

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 8 JUNE 2022

Present: Councillors Clark, Mrs Grigg (Vice-Chair in the Chair), Kimmance, Knatchbull, McKenna, Munford and Spooner, Springett and Young.

Lead Member Present: Councillor Cooper, Lead Member for Planning and Infrastructure.

1. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs Blackmore and Trzebinski.

2. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

Councillor Knatchbull was present as Substitute Member for Councillor Trzebinski.

Councillor McKenna was present as Substitute Member for Councillor Mrs Blackmore.

3. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED: That Councillor Blackmore be elected as the Chairman of the Committee for the Municipal Year 2022/23.

4. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR**

RESOLVED: That Councillor Grigg be elected as the Vice-Chair of the Committee for the Municipal Year 2022/23.

5. **URGENT ITEMS**

The Chairman stated that there was one urgent item, Item 16 – Levelling Up Bid Junction 7 M20 Signalisation. The reason for urgency was that the issue needed to be considered before the Lead Member's decision on the matter to meet Kent County Council's deadline.

6. **CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF BUSINESS**

The Chairman stated that the Lead Member for Planning and Infrastructure would be invited to address the Committee after Item 12 – Questions from Members to the Chairman (if any).

7. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

8. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members and Officers.

9. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

10. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public, unless any Member of the Committee wished to refer to Item 17 – Exempt Appendix – Draft Statement of Common Ground with Medway Council, in which case the Committee would enter into closed session due to the possible disclosure of exempt information.

11. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

12. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS

There were no questions from Local Residents.

13. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

14. VERBAL BRIEFING FROM THE LEAD MEMBER FOR PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The Lead Member for Planning and Infrastructure addressed the Committee and stated that he looked forward to working with the Committee across the municipal year.

15. 4TH QUARTER FINANCIAL UPDATE & PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Lead Member for Planning and Infrastructure introduced the report and stated that its format remained the same as those previously presented under the Council's preceding governance arrangements for consistency.

The £281,000 underspend against the revenue budget was highlighted and had arisen due to the speedy recovery of the Planning Fees and Parking fees from the Covid-19 pandemic. There had been no capital expenditure during the quarter, however planning for the Medway Street

Flood Barrier's delivery continued through residual funding for the Bridges Gyrotory Scheme. The overspend on the Local Plan Review had been met from the corporate contingency budget.

The Key Performance Indicators' positive performance was noted.

In response to a question, the Director of Finance and Business Improvement confirmed that the zero-expenditure figure for Development Management Enforcement Section was due to its new addition as a cost to the Service.

RESOLVED: That

1. The Revenue position as at the end of Quarter 4 for 2021/22, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances have been identified, be noted;
2. The Capital position at the end of Quarter 4 be noted;
3. The Performance position as at Quarter 4 for 2021/22, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant issues have been identified, be noted; and
4. The Annual Performance for 2021/22 be noted.

16. LOWER THAMES CROSSING – LOCAL REFINEMENT CONSULTATION

The Lead Member for Planning and Infrastructure introduced the report, stating that the ongoing Local Refinement Consultation built upon the previous consultation that took place in the summer of 2021.

The proposals included within the consultation were outlined, with specific attention given to the environmental compensation and mitigation proposals that directly affected the Council. These were traffic enforcement between junctions 3 to 4 of the M20 and a new compensation site at Bluebell Hill on the M2 corridor. Due to the cross-boundary nature of the proposals, the Council wished to know more about their management with neighbouring authorities.

The Lower Thames Crossing proposal could impact the local road network, particularly the A229 corridor, but the Council would continue to engage with Kent County Council as highways authority.

Reassurance was given that the proposals would not impact the existing or proposed spatial strategy within the 2017-2031 Local Plan policies and the Local Plan Review Regulation 19 submission for 2022-2037.

In response to questions, the Strategic Planning Manager explained that the Council's consultation response commented on those proposals that would directly impact the borough.

RESOLVED: That the Lead Member for Planning and Infrastructure be recommended to:

1. Note the contents of the Lower Thames Crossing Local Refinement Consultation; and
2. Approve the submission of the Council's response as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

17. LEVELLING UP BID JUNCTION 7 M20 SIGNALISATION

The Lead Member for Planning and Infrastructure introduced the report and stated that the positive feedback received on the Council's initial but unsuccessful funding bid for the scheme would contribute to the refinement of the second bid submitted.

In explaining the funding bid's submission, it was stated that whilst there were some Section 106 monies available for the scheme, a complete reliance on those monies could lead to a delay in its implementation. The proposed scheme met the assessment criteria set, was ready for implementation and would improve the local road network, whilst being able to take place alongside other highways improvements.

In response to questions on the Section 106 monies as outlined within the report, the Lead Member for Planning and Infrastructure indicated that the monies would not cover the scheme's total cost, which was also likely to have increased by the time the monies were received by the Council. Any unrequired Section 106 monies would be returned to the developer. If possible, and within the applicable legal framework, an attempt to renegotiate the agreements would be made. The importance of improving the road network was re-emphasised.

The Director of Regeneration and Place referenced the endeavours clause within the relevant Section 106 agreements in explaining the Council's funding bid submissions. Reassurance was given that such issues were historic in nature as the Council progressed towards collecting Community Infrastructure Levy monies instead. The Head of Planning and Development further stated that the clause had been included within the agreements, as the developers were aware of the Council's funding bid submission during the negotiation process.

In response to questions, the Leader Member for Planning and Infrastructure stated that whilst the junction improvement would fall under the remit of National Highways, it was unlikely to be funded by the organisation hence the Council's bid submission. The distribution of Levelling up funding was explained, with any successful scheme to be ready for implementation. Other schemes, such as the Leeds Langley Relief Road and Town Centre Strategy, had not been put forward as they would not currently meet that requirement.

The Committee supported the bid's submission.

RESOLVED: That the Lead Member for Planning and Infrastructure be recommended to approve the submission of a joint Levelling Up Round 2 bid with Kent County Council to fund improvement works to Junction 7 M20, as set out at paragraph 3.3 (Option 2) of the report.

18. DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND WITH MEDWAY COUNCIL

The Lead Member for Planning and Infrastructure introduced the report and stated that Medway Council's Cabinet had approved the draft Statement of Common Ground attached at Exempt Appendix 1 to the report, with an Officer delegation to make minor amendments.

RESOLVED: That draft Statement of Common Ground attached at Exempt Appendix 1 to the report be recommended to the Executive for approval.

19. EXEMPT APPENDIX 1 - DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND WITH MEDWAY COUNCIL

RESOLVED: That the item be considered alongside Item 17 – Draft Statement of Common Ground with Medway Council.

20. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.07 p.m.