

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

**Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation
Committee**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 9 FEBRUARY
2016**

Present: Councillor Burton (Chairman), and Councillors English, Mrs Gooch, Mrs Grigg, D Mortimer, Paine, Springett, de Wiggondene and Mrs Wilson

Also Present: Councillors Round and Sargeant

210. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies.

211. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute members.

212. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

213. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Round was in attendance for item 17 and Councillor Sargeant was in attendance reserving his right to speak.

214. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

215. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

It was noted that all members had been lobbied on item 17 – Headcorn Neighbourhood Plan.

It was also noted that Councillor English and Councillor Paine had been lobbied on item 16 – Responses to consultation on the Prospectus for 'A new approach to rail passenger services in London and the South East' and Kent County Council's Draft Consultation on the New South Eastern Franchise.

216. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 JANUARY 2016

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

217. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 JANUARY 2016

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

218. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

219. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Councillor Dave Andrews of Headcorn Parish Council put Headcorn Parish Council's Councillor Lyn Selby's question to the Chairman as follows:

"Can the Chairman point to the paragraph(s) within the NPPF that states that a rural service centre is not subject to the policies on rural housing and sustainability within the NPPF, and if not can the Chairman please explain in what sense Headcorn's Neighbourhood Plan, which has the overwhelming support of the local community; provides for between 250-280 new houses over the plan period (far more than the assessed need even based on the numbers in MBC's SHMA); takes sustainability extremely seriously; is completely aligned to government policy on housing provision to promote growth, as well as NPPF policy on housing in rural areas, has not been positively prepared and therefore how the retention of paragraph 5 of MBC's report can be justified?"

The Chairman responded by referring Councillor Andrews to the report in the agenda that sets out in detail the issues based on Officer advice. The Chairman stated it would be wrong for him to give a personal opinion on the suggested consultation response in the report and to do so may prejudice the Committee's debate. The Committee's deliberations may result in a change to the suggested submission.

Councillor Andrews did not have a supplementary question.

220. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED:

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

221. CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

RESOLVED:

That item 17 – Headcorn Neighbourhood Plan be taken as the first item of business.

222. HEADCORN NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Spatial Policy Team Leader explained to the Committee the process that Headcorn Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) had been through to date. The Borough Council was responsible for the conduct of the public consultation which was required by Regulation 16, and the Council could also make its own representations on the HNP as part of the consultation process. Comments may be made with regard to the extent to which the council believes the HNP had satisfied the basic conditions of the Neighbourhood Plan Regulations and these are passed to the Independent Examiner at the next stage of the process.

The Committee were provided with an overview of the report and it was explained that the HNP's main area of divergence was in relation to the emerging Local Plan and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which should both be considered when preparing neighbourhood plans. The main concerns were that no specific sites had been allocated and the plan did not take account of the Borough's objectively assessed housing needs, as required by the NPPF. This meant the plan failed at the first step in conformity with the NPPF and the emerging Local Plan because appropriate provision for housing had not been made and did not provide the certainty of plan led development.

The Committee were informed of two changes to the report:

1. The reference in the report to paragraph 9 of the NPPF should read as paragraph 69, which referred to the significance and role of neighbourhood planning as noted in paragraph 2.13 of the report; and,
2. Paragraph 2.37 be removed as it no longer reflects HNP policy.

Councillor Round addressed the Committee.

The Committee went on to consider the report of the Head of Planning and Development - Headcorn Neighbourhood Plan (HNP) - dated 9 February 2016 constituting the formal response of the Council to the consultation on the Headcorn Neighbourhood Plan according to Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012.

The Committee heard that the Officer's specific concern with the HNP was the cap of 90 dwellings for the plan period 2022 to 2031. The Committee heard that it was the Officer's view that this did not demonstrate positive planning as Headcorn was considered a sustainable location for development. This meant that the HNP was not in conformity with the

NPPF or the emerging Maidstone Borough Local Plan. The Committee asked that the concern regarding the cap of 90 dwellings in the HNP be made specific in the Council's consultation response.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee approves the report to the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee dated 9 February 2016 as the basis for the Council's formal representations on the Headcorn Neighbourhood Plan (July 2015), attached to the report as Appendix A, according to Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Plan regulations 2012, and approves the Council's consultation responses to the Headcorn Neighbourhood Plan (July 2015) described in more detail in paragraphs 2.11 and 2.48 of the report to the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee dated 9 February 2016, subject to the amendment to paragraph 2.13 to refer to paragraph 69 of the National Planning Policy Framework, the removal of paragraph 2.37 and with the addition of a specific reference to the Committee's concerns regarding the cap of 90 dwellings for the period of 2022-2031 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Voting: For – 9 Against – 0 Abstentions - 0

2. That the Committee note the Headcorn Neighbourhood Development Plan (July 2015) has been assessed at this stage, to not require a Strategic Environment Assessments or Habitats Regulations Assessment.
3. That the Committee notes the Headcorn Neighbourhood Plan policies are in general conformity with the adopted Maidstone Borough Wide Local Plan policies with the exception of those identified in paragraphs 2.16 to 2.38 of the report.
4. That the Committee notes that the Headcorn Neighbourhood Plan is not in general conformity with the National Planning Policy Framework or the Local Plan (Regulation 19) in respect of not being positively prepared and making provision for objectively assessed need for housing and employment; specifically regarding the cap of 90 dwellings for the period of 2022-2031 of the Neighbourhood Plan.

