such as household size, car availability, census and employment data. Once a Visum model has been used to replicate existing conditions it can then be used to predict future travel patterns and demands based on changes in land use and/or changes in demographics. Future traffic projections are based on assumptions about how population, employment, vehicle operating costs and other factors will change over time.
- 1.3 Jacobs have stated that they are confident that the Visum Model remains the best tool to model accurately the impact of development proposals on the local and strategic road network in the context of the emerging Maidstone Core Strategy.
- 1.4 The Model concentrates on peak hour conditions in the urban area as this is the part of the Borough where MBC policies are seeking regeneration and brownfield development to revitalise vacant office and retail units. Congestion in Maidstone has long been recognised as a serious issue by Members, the public, transport operators and the development industry..
- 1.5 The Model is a strategic tool, aimed at producing evidence to help support the overall strategy and vision for the Borough encompassed in the Core Strategy. It assesses the likely use of various modes of transport and the resulting travel patterns in and around the town. It is not intended to give accurate representations of individual turning movements at every junction, and so would not be used for site specific development control detailed impact

assessments. Other modelling techniques and tools are available that are capable of modelling site specific situations.

- 1.6 The Visum Model tests a set of assumptions about the provision of a package of transport measures and its performance in dealing with the LDF Core Strategy development options. The model is calibrated against traffic flows and public transport patronage in 2007, and therefore the input data identifies the changes predicted to take place by 2026 in the size and location of housing, employment and retail sites in the Borough. It is trying to predict the increased level of demand for travel and then assess how the road and public transport networks would cope with it.
- 1.7 The decision that was taken at Cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2011 will impact on the eventual results that will emerge from the model. It is important in terms of the robustness of the evidence base that any Inspector can be satisfied that what has been modelled is what is contained in the Core Strategy and therefore we will look to run the model again according to the decisions that are made about the distribution of development across the Borough. Members should note that it costs £10,000 to run the model and takes approximately 4 weeks to obtain any results. We will ask Jacobs to run the model again when we have received results from the work that is being carried out into an updated Employment Land Review.
- 1.8 The guiding principles of measures that have been included in assumptions within the current model scenario relate to the following matters:
  - Promotion of sustainable transport
  - Seeking to manage the demand for travel downwards
  - Measures that are achievable within the plan period; and
  - Measures that are within the bounds of reasonable expectations of available finance

## Modelling Processes

- 2.1 The model is presented with a schedule of expected housing, employment and other development sites for 2026, and a package of transport initiatives. The model is then run to produce morning and evening peak performance figures for 2026. The model uses an assessment of 'generalised cost' to predict which mode of travel people will use, and what would be their chosen destination. This is a combination of the actual cost (such as car fuel or public

transport fares) and an estimated cost equivalent to the time taken to travel. For instance the generalised cost of a bus journey is the monetary 'value' of the walking time to a bus stop, the waiting time (dependant on the frequency of service), the time taken by the bus to reach the appropriate bus stop, and the time taken to walk to the final destination.

- 2.2 We have so far looked to the model to produce a set of outputs that concentrate on the congestion levels on the main routes in and out of the town centre, using data such as travel times on specific routes, proportion of trips made by various modes, and cordon flows. Model runs have been based on previous iterations of development scenarios and will therefore not be valid in the face of the current approach to development distribution.
- 2.3 The transport strategy that will be adopted in support of the Core Strategy must also be achievable within the Core Strategy Plan Period, in that the funding for any infrastructure could be reasonably expected from development including Community Infrastructure Levy and the New Homes Bonus or other sources such as LTP, LSTF, LEP, and LIP. Site specific S106 requirements would also be expected. We do need to be alert to how changes in funding regimes may impact on how schemes may be funded.

#### Sensitivity

- 3.1 It must be borne in mind that calculations of capacity become very sensitive when the highway network becomes overloaded as a relatively small predicted increase in demand can create a sharp increase in travel times unless alternative means of travel are available. When the model reaches an upper level of congestion that can be accommodated on the network any demand above this level would be predicted not to be able to complete their journeys within the peak hour i.e. they would travel at different times and/or travel to different destinations or make other arrangements such as working from home.

#### Summary

- 4.1 Given the complexity of issues involved in the discipline of transportation modelling Members need the opportunity to look at the model and the way in which the assumptions that are going to be contained within it operate and influence the final output. As this would require a great deal of technical information it is proposed that a Member workshop be held to which Jacobs would be invited to explain the assumptions behind the model, the sorts of data the model uses and how changes to spatial distributions will affect the outcomes.



- 4.2 If such a workshop were to be held it would give members the opportunity to have a full discussion of all the matters relating to transport modelling in an arena that also provides the technical expertise beyond the remit of your planning officers. Officer attendance would be restricted to allow the focus to remain on Member concerns
- 4.3 Both Members from Maidstone BC and KCC would be invited and the workshop will be arranged as soon as possible.