

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2023

Attendees:

Committee Members:	Councillor Joy (Vice-Chairman in the Chair), Conyard, Forecast, Jeffery, Mortimer, Reid, Riordan, Rose and Springett
Cabinet Members:	Councillors Garten, Cabinet Member for Environmental Services and Councillor Parfitt-Reid, Cabinet Member for Housing and Health
Visiting Members:	Councillor Cleator

77. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hastie, Khadka and Knatchbull.

78. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following Substitute Members were noted:

- Councillor Conyard for Councillor Khadka
- Councillor Forecast for Knatchbull
- Councillor Reid for Hastie

79. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

80. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor Cleator was present as Visiting Member for the following Items:

- Item 10 – LGPS Pension Guarantee for Waste Contract
- Item 11 – Proposed Private Sector Leasing Scheme (PSL) and changes to the current Landlord Incentive Scheme (LIS)
- Item 12 – 2nd Quarter Financial Update & Performance Monitoring Report

81. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

82. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

83. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public, unless any Member of the Committee wishes to discuss Item 13 – Exempt Appendix to Item 11 – Proposed Private Sector Leasing Scheme (PSL) and changes to the current Landlord Incentive Scheme (ISL), in which case the Committee would enter into closed session due to the possible disclosure of exempt information, for the reason specified having applied the public interest test.

84. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 OCTOBER 2023

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 30 October 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

85. 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.

86. LGPS PENSION GUARANTEE FOR WASTE CONTRACT

The Cabinet Member for Environmental Services introduced the item and stated that four employees currently employed by Biffa Municipal Ltd, originally employed by the Council, would transfer to SUEZ Recycling and Recovery UK in March as part of the Mid Kent waste contract change. For the four employees to retain their pension rights, SUEZ Recycling and Recovery UK would need to become an Admission Body for the Local Government Pension Fund (LGPS), and Maidstone and Ashford Borough Councils would need to provide a pension guarantee of £383,000 to the Kent Pension Fund to protect the employees from a shortfall.

The Committee enquired about how the pension guarantee would be monitored and the Head of Environmental Services and Waste Management stated that protections were in place in the waste contract, that SUEZ would provide data and information on its contributions to the LGPS and the same practice had been implemented with Biffa without issue.

The Committee agreed that the £383,000 was an appropriate provision to the Kent Pension Fund and recommended that it be agreed to the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the CABINET MEMBER:

That the provision of a guarantee to the total value of £383k to the Kent Pension Fund in partnership with Ashford Borough Council be approved.

87. PROPOSED PRIVATE SECTOR LEASING SCHEME (PSL) AND CHANGES TO THE CURRENT LANDLORD INCENTIVE SCHEME (LIS)

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Health introduced the report and stated that the Council was experiencing unprecedented demand for homeless services and currently had 270 households in Temporary Accommodation (TA), of which the Council owns 105 households. It was proposed to create a Private Sector Leasing (PSL) Scheme and for the Council to own 50 households under the scheme in two years.

The Committee agreed that the PSL Scheme would be beneficial to the Council's support for vulnerable residents and increase the portfolio of Temporary Accommodation. A Member of the Committee raised a concern about whether the Council could purchase properties from landlords at the rates it anticipated considering the increased demand for rental properties.

In response to concerns, the Director of Regeneration and Place stated that the scheme would provide a guaranteed rental income, internal repairs and a management service. It was further stated that when the decision would be made another recommendation would be included to state that the final decision on leasing individual properties would be made in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing and Health together with the Director of Finance & Business Improvement.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the CABINET MEMBER:

That is be agreed to:

1. Launch an MBC PSL scheme with an ambition to secure 50 homes within two years of launch, and;
2. Recast the capital programme to deliver the remainder of the purchased TA over 24/25, so shortening the programme from three to two years, subject to prevailing market conditions / availability of suitable stock.

88. 2ND QUARTER FINANCIAL UPDATE & PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Cabinet Member for Housing and Health introduced the item and stated that:

- The Council was projecting a net overspend of just under £300,000 for the 2023/24 financial year.
- The finance budget for Housing, Health and Environment Services was currently £3.615m, compared to a budget of £3.434m.
- The end of year forecast for Housing, Health and Environment Services was a projected overspend of £582,000.
- The largest variance in budget was from homeless temporary accommodation.
- Four of the eight Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for Housing, Health and Environment Services were achieved, with three missing targets within 10%.

The Committee considered the update and queried the £90,000 underspend in relation to Environmental Protection Section and whether the Committee could be presented with a trend metric for KPIs.

The Director of Regeneration and Place stated he would provide an answer to the Environmental Protection underspend to the Committee and the Information and Analytics Manager stated that future performance reports could include a trend graph metric.

RESOLVED: That the following be noted:

1. The Revenue position as at the end of Quarter 2 for 2023/24, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances have been identified;
2. The Capital position at the end of Quarter 2 for 2023/24;
3. The Performance position as at Quarter 2 for 2023/24, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant issues have been identified; and
4. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund update, attached at Appendix 3 to the report.

89. EXEMPT APPENDIX TO ITEM 11 - PROPOSED PRIVATE SECTOR LEASING SCHEME (PSL) AND CHANGES TO THE CURRENT LANDLORD INCENTIVE SCHEME (LIS)

RESOLVED: That the item be considered alongside Item 11 – Proposed Private Sector Leasing Scheme (PSL) and changes to the current Landlord Incentive Scheme (LIS).

90. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 6.59 p.m.