

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 9 OCTOBER 2018

Present: Councillors D Burton, Clark, Cox, Field, Garten,
Mrs Grigg, Munford, Parfitt-Reid and de Wiggondene-
Sheppard

Also Present: Councillors Perry and Spooner

76. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

77. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Perry was substituting for Councillor de Wiggondene-Sheppard.

78. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

79. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

The following Visiting Members were present:

- Councillor Perry indicated that he was substituting for Councillor de Wiggondene-Sheppard until he arrived. Councillor Perry stated that upon Councillor de Wiggondene-Sheppard's arrival, he would assume the role of Visiting Member.
- Councillor Perry reserved his right to speak on Item 17. Development of the New Strategic Plan.
- Councillor Spooner was present but did not register to speak.

80. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

81. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

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

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public as proposed.

83. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 SEPTEMBER 2018

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed.

Voting: For – 4 Against – 3 Abstentions – 2

84. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

85. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

86. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Officers informed the Committee that:

- The Tonbridge and Malling Local Plan was being consulted on. It was suggested that the response to this consultation be brought to the November Committee meeting.
- The Maidstone Housing Design Guide item would need to be discussed in December to allow for a workshop to take place.

Members received an update on Ashford Borough Council Local Plan, which was subject to a Main Modifications consultation following Independent Examination.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

87. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

RESOLVED: That the Reports of Outside Bodies be noted.

88. MAIDSTONE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT PACKAGE AND ASSOCIATED LOCAL GROWTH FUND MONIES UPDATE - VERBAL UPDATE

Mr William Cornall, Director of Regeneration and Place, addressed the Committee. Mr Cornall stated that an update report regarding the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package (MITP) was an item on the 17 October 2018 Maidstone Joint Transportation Board (MJTB) agenda. This report outlined significant risk to MITP funding. It was explained that in 2015, via the MJTB, Kent County Council (KCC) and Maidstone Borough Council (MBC) identified five locations where interventions were required to reduce traffic congestion and improve journey time reliability. The

work associated with these locations had an estimated cost of £14.25m, with the projects awarded Local Growth Fund monies totalling £8.9m by the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). Developer contributions, through Section 106 agreements, formed the remaining balance. Although project monies had been allocated to the five locations, funding was only secured once a full business case had been submitted to the SELEP Independent Technical Evaluator and approval had been granted by the SELEP Accountability Board. Once approved, all monies needed to be spent by March 2021. A deadline had since been introduced, requiring that all business cases be submitted by 16 November 2018. The report to the MJTB in October 2018 outlined that there was a risk of not meeting the business case submission deadline, which resulted in £4.9m of funding being at risk. Furthermore, risks were highlighted in terms of spending the project money by the March 2021 deadline. Finally, the report made reference to the possibility of substituting projects. No projects were recognised for Maidstone Borough Council, however, a project in the Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council area had been identified.

In response to questions from the Committee, Officers stated that dialogue with KCC was always open, however, it was unlikely that the full business case deadline would be met.

The Committee recognised the substantial amount of money that was at risk, and acknowledged the severity of the situation. The Committee noted that as the MJTB had unanimously agreed to support the schemes in 2015, the lack of progress was concerning. In order to demonstrate due diligence by the Committee, it was suggested that a reference be made to the MJTB regarding the MITP.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That Officers double their efforts to work with Kent County Council to ensure the MITP reported milestones are met and all the monies are used for their intended purpose.
- 2) That given the risk highlighted in the published report, SPST Members ask the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board to urge Kent County Council to revisit and urgently act on the resolution of the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board dated 7 December 2015, to deliver the MITP per the reported milestones, to ensure that we do not lose this funding.

Voting: Unanimous

Note: Councillor de Wiggondene-Sheppard entered the meeting at the conclusion of this item (6.47 p.m.). Councillor Perry, who had been substituting for Councillor de Wiggondene-Sheppard until his arrival, took on the role of Visiting Member.

89. PARKING SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

Mr Alex Wells, Service Analyst, presented the Parking Services Annual Report. Mr Wells explained to the Committee that Maidstone Borough Council had a legal responsibility to publish on and off street parking statistics on an annual basis.

In response to questions from the Committee, Officers stated that:

- The report format was designed to be used as an interactive online dashboard.
- When producing a hard copy of the report, some formatting was lost. However, a link to the interactive version was provided in the hard copy document.
- Work was to be undertaken with the Communications Team within one month to ensure that a useable hard copy was produced. Once completed, the Committee would be notified by email.

RESOLVED: That the Parking Services Annual Report be supported and published online, and upon request, a readable paper copy be made available.

Voting: Unanimous

90. LOCAL ENFORCEMENT PLAN

Mr James Bailey, Development Manager, introduced the report. Mr Bailey explained to the Committee that paragraph 1.8 of the report contained a reference to a Key Performance Indicator (KPI). This should instead refer to a Local Performance Indicator (LPI). Mr Bailey outlined that KPIs were reported to the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee and Corporate Leadership Team, whereas LPIs were not. It was suggested that the KPIs for Priority 1 and 2 breaches be:

- Priority 1 – 100% of target response times met.
- Priority 2 – 90% of target response times met.

