

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**COMMUNITY, LEISURE SERVICES AND ENVIRONMENT
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 JANUARY 2014

Present: Councillor Mrs Blackmore (Chairman), and
Councillors Brindle, Mrs Gooch, Mrs Joy,
Mrs Mannering, Mrs Parvin, Thick, Vizzard and Yates

Also Present: Councillors J.A. Wilson

78. THE COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER WHETHER ALL ITEMS ON THE AGENDA SHOULD BE WEB-CAST

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

79. APOLOGIES

It was noted that apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs Gibson and Munford.

80. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Thick was substituting for Councillor Mrs Gibson and Councillor Gooch was substituting for Councillor Munford.

81. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS/WITNESSES

The Cabinet Member Councillor J A Wilson was present as a witness with regard to Agenda Item 8 – Draft Play Areas Strategy.

82. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

83. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the Items on the Agenda be taken in public as proposed.

84. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 10 DECEMBER 2013

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 December 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the addition of Councillor Yates having given apologies for that meeting.

85. DRAFT PLAY AREAS STRATEGY

Jason Taylor, Parks and Leisure Manager, and Amanda Scott, Play Facilities Development Officer, were invited to present the Draft Play Area Strategy following the Committee's consideration of the work done by officers on the Play Area Review at the Committee meetings on 22 April and 26 July 2013.

Following the recommendations made at the meeting on 26 July 2013, Officers have now produced the Maidstone Play Strategy – A Strategy for Outdoor Equipped Play Areas 2014-2024.

Members asked for clarification on the definition of play areas, age groups and the funding available to parish councils who have a strategically important play area and felt it was important that these were made clearer in the Strategy, especially with regard to the match funding.

Officers answered questions raised by Members regarding, inter alia, fitness/exercise areas within play areas, the play area scoring matrix, a rolling programme of maintenance of the new play areas and internal consultation between departments regarding planning applications and S106 monies.

The following points were also raised by Members:-

- The inclusion of Neighbourhood Plans;
- The action plan needs to be in chronological order;
- The importance for all local community groups to be made aware of the consultation; and
- That the Committee be kept informed regarding progress and implementation of the Strategy

The Cabinet Member thanked the Officers for their hard work in compiling the Strategy and stated that he hoped this Strategy would be an exemplar for future strategies.

RESOLVED:

1. That the draft Maidstone Play Strategy 2014-2024 is consulted on for a 5 week period, subject to the following:-
 - a) That Parish Councils and Borough Councillors be requested to pass the consultation details on to local community groups who may have an interest.
 - b) That a glossary be added to the Draft Play Area Strategy to give clarity to the definition of play areas and age groups.
 - c) That it be made clearer within the Draft Play Area Strategy that the funding of up to £10,000 available to Parish Councils who have a strategically important play area in their area requires match funding.

- d) That reference to Neighbourhood Plans be included in the Draft Play Area Strategy.
 - e) That the Action Plan be amended so that it is in chronological order.
 - f) Section 7 of the Play Area Strategy – Implementation and Monitoring arrangements – Add the Community, Leisure Services and Environment O&S Committee as a further bullet point in the second paragraph, stating that the Committee will be updated twice a year.
2. That, following the consultation period and taking into account any objections and representations received, the Cabinet Member for Community and Leisure Services be recommended to agree:-
- a) To adopt the Maidstone Play Strategy – A Strategy for Outdoor Equipped Play Areas 2014-2024;
 - b) Approve a new borough wide standard for equipped play “That most residents across the borough will live within 12 minutes’ walk of a good play area”;
 - c) The allocation of capital funding to allow the improvement of all strategically important play areas to Green and Amber standard;
 - d) That any non-Strategically Important Play Areas be offered to the community and added to the community right to bid list of assets;
 - e) After one year any non-strategically important play areas that are not taken on by the community will have the play equipment removed, but will be retained as open space; and
 - f) The allocation of funding to support a grant scheme to allow Parish Councils to improve any strategically important play areas that they are responsible for.

86. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its Future Work Programme. Concern was raised regarding the meeting arranged for 30 January 2014 in that it clashes with a Licensing Committee, of which 5 Councillors were Members of both Committees. It was agreed to look at the possibility of changing this date.

A Member raised the issue of older people’s services provided by outside agencies and how the Council linked into them and felt this was an issue that should be considered for review by the Committee. It was felt that some scoping work was required and that consideration be given to including this as a subject to review in the next municipal year.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Future Work Programme be noted.
2. That the Overview and Scrutiny Officer be asked to look at alternatives dates for the meeting currently arranged for 30 January 2014.
3. That Councillor Vizzard liaise with the Overview and Scrutiny Officer on scoping work regarding older people's services.

87. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.32 p.m.