

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**PLANNING AND HEALTHIER STRONGER COMMUNITIES POLICY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 9 JULY 2024

Attendees:

Committee Members:	Councillors Barwick (Chairman), Clark, Conyard, Forecast, Greenan, Harper, Milham, Russell and Spooner
Cabinet Members:	Councillors Harwood (Cabinet Member for Planning Policy and Management) and S Thompson (Cabinet Member for Healthier Stronger Communities)
Visiting Members:	Councillors Cleator and English

6. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Kehily.

7. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor Milham was present as a Substitute Member for Councillor Kehily.

8. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman stated that there were urgent updates to Item 12: Maidstone Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan and Item 13: Kent Mineral Sites Plan Regulation 18 Updated Response which contributed to the item's consideration.

9. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor Cleator was present as a Visiting Member for Item 10 - 4th Quarter Financial Update & Performance Monitoring Report.

Councillor English was present as a Visiting Member for Item 12 - Maidstone Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan and Item 13 - Kent Mineral Sites Plan Regulation 18 Updated Response.

10. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

11. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

12. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public, unless any Member of the Committee wishes to discuss Item 15: Exempt Appendix 1: Draft Statement of Common Ground with KCC Regarding Review of Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024-39 in which case the Committee would enter into closed session due to the possible disclosure of exempt information, for the reason/s specified having applied the public interest test.

13. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 MAY 2024

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2024 be approved as a correct record and signed.

14. 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.

15. 4TH QUARTER FINANCIAL UPDATE & PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Cabinet Member for Healthier Stronger Communities introduced the report and thanked officers for altering the content to reflect the new Policy Advisory Committees (PACs). The Head of Finance expanded on the content of the report and stated that:

- The overall financial position at the end of the year was within budget. There was an overspend of just over £1.6 million for this Committee, mainly attributed to the health centre at Lockmeadow, which the Council had managed since the end of David Lloyd's tenancy, and the vacant lots at Lockmeadow, which were taking longer than expected to fill vacant tenancies;
- There was an underspend of just under £1.4 million on capital, with slippage in leisure and the with the Town Centre Strategy related to the delays with the local plan review. These funds would be available for next year's budget;
- 82% of targeted Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were met for this quarter compared to 58% for the previous one. 33% of KPIs achieved their annual targets compared to 57% for last year;
- Footfall at the museum and visitor information centre had seen a slight decline, but the Hazlitt Theatre had sold 74% of tickets; and
- There had been a high success rate in applications for Planning and Management, exceeding targets with 100% compliance with priority 1 cases for Enforcement.

In response to concerns raised by several Committee Members, the Head of Finance advised that the leisure centre costs, covered under capital, had been more than anticipated due to its unexpected state of disrepair. The longer term dilapidation costs would be recouped but could take a while as this was legally complicated. There were a few areas that were outside Finance's remit to

respond, but it was agreed to return with further information on the Leisure Services overspend, Lockmeadow market, the KPIs of the museum and to confirm which PAC is responsible for the park and ride sites.

The Cabinet Member for Healthier Stronger Communities agreed to make enquiries concerning the flood barrier planning and stated that he had been briefed on youth unemployment, which was another statistic of concern.

RESOLVED: That

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

16. **HEADCORN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN REGULATION 16**

The Cabinet Member for Planning Policy and Management introduced the report and advised that Headcorn Parish Council undertook a public consultation on the pre-submission version of the neighbourhood plan (Regulation 14) between June and August 2023. The second round of public consultation, on the submission version of the neighbourhood plan (Regulation 16) was attached at Appendix 2 to the report.

The Strategic Planning Manager stated that they had worked closely with Headcorn Parish Council to help produce the neighbourhood plan and provided advice around conforming with the recently adopted Local Plan Review and national legislation. If the recommendations were agreed, the Neighbourhood Plan would be submitted to an independent examiner along with the Council comments.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the CABINET MEMBER: That

1. The Council's representation in response to the Regulation 16 consultation on the Headcorn Neighbourhood Plan, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

17. **MAIDSTONE LOCAL CYCLING & WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN**

The Strategic Planning Manager outlined that the report and advised that the LCWIP was being funded by money from Active Travel England through Kent County Council. The consultation is managed by Maidstone Borough Council and, will allow us to get feedback on local resident's priorities. Once an LCWIP is in adopted it could be used as a bidding tool for more funding in the future to fulfil the projects outlined within it.

Several Members raised concerns that the routes proposed lacked ambition, were not fit for purpose or should not be considered priority, with previous routes suggested under the local cycling and walking strategy being more in need of attention. It was also raised that undertaking this consultation in July would exclude residents on holiday and school children who would make most use of the routes.

The Strategic Planning Manager reassured that this was only one approach to secure funding for consultation on priority routes and would not take away from previous proposed routes on the Local Cycling and Walking Strategy, which is different. He also emphasised that the funding was time-sensitive and that large amounts would be missed if the deadline were not met. The Committee agreed to approve the recommendations so as not to forfeit the funding, but wanted their comments noted by the Cabinet Member.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the CABINET MEMBER: That

1. The public consultation on the technically preferred cycling and walking routes for the Maidstone Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan be approved taking Committee comments into consideration.

Councillor Harper requested that his dissent be recorded.

18. **KENT MINERAL SITES PLAN REGULATION 18 UPDATED RESPONSE**

The Cabinet Member for Planning Policy and Management introduced the report and advised that there was an urgent update to the draft updated response, which had been circulated. The revised letter aligned us with Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council, the Forestry Commission and our local MPs and made the Council position on the matter clearer. The letter requested that Kent County Council make their decision while considering potential implications arising from a recent Supreme Court ruling on Horse Hill, Surrey and the future impacts.

Several Members commented on the importance of protecting Ancient Woodland, though it was acknowledged that this would ultimately be up to KCC. It was also raised that there was a local need for construction materials and that alternatives, such as importing them or finding other resources, would have its own carbon footprint and set of issues. Overall, the Committee approved the wording of the letter, which made the Council position on the consultation clear.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the CABINET MEMBER: That

1. The role, status and the progress regarding the update to the Kent Mineral Sites Plan by Kent County Council be noted;
2. The actions taken to date in providing Maidstone Borough Council's input to the Kent Mineral Sites Plan be noted; and
3. The urgent update to the draft updated response attached as Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

19. DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND WITH KCC REGARDING REVIEW OF KENT MINERALS AND WASTE LOCAL PLAN 2024-39

The Cabinet Member for Planning Policy and Management introduced the report and emphasised the importance of working with Kent County Council on this item. The Strategic Planning Manager stated that the report was an update aligned with the new National Planning Policy Framework until the consultation that the government intended to launch at the end of July and with the new Local Plan Review.

The Committee were happy to approve the recommendations.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the CABINET MEMBER: That

1. The progress of the proposed refresh of the Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan be noted; and
2. The draft revised SoCG, attached as Exempt Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

20. EXEMPT APPENDIX 1: DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND WITH KCC REGARDING REVIEW OF KENT MINERALS AND WASTE LOCAL PLAN 2024-39

RESOLVED: That this item be considered alongside Item 14 – Draft Statement of Common Ground with KCC Regarding Review of Kent Minerals and Waste Local Plan 2024 – 39.

21. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 8.05 p.m.