

The decision relating to Minute 232 was determined through the Review of Service Committee Decision process, Rule 33 of the Borough Council's Constitution. There will be no call-in permitted.

A call-in period will not apply to Minute 231 as the report was noted.

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE**

#### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 12 APRIL 2022**

**Present:** Councillors Brindle, Cooper (Chairman), Cox, English, Garten, McKay, Munford and Russell and Springett

**Also Present:** Councillors Harper, Holmes and M Rose

218. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Clark, Mrs Grigg and Spooner.

219. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Councillor Brindle was present as Substitute for Councillor Spooner.

Councillor Cox was present as Substitute for Councillor Mrs Grigg.

Councillor English was present as Substitute for Councillor Clark.

220. **URGENT ITEMS**

The Chairman stated that he had accepted an urgent update to Item 15 – Alternative Referral of Service Committee Decision – Article 4 Directions, as the information contributed to the issue's consideration. The update had been published on the 8 April 2022.

221. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

Councillors Harper, Holmes and M Rose were in attendance as Visiting Members for Item 15 – Alternative Referral of Service Committee Decision – Article 4 Directions.

222. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

223. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

224. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

**RESOLVED:** That all items be taken in public as proposed.

225. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 MARCH 2022

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the addition of the following wording between the first and third paragraphs of Minute 208:

'All Councillors confirmed they had been lobbied on the above proposals'.

226. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

227. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

228. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

229. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The previously raised issue concerning the use of residents' parking permits across Council owned car parks, would be added to the work programme and carried forward to the relevant Member on the Executive, to reflect the Council's change in governance arrangements.

**RESOLVED:** That the amended Committee Work Programme be noted.

230. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports of Outside Bodies.

231. LOCAL PLAN REVIEW UPDATE

The Strategic Planning Manager introduced the report and stated that the Local Plan Review (LPR) documentation had been submitted to the Planning Inspectorate on 31 March 2022. Acknowledgement of the documents' receipt had been received.

The process to be undertaken by the Inspectorate in independently examining the LPR was briefly outlined, with the subsequent 'Matters, Issues and Questions' likely to be received from May 2022. The topics covered within those would usually act as a good indication of which topics within the LPR would receive particular attention during its examination.

A Programme Officer had been appointed to facilitate the process between the Council and the Inspectorate, and was the same officer appointed following the adopted Local Plan's submission.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

232. ALTERNATIVE REFERRAL OF SERVICE COMMITTEE DECISION - ARTICLE 4 DIRECTIONS

The Head of Planning and Development introduced the briefing note and referred to the urgent update provided. The table within the briefing note included all of the definitions pertaining to Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO), and it was noted that the Council had previously focused on licensed HMOs.

The Committee were advised that if it felt that harm was being caused by HMOs, and that this harm could be evidenced, the four recommendations within the briefing note would be applicable. The recommendations were outlined, with reference made to the strengthening of the design quality criteria for HMOs, as the Council had adopted Kent County Council's parking standards which permitted minimal parking facilities. These parking standards contributed in part to the approval of HMO planning applications. DM23 was the policy relating to parking standards.

Councillors Harper and M Rose addressed the Committee as Visiting Members, as two of the Councillors that had submitted the Original Referral, attached at Appendix 2 to the briefing note.

Councillor Holmes addressed the Committee as a Visiting Member as one of the Councillors that had submitted the Alternative Referral, attached at Appendix 1 to the briefing note.

Several Members of the Committee referenced the contributing factors to the original decision made. This included that the Council's current policies applicable to an HMO planning application's consideration were inadequate and the importance of developing suitable policies, such as the Town Centre Strategy and Design and Sustainability Development Plan Document (DPD), to provide an effective mechanism to review those applications.

In response to questions, the Head of Planning and Development stated that the Design and Sustainability DPD would take several years to produce, as supporting evidence was required alongside a public consultation and examination.

In line with the updated information provided, the options as outlined in the briefing note were felt to be necessary and suitable, with the threshold to be raised to 10% to adequately address those concerns across a wider geographical area. It was requested that in reviewing DM23 as part of the Design and Sustainability DPD's creation, any other related policies also be reviewed.

In response to several Members having expressed support for improved housing standards, the Head of Planning and Development stated that licensing HMOs allowed for a higher standard of facilities to be achieved within those properties.

**RESOLVED:** That the Lead Member(s) for the relevant portfolio(s) be recommended to:

1. Take forward the "Design and Sustainability" Development Plan Document to include a review of DM23 and any other relevant policies, and once adopted seeks to bring in Article 4 Directions on a street-by-street basis, once Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) prevalence reaches the evidenced threshold of 10%;
2. Take forward a review of residents' parking entitlement for either all HMO residents or just residents of new HMOs created after;
3. Explore the possibility and merits of creating a formalised licensing arrangements for all HMOs; and
4. Take forward an exploration of referring all HMO properties to the Valuation Office for revaluation, based on their net rental income (as an HMO), rather than their valuation as a single self-contained dwelling, as is currently the case.

233. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.27 p.m.