

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

HERITAGE, CULTURE AND LEISURE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 2 OCTOBER 2018

Present: Councillors Cox, Cuming, Fermor, Harper (Chairman),
Hastie, Hinder, Mrs Hinder and Mrs Wilson

55. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Fort and Lewins.

56. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Cox was substituting for Councillor Lewins.

57. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

58. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

59. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

60. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

Councillors Fermor, Harper, Hastie and Mrs Wilson stated that they had been lobbied on Agenda Item 14 – Play Area Provision.

61. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

62. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 4 SEPTEMBER 2018

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2018 be signed as a correct record subject to the following insertion:-

Committee Work Programme

Details of Significant Anniversaries – this would be incorporate into the Festivals and Events report due **on 30th** October.

63. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

64. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

65. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

The Committee considered the Committee Work Programme for 2018/19.

The Chairman requested that a report be presented to the November meeting providing an update on the booking of sports pitches following concerns raised by a Member which related to Shepway Green.

66. REFERENCE FROM PLANNING COMMITTEE - PROVISION OF A FOOTWAY FROM THE LEISURE CENTRE CAR PARK TO THE SPORTS PITCHES TO THE REAR OF THE CENTRE

The Committee considered a Reference from Planning Committee which related to a request for the provision of a footway from the Leisure Centre car park to the sports pitches to the rear of the centre.

Mrs Jennifer Shepherd, the Head of Environment and Public Realm advised that she had spoken to the Project Manager who confirmed that the footway could be incorporated within existing budgets.

RESOLVED: That the Committee approve the provision of a footway to create an access for the public by the side of the Park Maintenance building to the sports pitches to be paid for within existing budgets.

Voting: Unanimous

67. CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chairman advised that he intended to take Agenda Item 13 – Development of the New Strategic Plan at the end as this was likely to stimulate more debate due to its content.

68. PLAY AREA PROVISION

Mrs Shepherd introduced her report which provided an update following the adoption of Maidstone's Play Area Policy by the Committee in October 2017.

The Committee noted that £200,000 had been allocated to the Parish Grant Scheme to support improvements at Strategically Important Play Areas owned or operated by Parish Councils. Out of the 29 Parishes that were eligible for funding, 9 applications were received and had been successful for funding. The total amount requested was £86,500 and with

match funding of £143,000 the scheme had generated £230,000 of improvements to Strategically Important Play Areas.

Due to there being a surplus in the budget, it was proposed that a second round of funding be undertaken to give those Parishes who did not submit an application previously to put in a bid for funding.

Mrs Shepherd advised that there were 20 MBC play areas which had been identified as non-strategically important and would be considered for decommissioning when the equipment comes to the end of its usable life. However, the Committee was advised that Officers would be contacting Ward Members and Parish Councils of those play areas to have an early discussion to consider alternative management arrangements for the site or request the Committee consider the future of their Non-Strategically Important Play Areas (NSIPAs).

It was noted that none of those on the list of NSIPAs would be closed for the next five years.

In response to questions from Members, Mrs Shepherd advised that:-

- She would check with the Property Team to see how the transfer of the ownership of Franklin Drive play area to Boxley Parish Council was progressing.
- If the Parish Council was to purchase a piece of play equipment, the Council would carry out safety inspections and minor repairs but if there were major repairs required then it would not carry these out.

In the proceeding discussion Members made the following comments:-

- That one of the criterion for strategically important play areas of being within a 12 minute walk to residents should be revisited.
- That there are a number of densely populated areas and areas of deprivation that do not have a play area and this should be further investigated.
- That if there was a strength of feeling from residents for a play area in their area, a residents association or similar organisation could take several years to form by which time it could be too late.
- That any surplus from the underspend on the Parish Grant Scheme should be ringfenced and used towards those non-strategically important play areas.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the outcome of the Strategically Important Play Area (SIPA) Parish Grant Scheme be noted.

- 2) That a second round of funding, based on the previous criteria, for the remaining budget be approved.
- 3) That a pro-active approach to contacting Ward Members and Parish Councils for areas with non-strategically important play areas (NSPAs) is supported, in order to seek opportunities for further investment, third party management of the sites or consideration of their decommissioning.

Voting: Unanimous

69. MUSEUM TRANSFORMATION PLAN 6 MONTH REVIEW

Ms Victoria Barlow, the Museum's Director gave a presentation on the progress made during the last six months to the Museum Transformation Plan.

The Committee was informed that the action plan for 2018/19 focussed on two main areas of delivery, the transformation of the museum and the development of a new café at the eastern end of the building.

It was noted that the Museum currently reached about a third of the residents of the borough but wanted to engage with more communities and one of the ways it was achieving this was to run a series of Memory Days to enable people to tell their stories in order that the public could gain more insight into the past employment of the town, such as Trebor Bassett and the Paper industry.

A recent consultation on what visitors would like to see more of featured answers such as more dinosaurs, more disabled friendly activities, improved lighting upstairs, things that they could touch and pet horses.

In the ensuing discussion Members made the following comments:-

- That the Museum should not just be limited to the history of Maidstone.
- That having a more tactile approach should be encouraged.
- That the plans for the relocation of the Café were very exciting.
- That governance arrangements need to be realigned, especially in regard to the Museum's Strategic Board. It was felt that this should be reconstituted as an Advisory Board to advise on best practice.
- That work should be undertaken to launch a fundraising campaign to raise £5 million for the Museum.

