

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

SPATIAL PLANNING STRATEGY ADVISORY GROUP

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 24 JULY 2012

Present: Councillor Lusty (Chairman), and
Councillors Burton, Mrs Gooch, Harwood, Moss and
Mrs Wilson

Also Present: Councillors English, Paine, Paterson and Yates

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute members.

3. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillors English, Paine, Paterson, and Yates indicated that they wished to speak in respect of all the items on the agenda.

4. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Lusty be elected Chairman of the Group for the municipal year 2012/13.

5. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Harwood be elected Vice Chairman of the Group for the municipal year 2012/13.

6. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members and Officers.

7. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

All members of the group stated that they had been lobbied on the Core Strategy.

8. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

9. CORE STRATEGY PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: KEY ISSUES AND RESPONSES

The Group considered the report of the Director of Change, Planning and the Environment relating to the key issues arising from the representations made during the public participation consultation on the draft Core Strategy (2011) and to note the officers' response.

The Group discussed in great detail the issues raised in the report and the various measures that could be taken in respect of the concerns raised.

RESOLVED to Recommend to the Cabinet: That the recommendations set out in the report be approved subject to the following amendments:-

- a) Recommendation (ii) re Junction 8 was agreed but in addition the following resolution was also agreed.

That in respect of the proposals relating to Junction 8 on the M20 motorway and the Woodcut Farm site the 7ha site to the north west of the site would be given over to a landscaped area should come into public ownership either through the Council or a Charitable Trust and that the proposal is communicated to the community setting out the Council's intention through this proposal to protect the land to the north west of this area as open countryside.

- b) Recommendation (iii) be reworded as follows:
"Retain Junction 7 of the M20 motorway as a medical campus and that the Cabinet give further consideration to the allocation for land as development in the Core Strategy in conjunction with the adjacent redevelopment of Newnham Court Shopping Centre which would have been guided by an approved Development Brief".
- c) Recommendation (xii) be reworded as follows:
"Rename Green wedges as Green and Blue corridors, transfer references to corridors in policies CS3 to policy CS1 and amend the Green wedges notations on the Key diagram but that in so doing these changes are cross referenced to the NPPF".
- d) New recommendation (xv) be inserted in the following terms:
"That the Cabinet give consideration to the Maidstone Town Centre being allocated a strategic site or highlighted in policy in a way that has the same effect as that of a strategic site allocation.

10. CORE STRATEGY STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT SITE ALLOCATIONS

The Group considered the report of the Director of Change, Planning and the Environment relating to the draft Core Strategy strategic site allocations for housing and employment, together with the policy for the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the distribution of housing targets for rural service centres, and to approve the document attached at Appendix A to the report for public consultation in accordance with regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

The Group discussed in great detail the issues raised in the report and the various measures that could be taken in respect of the concerns raised.

The Director of Change, Planning and the Environment reported to the Group a number of amendments he wished to make to the consultation document which are set out below:-

Core Strategy Strategic Site Allocations – Proposed Amendments

East of Hermitage Lane

1. After paragraph 3.16 add new paragraph: "East of Hermitage Lane lies, in part, within an identified biodiversity opportunity area (BOA). The Greensand Heaths and Commons BOA, in which the north eastern portion of the site is located, is characterised by a concentration of woodlands on the Greensand Ridge where areas of healthy vegetation and acid grassland are a feature. The larger field, which is proposed for development, has been ploughed on a number of occasions, although opportunities exist for targeted habitat restoration and creation as part of the development."
2. Delete paragraph 3.17 and replace with: "At the south western end of the site is a smaller field with an area of protected trees to the north east. The field and trees, which are to be retained as informal/natural open space, offer the chance to create an enhanced biodiversity corridor through and around the proposed development. Retention of the smaller field also allows a section of archaeological remains to be left in situ, as advised by the County Archaeologist. The retention and enhancement of this part of the site will also screen the proposed development from Hermitage Lane and maintain the setting of Maidstone Hospital."

