

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Planning, Transport and Development Overview & Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 9 JUNE 2014

Present: Councillor Springett (Chairman), and
Councillors Chittenden, English, Munford, Powell,
Ross, Round, de Wiggondene and Willis

Also Present: Councillors Ells and Sargeant

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

RESOLVED: that all items on the agenda be webcast.

2. APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

3. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

4. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS/WITNESSES

Councillors Ells and Sargeant were present.

Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development and Emma Boshell, Planning Officer, Spatial Policy were in attendance for item 11, Interim Report on the key issues arising from the Maidstone Borough Local Plan Regulation 18 Public Consultation events.

5. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: that Councillor Springett be elected Chairman for the 2014-15 Municipal year.

Councillor Springett, having been elected Chairman of the Committee, took the Chair.

6. ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: that Councillor English be elected as Vice Chairman for the 2014-15 Municipal year.

7. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures.

8. TO CONSIDER WHETHER ANY ITEMS SHOULD BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBLE DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION

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

9. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 MARCH 2014

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2014 be approved as a correct record and duly signed by the Chairman.

10. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 APRIL 2014

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 15 April be approved as a correct record and duly signed by the Chairman.

11. INTERIM REPORT ON THE KEY ISSUES ARISING FROM THE MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN REGULATION 18 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Emma Boshell, Planning Officer, Spatial Policy gave the Committee an overview of her report and the interim results of the Draft Local Plan consultation events.

During lengthy discussions the following points were raised:

- The amended policies under Regulation 18 would be seen by the parish councils that had worked with Design South East. It would then come to Committee in December 2014 together with the representations. The new and deleted site allocations would come to Committee in January 2015.
- The Design South East report would come to Committee before being made public.
- Ms Boshell confirmed, as a result of the further call for sites 160 sites were received. This figure included 60 sites rejected from the previous call for sites.
- Traffic modelling work was underway with Kent County Council (KCC) based on the objectively assessed housing need figure of 19,600 as well as other scenarios. Mr Jarman confirmed Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) needed to show it had tried to meet the assessed housing need by going through the process of looking at road junctions and infrastructure to establish if they can be improved. MBC would need to robustly evidence a reduction in the 19, 600 figure otherwise the inspector would reject the final plan. The traffic modelling may support a reduction in this figure.

- Questions were raised regarding the criteria used for the designation of Rural Service Centres (RSC), in particular Harrietsham. Mr Jarman explained Harrietsham was designated a RSC in the draft Local Plan partly because of the road and rail links in the area. Mr Jarman confirmed the RSC criteria would be looked at again and a report brought to this Committee.
- Mr Jarman went on to explain why RSCs were included in the plan. A sustainability appraisal of the whole Local Plan was carried out and a hierarchy developed of the most sustainable places to build the 19,600 houses. The hierarchy developed was:
 1. Town Centre
 2. Edge of urban area
 3. RSCs
 4. Larger Villages
- After larger villages, Mr Jarman explained Policy SP5 would be used so no development is permitted as villages at this level did not have sustainable facilities.
- Mr Jarman confirmed brownfield sites in villages took precedence for development over green field sites where they did not cause damage to the open countryside and were sustainable.
- Ms Boshell confirmed consultation with KCC (as the education provider) had shown that education did not show as a concern in Harrietsham, but the consultation would be ongoing and future comments from KCC would be taken in to account.
- Ms Boshell confirmed that representations made on the Local Plan after the consultation period would be considered after all the representations made within the consultation period. It was noted that this was a legal requirement.
- Consultation work with Parish Councils would help to identify the Parishes who wanted further developments in their areas.
- Ms Boshell confirmed Councillors will be invited to a multi stakeholder event being held in September 2014.
- Mr Jarman confirmed the timetable for the Economic Development Strategy shown on page 20 of the agenda pack would be put back. The reason being there was more work to be done on the Local Plan in relation to the quality of existing and proposed employment sites behind the two strategies.
- It was agreed a joint meeting between the Planning, Transport and Development and Economic and Commercial Development committees be arranged when the full qualitative assessment was completed as it was important to both the Local Plan and the Economic Development Strategy. Also, a detailed interim report from the Head of Economic

Development on the qualitative assessment would come to this committee before the joint meeting.

