

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, HIGH STREET, MAIDSTONE ON 20 JUNE 2012

Present: Councillor Nelson-Gracie (The Mayor), and Councillors Ash, Barned, Black, Mrs Blackmore, Brindle, Burton, Butler, Chittenden, Cox, Cuming, English, Garland, Mrs Gibson, Mrs Gooch, Ms Griffin, Mrs Grigg, Harwood, Hogg, Hotson, Mrs Joy, Lusty, McKay, McLoughlin, Moriarty, B Mortimer, D Mortimer, Moss, Munford, Naghi, Newton, Paine, Parvin, Mrs Parvin, Paterson, Pickett, Mrs Ring, Robertson, Mrs Robertson, Ross, Sams, Mrs Stockell, Thick, Vizzard, De Wiggondene, J A Wilson, Mrs Wilson and Yates

20. **PRAYERS**

Prayers were said by the Reverend Canon Chris Morgan-Jones.

21. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Beerling, Daley, Greer, Mrs Hinder, Springett and Warner.

22. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures by Members and Officers.

23. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

24. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

RESOLVED: That the items on the agenda be taken in public as proposed.

25. **MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE BOROUGH COUNCIL HELD ON 16 MAY 2012**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Annual Meeting of the Borough Council held on 16 May 2012 be approved as a correct record and signed.

26. **MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor reported that he had attended 48 engagements since the Annual Meeting. He also reminded Members that there was still an

opportunity to take part in the sweepstake about his weight change during his Mayoral year.

The Mayor also reminded Members of forthcoming functions including his Garden Party on 11 July, the cricket match with Tonbridge and Malling on 5 August as well as his Curry night on 15 August. He said that he hoped that Members would cheer on the Olympic flame as it passed through the Borough on 19/20 July.

27. PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

28. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Question to the Leader of the Council

Mr Richard Wadey asked the following question of the Leader of the Council:-

Has the Council considered the case for setting out policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, as requested in paragraph 53 of the new National Planning Policy Framework? And, if so, what conclusion has it reached?

The Leader of the Council responded to the question.

Councillor Mrs Wilson, the Leader of the Opposition, and Councillor Mrs Gooch, the Leader of the Independent Group, then responded to the question.

Mr Richard Wadey asked the following supplementary question of the Leader of the Council:-

Do you yet have a clear concept how the word inappropriate should be construed or is that still to be considered?

The Leader of the Council responded to the question.

Councillor Mrs Wilson, the Leader of the Opposition, and Councillor Mrs Gooch, the Leader of the Independent Group, then responded to the question.

To listen to the responses to these questions, please follow this link:-

http://clients.westminster-digital.co.uk/maidstone/mg_proxy.aspx?mg_a_id=12414

29. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Question to the Leader of the Council

Councillor Mrs Wilson asked the following question of the Leader of the Council:-

In view of the Council's priority of prosperity and the job creation related to it, it was pleasing to read in the Conservative Election Special that 2000 jobs had been created since the target of 10,000 jobs by 2026 had been set. This is to be applauded. However, since the Cabinet has not yet formally agreed to this job creation target for the Local Development Framework core strategy, and to avoid any possible ambiguity or misunderstanding, would the Cabinet Member for Economic and Commercial Development please confirm the precise period covered, start date and end date, for which this calculation was made; detail the 2000 jobs created by company, general location in the Borough, number of jobs and whether full or part-time – it is acceptable if this part of the question is handed out to Councillors at the meeting as a paper copy rather than reading them all out if preferred – and finally state the number of jobs lost in the same period so that Councillors know the net gain for the Borough.

The Leader of the Council responded to the question.

Councillor Mrs Wilson asked the following supplementary question of the Leader of the Council:-

What is the period covered and precisely what jobs have been included and those that have not and does it include those that are transferred from one centre to another.

The Leader of the Council responded to the question.

Question to the Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services

Councillor Chittenden asked the following question of the Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services:-

Liberal Democrats fully recognise that as the County Town of Kent money should be allocated for events relating to the Olympic torch passing through Maidstone, and of course there is an overnight stop here. However, the cost for Maidstone is the highest in Kent by far with a budget of £210,000. Is this money coming entirely from the Borough Council Budget or have contributions to the budget been made by other donors and if so how much?

The Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services responded to the question.

To listen to the responses to these questions, please follow the link:-

http://clients.westminster-digital.co.uk/maidstone/mg_proxy.aspx?mg_a_id=12415

30. RECORD OF RECOMMENDATION OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - LEADER'S REPORT ON CURRENT ISSUES

It was moved by Councillor Garland, seconded by Councillor Mrs Wilson, that his recommendation on the Leader's Report on Current Issues be approved.

Councillor Parvin, the Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee, advised the Council that, in accordance with Article 15.02 (a) of the Constitution, the Standards Committee had evaluated the proposed amendments to the Council Procedure Rule relating to the Leader's Report on Current Issues and, although having some concerns about the details (for example, calling the Rule "Leader's Report on Current Issues"), in principle, believed that their implementation would help to ensure that the aims and principles of the Constitution were given full effect by providing an opportunity for all Members of the Council to have greater involvement in Council meetings.