North of Sutton Road

3. Paragraph 4.10 following "and enclosure to development" add: "The County Ecologist has identified the eastern part of the site as having ecological potential so more detailed consideration should be given to this area through the submission of an ecology survey, incorporating mitigation measures, to be approved by the Borough Council. Existing landscape features within the site should be retained where possible. Bicknor Wood to the north of the site and the trees running along the eastern boundary are subject to tree preservation orders (TPO No.37 of 1981 and TPO No.36 of 1981)."
4. Policy SS2c add new criterion: "Submission of a full landscape assessment and ecology survey, to be approved by the Borough Council".

Woodcut Farm

5. Paragraph 5.3 amend first sentence to read "The site which is some ~~25.8ha~~ **25.3ha**, is situated..."
6. Paragraph 5.9 add "The site does lie within the Mid Kent Greensand and Gault Biodiversity Opportunity Area and opportunities to develop targeted habitat mitigation and enhancements in conjunction with the site's development will be identified."
7. Policy SS3(5) amend to read "Larger footprint buildings will be accommodated in the field to the east of the stream up to a maximum unit size of ~~15,000sqm~~ **10,000sqm ground area** with building ridge heights not to exceed 14m".

Newnham Park

8. Paragraph 6.10 after "views from the AONB" add: "Of particular prominence is the hill to the north east of the field located to the east of the stream, so development will not be permitted on this part of the site."
9. Paragraph 6.15 amend to read "The medical campus will provide for up to ~~200,000m²~~ **150,000m²** of specialist medical facilities".
10. Policy SS4(1) amend to read "Provision of a maximum 200,000m² of specialist medical facilities set within an enhanced landscape structure" and replace with "Provision of a maximum ~~200,000m²~~ **150,000m²** of specialist medical facilities set within an enhanced landscape structure".
11. Policy SS4(5) after "...use of the topography in site layout plans ..." add: "to exclude development on more prominent parts of the site."
12. Policy SS4(7) amend to read "The cumulative quantum of retail floorspace will be restricted to the provision of up to 500sqm above that which already exists and any additional retail floorspace above this limit must be complementary to town centre uses and ~~the need for~~, **by means of a sequential sites assessment, demonstrably require** an out of town location justified.

The Group were also asked to recommend a change to the original recommendation 1.2.4 so as to read as follows:-

"The Cabinet notes that the Maidstone Strategic Site Allocations Sustainability Appraisal July 2012 (Appendix C) forms part of the evidence base; and requests that the consultants (URS) be asked to provide a summary of the significant environmental effects of the options chosen and the reasonable alternatives rejected, as set out in the Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, Schedule 2.

RESOLVED to Recommend to the Cabinet: That the recommendations in the report be approved subject to taking into account any decisions made in Minute 9 above and the amendment recommended by the Director of Change, Planning and the Environment as set out above and the change to recommendation 1.2.4 as set below:-

“That it be noted that the Maidstone Strategic Site Allocations Sustainability Appraisal July 2012 (Appendix C) forms part of the evidence base; and requests that the consultants (URS) be asked to provide a summary of the significant environmental effects of the options chosen and the reasonable alternatives rejected, as set out in the Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004, Schedule 2.”

11. DRAFT JOINT INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The Group considered the report of the Director of Change, Planning and the Environment seeking agreement to a Draft Integrated transport Strategy, prepared jointly by the Kent County Council and the Maidstone Borough Council, for public consultation.

The Group discussed in great detail the issues raised in the report and the various measures that could be taken in respect of the concerns raised.

RESOLVED to Recommend to the Cabinet: That, subject to the following amendments, the Draft Integrated Transport Strategy and its preferred option, using a “do minimum plus” basis for further improvements be approved for public consultation:-

- a) That a greater emphasis is given to pedestrian movement in and around the Maidstone town centre within the Strategy.
- b) That the Cabinet investigate and seek clarity from the Kent County Council on what level of funding it would underwrite the schemes set out in the ITS Action Plan.

12. INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN UPDATE

The Group considered the report of the Director of Change, Planning and the Environment on progress on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan in order to inform the Core Strategy strategic site allocations and the Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS).

RESOLVED: That the progress of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and the indicative cost estimates be noted.

13. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30pm to 9.54pm.