- Mr Jarman explained Maidstone did not have sufficient brownfield sites left to build on. Broad locations in urban areas such as Invicta Barracks, North Ward and Lenham were identified and proposed in the plan to come forward between 2026 and 2031.
- Concern was raised regarding the proposed number of 2700 units for development in North Ward as it represented a huge increase in this area of the borough.
- Concern was raised that the inclusion of the Invicta Barracks site in the Local Plan undermined the possibility of reducing the 19,600 figure as it was understood the site would not be available in the Ministry of Defence (MoD) plans for ten years. Mr Jaman explained the inclusion of the site was not objected to by the MoD and excluding the site from the plan would mean having to find another site in the borough to provide 1,300 houses.
- The Committee agreed to revisit the decision to include the Invicta Barracks site at a later date where more consideration could be given to the evidence for including this site.
- Concern was raised about the objectively assessed housing need figure of 19,600. Mr Jarman explained the figure was arrived at using the Government's own trend based population figures, which had to be used. Some authorities had tried to avoid using these figures for the development of their local plans and failed. The figure of 19,600 was not MBC's housing target figure for the borough it was the objectively assessed demand figure for housing up to 2031 based on projected population figures. The housing target figure could be lower but it would need to be based on robustly evidenced constraints that the infrastructure was unable to cope with this increase in housing, for example: road; sewage; schools; landscape. Mr Jarman explained the purpose of the Regulation 18 consultation on the Local Plan was to come up with a housing target figure.
- The point was made that inward migration influenced population growth in the borough along with birth and death rates. However inward migration was difficult to assess.
- The Committee noted some housing had already been built or had planning permission (approximately 6000 units) since 2011 (within the term of the Local Plan of 2011 to 2013). It was explained that this figure could be included as part of the housing provision for meeting the 19,600 figure.
- Mr Jarman explained the Duty to Cooperate between local authorities and the importance of authorities consulting each other on their local plans and show evidence as to why any housing target figures were lower than the objectively assessed housing need figure. The National

Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) highlighted the need for local authorities to be constructive and open.

- Ms Boshell informed the Committee the draft five year rolling housing land supply did not include any windfall sites. The first five years supply had to show 100% certainty of the location of the sites. Care home provision and student accommodation could be included in the figure. Mr Jarman told the Committee this was being explored.
- The point was made that the draft Local Plan created considerable uncertainty, but the end result would create certainty where developments could and could not be built.
- Mr Jarman told the committee the trend based population figures were published every two years. Up to date data could result in a reduction in the figure of 19,600. The Local Plan once adopted would be reviewed in 2020. The NPPF stressed local authorities needed to be thorough with their information and evidence for projections for employment, population and retail growth. At the examination stage of the plan the inspector could tell MBC the housing target was too low. This would result in the whole local plan process being started again.

RESOLVED: The Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the report and recommended:

- a. That the Design South East report is reviewed by the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to the planned multi-stakeholder meeting.
- b. That ward members of the parishes Design South East are working with are invited to attend the multi-stakeholder meeting to be held in September.
- c. That before a final decision is made on the draft Local Plan site allocations Parish Councils be informed and discussions take place on the right to build as part of the neighbourhood planning with a view to facilitating a convergence of the two (ie the Neighbourhood Plans and the Local Plan site allocations).
- d. That feedback be sought from Parish Councils on the consultation with Design South East and Parish Councils be informed of how their feedback had been used to develop the Local Plan.
- e. The Head of Commercial and Economic Development provide the Committee with a detailed report for the meeting on 21 October 2014 on the quality of existing and proposed employment sites being used for the development of the Economic Development Strategy and the Local Plan.
- f. That the Spatial Policy Team arrange a joint meeting with the Planning, Transport and Development and Economic and

Commercial Development Overview and Scrutiny Committees to look at the qualitative data for the employment review to be used for the Economic Development Strategy and the Local Plan, possibly in early November 2014.

- g. That Committee revisit the evidence to include Invicta Barracks as a site in the draft Local Plan at the meeting of 20 January 2015.
- h. That new Councillors spend time with key Planning staff between August and September 2014 to gain a greater insight into local planning.

12. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: The Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the results of the Future Work Programme Workshop and agreed:

- 1. That the Future Work Programme (FWP) should be drafted with suggested dates for each agreed item and presented to the Committee at their meeting on 24 June 2014.
- 2. That suggestions made for the Future Work Programme not taken forward be included at the bottom of the draft FWP for future consideration.
- 3. That an initial meeting for the review working group be set up in to scope the agreed review of Transport in the Borough and brought to the Committee at their meeting on 22 July. The working group to include Councillors Springett, English, Munford, Powell and Ross. Once the scope had been agreed the Committee would agree who to invite as witnesses and the proposals circulated to all Councillors.

13. DURATION OF MEETING

20:08 – 22:19