The Committee commented that the Local Enforcement Plan demonstrated significant progress. There was, however, a need to ensure that KPIs were formally drafted prior to approval by the Committee. Members suggested that the flowcharts included in the report could be improved. The use of the term "customer" in the documentation was also queried.

RESOLVED: That an amended report be submitted to the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee including the criteria of the Performance Indicators for Priority 1 and Priority 2 breaches.

Voting: Unanimous

91. MAIDSTONE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW: BROAD SPATIAL OPTIONS

Mrs Sarah Lee, Principal Planning Officer (Strategic Planning), outlined that the Local Plan Review would define how housing, and other developments, should be distributed in the borough. This review would include a new housing target. Mrs Lee explained to the Committee that the latest household projections were significantly lower than previous figures. The Government has indicated that it will review its standard methodology for calculating "local housing need" figures, and that this will be consulted on in December 2018. It was stated that the demand for houses could be met through a variety of means, but it was likely that a package of different spatial approaches would be required to meet the expected target of more than 1000 dwellings per year. Mrs Lee informed the Committee that the Sustainability Appraisal was key to ensuring that the Local Plan Review was objective and sustainable. A workshop was scheduled for 23rd November 2018 to explore the Sustainability Appraisal process and its role in the Local Plan Review. Ahead of a Call for Sites, there was the potential to distribute an information package to developers, outlining the national and local constraints, the desired outcome of the Local Plan and the information that would need to be supplied to the Council regarding future developments.

In response to questions from the Committee, Officers stated that Maidstone Borough Council was on target to maintain the five year land supply of housing based on current figures. There was a risk that if the figures were to change, and no further provision was made through the Local Plan Review, the five year land supply would not be maintained.

The Committee made the following observations:

- That positive, proactive planning was crucial to the success of the work.
- That future plans should consider the possibility of housing need figures rising, so that if the numbers changed, the Council was well prepared.
- That the evidence base needed to be as current as possible to inform a refresh of the Local Plan.
- That the lessons learned from the previous Local Plan be considered during the review of the Local Plan.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That Officers progress the identification of broad spatial options for the Local Plan Review.
- 2) That a report outlining the Call for Sites information package be submitted to the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee for approval prior to publication.

Voting: Unanimous

The meeting was adjourned from 7.53 p.m. to 8.01 p.m.

92. DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

Mrs Angela Woodhouse, Head of Policy, Communications and Governance, introduced the report. Mrs Woodhouse outlined that the New Strategic Plan was designed to set out the future of Maidstone Borough Council through a clear vision, objectives and outcomes. These had been defined following workshops with Members, and feedback was being sought ahead of a report being submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee.

The Committee provided the following feedback:

- The wording used in the vision resembled a slogan rather than a statement. The following suggestions were made:
 - “Making Maidstone a place of opportunity and wellbeing, where residents are proud to live.”

 - “We want Maidstone Borough to be a vibrant, prosperous, twenty-first century urban and rural community at the heart of Kent. A place with distinctive character that is enhanced to create a clean, safe, healthy and green environment. A place of high quality education and employment, where all people can realise their aspirations.”
- The vision should include reference to “health” and “wellbeing”.
- There was the potential to reduce the number of objectives, while maintaining the same purpose of the current objectives and outcomes. The following suggestions were made:
 - 1) Great environmental quality
 - 2) Clean safe and empowered communities
 - 3) Embracing growth and thriving economy
 - 4) Proud of our heritage and culture
 - 5) Decent housing for everyone
 - 6) Promote infrastructure development and improve transport systems
- There was an opportunity to review or enhance policies, particularly in relation to environmental quality. Examples such as solar farms and considering outdoor space as part of planning developments were suggested.
- The wording used for some objectives and outcomes was too passive. This led to difficulties in linking key policies to specific objectives and outcomes.
- Objective 1 should include the following outcome:

“As a borough we make a positive contribution to reducing global warming.”

- The Leaders Forum was a potential opportunity to encourage future cross-party discussion.

Officers responded to questions from the Committee, stating that:

- By reducing the number of objectives, there was a risk that the number of outcomes for each objective would increase.
- The Council was able to influence a number of factors that would benefit the health of residents, and that the objectives and outcomes in the Strategic Plan would help to define how much each factor was prioritised.
- After the future report had been submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee, the Committees would be approached for a prioritisation exercise.
- That the timescales for the completion of the work were challenging and that a prompt response with feedback was welcomed.

RESOLVED:

That the feedback and suggestions provided by the Committee be noted and shared with Officers.

93. DURATION OF MEETING

6.32 p.m. to 8.38 p.m.