

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 8 DECEMBER 2022

Attendees:

Committee Members:	Councillors Mrs Annabelle Blackmore (Chairman), Mrs Grigg (Vice Chair), Clark, Kimmance, Munford, Spooner, Springett, Trzebinski, Young and Burton
Lead Members:	Councillor Burton (Leader of the Council)
Visiting Members:	Councillor English

105. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence had been received, however Councillor Kimmance was delayed in arriving.

106. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor English was present as a Substitute Member for Councillor Kimmance.

107. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

108. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor English was present as a Visiting Member for Item 14 – MBC Response to the Kent Minerals and Waste Plan Review and Item 15 – Fees and Charges.

109. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or officers.

110. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

111. EXEMPT INFORMATION

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

112. MINUTES OF THE URGENT MEETING HELD ON 3 NOVEMBER 2022

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the urgent meeting held on 3 November 2022 be agreed as a correct record and signed.

113. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2022

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2022 be agreed as a correct record and signed.

114. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

115. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS

There were no questions from Local Residents.

116. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

117. FORWARD PLAN RELATING TO THE COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan relating to the Committee's Terms of Reference be noted.

Note: Councillor Kimmance arrived during this item, at 6.37 p.m.

118. MBC RESPONSE TO THE KENT MINERALS AND WASTE PLAN REVIEW

The Leader of the Council was present to receive the Committee's feedback on behalf of the Lead Member for Planning and Infrastructure, and asked the Principal Planning Officer to introduce the report.

The Principal Planning Officer explained that the drafted response was to the second Regulation 18 consultation undertaken by Kent County Council (KCC) for the Kent Minerals and Waste Plan 2023-38. The consultation had been triggered following a change to the Plan period, updates to reference nature recovery networks and policy wording on circular economy, as well as reference added to Chapel Farm in relation to soft-sand.

Some Members of the Committee expressed concern that the response was focused on the problem rather than a proactive solution, and that wording should be added to the fourth paragraph of the drafted wording to emphasise the willingness of the Council to work together with KCC to ensure the plan could be effectively implemented.

However it was felt by other Committee Members that the response was a high level document and did not require further wording to be added.

The Leader of the Council agreed that the wording could be reconsidered to include the Council's willingness to continue communications with KCC to bridge the gap between the Council's current position and the impact that the updated plan would have.

RESOLVED: That the proposed response to this Kent Minerals and Waste Plan Review consultation at Appendix 1 of this report be agreed, and subject to further consideration by the Cabinet Member.

119. FEES AND CHARGES

The Head of Finance introduced the report and explained that Fees and Charges for 2023/24 would be implemented from 1 April 2023. Fees and charges could be split into two types; statutory and discretionary. The discretionary charges had been proposed following input from budget managers regarding their specific areas, considering a number of factors including the Council's values, the impact of competition and costs of service delivery. The proposed changes to the discretionary charges as outlined in table 1 of the report were summarised.

In response to questions, the Head of Finance explained that the proposals had taken into account the costs of service provision. However in relation to parking charges, the impact of Covid-19 was also considered and the two issues needed to be balanced.

Some concern was raised regarding the ability to fully consider the fees and charges presented without more information, including a line by line breakdown of current estimates.

The Head of Finance explained that only the top-line figures were presented within the estimates column, as there would be fluctuations within the individual lines which would impact how the budgets looked. A separate report on savings and growth would be presented to the Committee at their January 2023 meeting which would give further information on the financial position of services within the Committee's remit.

The Leader of the Council added that more comprehensive figures would be too detailed to present within the report, but specific data sets could be given outside of the meeting in order to assist the Committee to consider the impact of fees and charges to the Council.

In response to debate, the Leader of the Council acknowledged the opportunity to increase car park charges in the town centre, but was keen for the Council's car parks to remain competitive.

RESOLVED: That

1. the report be noted; and
2. the Executive be recommended to approve the Fees and Charges set out at Appendix 1 to the report.

120. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.42 p.m.