

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Planning, Transport and Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 21 JANUARY 2014

Present: Councillor Collins (Chairman), and Councillors McLoughlin, B Mortimer, Munford, Ross and Springett

Also Present: Councillors Daley, Mrs Gooch, Paine and Mrs Parvin

79. THE COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER WHETHER ALL ITEMS ON THE AGENDA SHOULD BE WEBCAST

RESOLVED: That all items on the agenda be webcast.

80. APOLOGIES

It was noted that apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chittenden, Watson, Mrs Wilson and de Wiggondene.

81. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following substitutions were noted:-

Councillor B Mortimer for Councillor Chittenden
Councillor Mrs Parvin for Councillor de Wiggondene
Councillor Gooch for Councillor Munford until item 10

82. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS/WITNESSES

Councillors Daley and Gooch indicated their wish to speak on agenda item 9 – Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy.

Councillor Paine (Cabinet Member for Planning, Transport and Development) was in attendance from 6:44 pm onwards.

83. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor McLoughlin be elected Chairman for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2013/2014.

84. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

85. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the items on the agenda be taken in public as proposed.

86. MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 2 DECEMBER 2013 AND 17 DECEMBER 2013

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 2nd & 17th December 2013 be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the following changes:

- That Councillor Mortimer's name be replaced with Councillor Burton's on the notification of substitute members for the minutes from the 2nd December 2013
- That Councillor Mortimer's name be removed from the notification of substitute members for the minutes from the 17th December 2013

87. MAIDSTONE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY

Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development, Michael Murphy, Principal Planning Officer (Spatial Policy) and Jon Bunney of JMP Transport Consultants were invited to introduce item 9:- Draft Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS).

Rob Jarman began by introducing the draft ITS. The Committee was informed that a new (higher) housing target had been calculated since the ITS was first drafted. The original housing target was set at 10,080; whereas new modelling had given a number of 19,600. Therefore the draft ITS had to be updated to reflect this new target. However the Committee was warned that even if no housebuilding was to occur over the period the ITS covers, traffic congestion would still increase.

Jon Bunney then informed the Committee that the new draft ITS contains refined vision, refined objectives and a new work programme. It focuses on the following elements:

- Park and Ride
- Improving the Gyratory system in the town centre
- Increasing walking, cycling and car sharing
- A refreshed town centre parking strategy

The Committee was informed that originally, three combinations of transport measures were considered:

1. Rail, bus, walking and cycling enhancements.
2. As option 1, but with radial Park and Ride sites.
3. As option 1 but with a North and South Park and Ride spine.

Option 1 was selected following public consultation. However, after further analysis it was agreed that Option 1 was not acceptable due to the levels of congestion that would be generated by it. Therefore Option 3 was

considered as the next best option; and this was the option proposed in the ITS. Therefore the ITS envisions a North-South Park and Ride spine, with a site close to Junction 7 of the M20 and another site at Linton crossroads at the A229 corridor to the south of the town.

A representative from Coxheath Parish Council raised concerns about the siting of a new Park and Ride site at Linton crossroads. He was concerned that a need for a park and ride site hadn't been established and he was also concerned about its financial viability.

Rob Jarman responded with the following points:

- That extensive modelling work carried out by Kent County Council and Maidstone Borough Council suggests a North-South spine park and ride service was the most viable option
- Financial considerations/viability depends on commitments by Kent County Council and Maidstone Borough Council. It would also be important to bid for money from the Local Enterprise Partnership, which is only possible if there is an ITS

The Committee requested that the Part II cost benefit analysis on the new Park and Ride be circulated to the Committee for information.

A Member was concerned that even though the details around Park and Ride sites were agreed last August (including a possible site at Linton crossroads); Linton, Coxheath and Loose Parish Councils were not consulted about it. The Member was concerned that officers were not following the parish charter.

The Committee highlighted that there was a possible wording error in paragraph 1.3.16 (page 30) of the report. The report stated:

'A refreshed town centre parking strategy, which will look to increase long-stay car parking charges and reduce car parking supply to promote the use of park and ride, and a reduction in short-stay car parking to prioritise shoppers and visitors.'

When it should have stated:

'A refreshed town centre parking strategy, which will look to increase long-stay car parking charges and reduce **long stay** car parking supply to promote the use of park and ride, and a reduction in short-stay car parking **charges** to prioritise shoppers and visitors.'

The Committee considered and agreed the officer's recommendations on page 26 of the agenda.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny recommends that Cabinet approves the refined vision and objectives for the ITS

- b) That the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends that Cabinet approves the work programme for developing for the ITS in to a full draft document
- c) That on this occasion Linton, Loose and Coxheath Parish Council be given advance notice of the ITS draft consultation subject to approval by Cabinet
- d) That the Part II cost benefit analysis on the Park and Ride be circulated to the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee for information; and
- e) That the wording of the final bullet in paragraph 1.3.16 of the report (page 30 of the agenda) be amended to read: 'a refreshed town centre parking strategy, which will look to increase long-stay car parking charges and reduce **long-stay** parking supply to promote the use of park and ride, and a reduction in short-stay car parking **charges** to prioritise shoppers and visitors

88. MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN PUBLIC CONSULTATION DRAFT - GROUP 3 POLICIES

Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development and Michael Murphy, Principal Planning Officer, Spatial Policy introduced item 10: - Maidstone Borough Local Plan Public Consultation Draft - Group 3 Policies.