RESOLVED: That Procedure Rule 17 in the Council Procedure Rules in the Constitution be deleted and the following inserted:-

"Leader's Report on Current Issues"

17.1 At every Ordinary Meeting of the Council (except the Annual Meeting) after the Question and Answer session dealing with questions by Members, the Leader shall report to the Council on current issues.

17.2 The Leaders of every other Group shall then have the right to respond to the issues raised.

17.3 Each Group Leader may speak for up to five minutes.

17.4 After the Leader and the other Group Leaders have spoken the Mayor will open the item to questions from Council Members for a period of fifteen minutes.

17.5 Questions to be asked by Council Members as set out in 17.4 above will be limited to those issues raised by the Leader and the other Group Leaders in their speeches. Questions will be answered as directed by the questioner and will not require a response from all Group Leaders. The Mayor will be the sole determinant of whether the question relates to the issues raised in these speeches.

31. CURRENT ISSUES - REPORT OF THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND RESPONSE OF THE GROUP LEADERS

The Leader of the Council submitted his report on current issues.

After the Leader of the Council had submitted his report, Councillor Mrs Wilson, the Leader of the Opposition, and Councillor Mrs Gooch, the Leader of the Independent Group, responded to the issues raised.

Several questions were asked by Members of the Council of the Leader of the Council, the Leader of the Opposition and the Leader of the Independent Group on the issues raised by them in their speeches.

32. ORAL REPORT OF THE CABINET HELD ON 13 JUNE 2012 - SPATIAL PLANNING STRATEGY

It was moved by Councillor Garland, seconded by Councillor J A Wilson, that the following recommendations of the Cabinet be approved:-

1. That a new body named the "Spatial Planning Strategy Advisory Group" be created with the following Terms of Reference:-

"To advise the Cabinet and the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development on the Spatial Planning Strategy, including the Local Development Framework and other Spatial Planning Documents including Development Plan Documents, Development Management Policies and Development Briefs".
2. That the new Spatial Planning Strategy Advisory Group be comprised of six Members and Substitute Members.
3. That the Spatial Planning Strategy Advisory Group be appointed by the Leader of the Council on the nomination of Group Leaders with a membership of:-

3 Conservatives
2 Liberal Democrats
1 Independent
4. That the Constitution be amended accordingly.

RESOLVED:

1. That a new body named the "Spatial Planning Strategy Advisory Group" be created with the following Terms of Reference:-

"To advise the Cabinet and the Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development on the Spatial Planning Strategy, including the Local Development Framework and other Spatial Planning Documents including Development Plan Documents, Development Management Policies and Development Briefs".
2. That the new Spatial Planning Strategy Advisory Group be comprised of six Members and Substitute Members.

3. That the Spatial Planning Strategy Advisory Group be appointed by the Leader of the Council on the nomination of Group Leaders with a membership of:-

- 3 Conservatives
- 2 Liberal Democrats
- 1 Independent

4. That the Constitution be amended accordingly.

33. REPORT OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 8 JUNE 2012 - STANDARDS REGIME

It was moved by Councillor Parvin, seconded by Councillor Mrs Stockell, that the recommendation relating to the Standards Regime be approved.

RESOLVED: That the existing Code of Conduct continue as an advisory Code until a new Code is adopted.

34. REPORT OF THE SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE HELD ON 11 JUNE 2012 - CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION AS REQUIRED BY THE LOCALISM ACT CONCERNING COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION AND OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

It was moved by Councillor D Mortimer, seconded by Councillor English, that the recommendations of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee relating to changes to the Constitution as required by the Localism Act be approved.

RESOLVED: That the amendments to the Constitution as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee be approved.

35. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES - APPOINTMENT OF NEW NON-STATUTORY STANDARDS COMMITTEE

It was moved by Councillor Parvin, seconded by Councillor Mrs Stockell, that the recommendations of the Head of Democratic Services relating to the appointment of a new non-statutory Standards Committee be approved.

RESOLVED:

1. That as from the commencement date, the allocation of seats on the new (not politically balanced) Standards Committee be as follows:-

Conservative	3 Members
Liberal Democrat	3 Members
Independent	3 Members

2. That three Substitute Members (one from each political group) be appointed to the new Standards Committee, but that they substitute for Members of their group only.
3. That the wishes of the Group Leaders with regard to the appointment of Members to serve on the new Standards Committee (and Substitutes) as set out below be approved:-

MEMBERS

CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	INDEPENDENT
PARVIN	ROBERTSON MRS	GOOCH MRS
GIBSON MRS	VIZZARD	MUNFORD
STOCKELL MRS	WARNER	NEWTON

SUBSTITUTES

CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	INDEPENDENT
HINDER MRS	WILSON MRS	MORIARTY

4. That Councillors Paul Butcher and Eileen Riden be appointed to serve as non-voting Parish Councillor representatives on the new Standards Committee for an initial period until November 2012.
5. That the existing arrangements be maintained until the commencement date.

36. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.35 p.m.