Voting: For – 9 Against – 0 Abstentions - 0

223. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME - FOR INFORMATION AND NOTING

A suggestion was noted that the Committee take all landscape related issues as one report and take forward in the programme of Supplementary Planning Documents in consultation with the Chairman and the Vice Chairman.

The Committee was reminded that the date of the April meeting had changed from 5 April to 18 April 2016.

The Committee was informed that a report on the Lower Thames Crossing and a report on the Council's responses to the National Planning Policy Framework consultation will be on the agenda for the meeting on 8 March 2016.

Concern was raised that the Council's responses to consultation documents appeared to be coming to the Committee after the closing date of the consultation.

RESOLVED:

That Officers be instructed to bring draft consultation responses relevant to the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee before the submission date for the responses.

Voting: For – 9 Against – 0 Abstentions – 0

224. VERBAL UPDATES FROM OUTSIDE BODIES

The Committee heard and noted the following updates from representatives from Outside Bodies:

Maidstone Bridges Gyrotory Scheme – plans all in conformity with the approved scheme with more detail needed on the green areas. The project was proceeding to the tender process.

Destination Management Plan

River – no meetings arranged to date.

Town – one meeting attended and concern was raised that significant pieces of work were taking place elsewhere. Assurances were given that this would be looked at.

Kent Community Rail Partnership and the Medway Valley Line Group – several meetings had been held and it was reported that a large amount of good work was underway, much of which the Council could support, for example via the Integrated Transport Strategy.

Strategic Board for Maidstone East Railway Station – no meetings yet.

Teston and Aylesford Tow Path Scheme – no meetings yet, however a site meeting was held regarding the siting of the tree planting.

The Committee also noted that the Town Centre Management Board and the Town Team were merging into one Community Interest Company called One Maidstone as of 1 April 2016.

225. PARKING SERVICES' ANNUAL REPORT 2014/2015

The Committee considered the Parking Services' Annual Report 2014/2015 detailing the Council's achievements in providing civil parking enforcement services and to confirm all associated income and expenditure and to consider whether to publish the document on the Council's website in accordance with Guidance issued under s87 of the Traffic Management Act 2004.

The Committee asked that the following typographical errors be corrected in the section 'Background to Parking in the Borough of Maidstone' before publication of the report:

- First line of the third paragraph should read 'increasingly' rather than increasing
- First line of the fifth paragraph should read 'This change in...' rather than 'This change is...'

RESOLVED:

That the Committee approves the Parking Services' Annual Report 2014/2015 for publication on the Council's website, subject to two typographical corrections as noted by the Committee, in accordance with the Statutory guidance published by the Secretary of State for Transport under section 87 of the Traffic Management Act 2004.

Voting: For – 9 Against – 0 Abstentions - 0

226. VERBAL UPDATE- THE REFORMATION OF MAIDSTONE PUBLIC TRANSPORT OPERATORS GROUP

The Committee received a verbal update on the progress of the reformation of the Maidstone Public Transport Operators Group. The Committee heard that the report was currently incomplete. A further update would be provided to the Committee at its meeting of 8 March 2016.

227. RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON THE PROSPECTUS FOR 'A NEW APPROACH TO RAIL PASSENGER SERVICES IN LONDON AND THE SOUTH EAST' AND KENT COUNTY COUNCIL'S DRAFT CONSULTATION ON THE NEW SOUTH EASTERN FRANCHISE

The Committee considered the Council's draft consultation responses to the prospectus document entitled 'A new approach to rail passenger services in London and the South East' being carried out by the Department for Transport and Transport for London; and, to consider the Council's draft consultation responses to the Kent County Council consultation on the New Southeastern Franchise.

RESOLVED:

That officers clarify the Council's priorities, taking account of the Committee's comments and suggestions on the services provided, with the specific assistance of Councillor de Wiggondene and Councillor English, and that the report be brought back to the Committee at its meeting on 8 March 2016 in order that the Council's fully deliberated responses are able to be submitted to the relevant bodies by the deadline of 18 March 2016.

Voting: For – 9 Against – 0 Abstentions - 0

228. DURATION OF MEETING

6:30pm to 7:55pm