Michael Murphy informed the Committee that the policies identified the most sustainable areas in the borough for development. Those areas, in order of the most sustainable for development, are:

- Town centre
- Urban area
- Edge of urban area
- Rural service centres
- Large settlements
- Countryside

Therefore an exercise has been carried out to prioritise areas for development using this classification system. Sites in the borough had been independently assessed, and Yalding and Coxheath were to be designated as Rural Service Centres.

A representative from Yalding Parish Council stated that the areas that were being considered for development in Yalding were susceptible to flooding.

Rob Jarman responded to this concern by informing the Committee that raising objections based on perceived difficulties was not enough of a reason to halt development in an area. Instead a 'positive planning' approach should be used, where all possible mitigation steps must be examined before development ruled out. In this case it would have to be established that flood compensation steps would have to be deemed unfeasible before development was ruled out in Yalding. If 'positive planning' is not used and barriers are constantly put forward we are at

risk of a planning inspector forcing the council to put flood compensation schemes in place.

A representative from Coxheath Parish Council raised concerns that designating Coxheath as a Rural Service Centre (RSC) would have a negative impact on the development of its local plan.

Rob Jarman responded that any neighbourhood plan that would be in place would have weight in local planning decisions; however it would be only one of many different policies that development would be judged against.

The Committee raised concerns that they did not fully understand what the consequences of designating a large village as a RSC would be. The committee asked what the implications would be if Yalding and Coxheath were designated as larger villages rather than RSCs.

The Committee were also concerned that they could not determine whether they could accept proposals for the designation of Rural Service Centres until they saw the evidence base that was used for determining the settlement hierarchy.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends that the proposed policies and associated plans of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan be approved by Cabinet for public consultation purposes subject to the following recommendations:
- b) That Cabinet give serious consideration to the possibility of removing Yalding and Coxheath as Rural Service Centres and reclassifying them as Larger Villages prior to Public Consultation; and
- c) That information be circulated to the Committee by Spatial Policy showing the evidence base for determining the settlement hierarchy categorisation for Larger Villages.

89. **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN DRAFT SPATIAL STRATEGY**

Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development and Sarah Anderton, Principal Planning Officer (Spatial Policy) introduced item 11:- Maidstone Borough Local Plan Draft Spatial Strategy.

Rob Jarman informed the Committee that the original housing target, which was assessed as 14,800, has been revised upwards. This is because updated demographic data, which the housing target is based on, has shown that population growth had been underestimated in demographic projections. This has led to a revised figure of 19,600 being calculated.

Sarah Anderton informed the Committee that the assessment that led to the housing target was carried out by consultants with specialist expertise; and a parallel exercise has been carried out at Ashford and Tonbridge and Malling councils using the same methodology.

Rob Jarman explained that although the figure of 19,600 has been agreed as the independently assessed housing need, the actual housing target will be 17,100. This target recognises constraints to development in the borough, including the Area of Outstanding National Beauty.

Rob Jarman warned the Committee of the danger of not accepting the independently assessed housing need. The need has been calculated using a rigorous methodology and using data sources recognised by the government. Gravesham used a different methodology and different data to calculate their figure and they were picked up on it on inspection.

The Committee were concerned that they didn't fully understand the process of how the housing target was calculated. However equally, they didn't have any reasons why the independently assessed need of 19,600 would be wrong.

Rob Jarman assured the committee that the assessment had been carried out using a rigorous methodology, using the government's own statistics and the same exercise had been carried out across three borough councils simultaneously.

RESOLVED: The Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommends that Cabinet:

- a) Agrees the borough's objectively assessed housing need of 19,600 dwellings for the local plan period 2011 to 2031 as the basis for determining the housing provision for the borough;
- b) Notes the currently identified potential to make provision for 17,100 dwellings, subject to full consideration of proposed housing site allocations in February 2014;
- c) Notes the borough's objectively assessed need of 37 hectares for office, industry and warehousing based sectors and at the Maidstone medical campus for the plan period 2011 to 2031, and the draft provisions for employment floorspace (offices 39,830m²; industry 20,290m²; warehousing 49,911m²; medical 98,000m²);
- d) Approves the key local issues, as amended, set out in paragraph 1.3.46 of this report; and
- e) Approves the spatial vision and objectives, as amended, set out in paragraph 1.3.48 of this report.

90. LONG MEETING

Prior to 10:30pm, during consideration of Maidstone Borough Local Plan Draft Spatial Strategy, the Committee considered whether to adjourn the meeting at 10:30pm or continue until 11:00 pm if necessary.

RESOLVED: That the meeting continue until 11:00pm, if necessary.

91. ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2012/13

The members considered item 12:- Annual Monitoring Report 2012/13.

RESOLVED: That the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee accepts the recommendations contained in the report.

92. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: That this item should be deferred to the next meeting.

93. DURATION OF MEETING

6.33 pm to 11.00 pm