In response to questions from Members, Ms Barlow advised:-

- That discussions were being held with the various Trusts at the Museum and it was progressing well.
- Some of the fossils were billions of years old, and some of the oldest exhibits donated to the Museum had come from the 1830's.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the review of progress towards the completion of the 2018/19 Action Plan of the Museum's 20 Year Plan be noted.
- 2) That the terms of reference of the Museum's Strategic Board be reviewed with a view to it becoming an Advisory Board.
- 3) That a Fundraising Campaign be commenced for the Museum.

Voting: Unanimous

70. DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

Mrs Alison Broom, the Chief Executive and Mrs Angela Woodhouse, the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance presented a report on the development of the new Strategic Plan.

The Committee was asked to consider the draft vision, objectives and outcomes as set out in the report which would also be presented to the other Service Committees during October.

The Committee made the following comments:-

Draft Vision/Objectives	Suggested Changes/Actions	Comments/Clarity of Language
Draft Vision – "A borough of opportunity that works for everyone that residents are proud to be part of"	"A borough of opportunity that works for everyone and that residents are proud to be part of"	Something that embraces all of our communities e.g. diversity, visitors, workforces
Objective 1 – Great Environmental Quality		
The borough's bio-diversity and green corridors are improved	"The borough's bio-diversity is improved"	The term 'green corridors' does not make provision for the waterways. Therefore this should be incorporated into the sub-text as the green and blue.
More residents participate in taking care of the	No change	

environment		
The carbon footprint of the borough is reduced	No change	Officers to feature trees more prominently in the sub-text The provision of more trees came out of the Member workshop and should be in the sub-text
Everyone has access to high quality and attractive parks and green spaces	No change	
More waste is treated locally and used as valuable resource	"More waste is treated locally and used as a valuable resource	Textual change
A borough which is recognised as being clean and well cared for	No change	
Objective 2 – Well Connected Safe and Empowered Communities		
A borough where more people feel safe	Officers to change the wording	Members felt that the wording as it stood suggested that people did not feel safe already. Officers to find a better form of words to reflect intention.
The harm caused by crime and anti-social behaviour is reduced	No change	
More investment in community infrastructure	No change	Members felt that the Council needed to be creative in the use of funding activities not just infrastructure
A diverse range of community activity enabled by the Council	No change	
A borough with more neighbourhood plans	No change	
Community creativity is encouraged and enabled	No change	Inclusion of use of S106 money as a how under outcomes.
		Community based outcomes could be simplified to one or two outcomes

Objective 3 – Embracing Growth		
New places are created that are well designed and connected	No change	That this means the development of infrastructure first should be created first should be more explicit
The Council leads the master planning and invests in the creation of new places	No change	
All new homes are built to a high quality of environmental and renewable building standards	No change	
The housing need is met for all	No change	Officers to be more explicit about the difference between this and a decent home.
Communities are engaged in planning growth of their place	No change	
Objective 4 – Renowned for Heritage and Culture (should be changed to “Renowned for our Heritage and Culture)		
The value of tourism is increased		That this should be under the objective for a thriving economy And/or use of heritage culture and arts to regenerate the economy
Well established and promoted cultural quarter	No change	Make a judgement on whether we mention the Museum and others
A destination that hosts high quality festivals and events and celebrates diversity	“A destination that promotes quality festivals and events and celebrates diversity, or put ‘a borough that celebrates its diversity’ into one of its own	This incorporates the smaller events and takes focus off us having to start
Increased resident participation in cultural and heritage activities	“Increased participation in arts, leisure and sports and cultural heritage activities across all age groups	Need to incorporate all activities

		Inclusion of new outcome ' A borough which celebrates its diversity' to reflect all of Maidstone's communities
Everyone knows we are the County town of Kent	Officers to reword to incorporate Maidstone's cultural offer across the borough	Officers to speak to Head of Economic Development and Regeneration for a suitable change of words
		It was noted that the museum wasn't included in here but other sites were included elsewhere. Officers will review and decide that either all sites are included or no sites at all.
		On the whole the Objective does not have enough emphasis on getting the people in the borough to have a pride and sense of place
Objective 5 – A Decent Home for Everyone (needs to change to “A Good Home for Everyone”)		
Homelessness and rough sleeping is prevented	No change	
Residents have a decent home		Officers to change the wording, homes need to be built fit for purpose – pick up the spirit of a 'good' home Members felt that a decent home did not illustrate this point well enough
The borough has a range of housing type and tenure to meet residents needs	No change	
The accommodation needs of the Gypsy and	No change	

Traveller community are met		
We have enabled and delivered affordable housing	No change	
Objective 6 – Better Transport Systems		
The transport system supports the growth in homes and jobs	“The growth in homes and jobs are supported by an integrated transport system”	Members felt that this needed to be more clearly defined
Sustainable travel options are invested in and improved	“Sustainable travel options are improved”	Take out the word invested as it could be construed by the public that the Council would be providing the investment. Investment should be included in the how.
Greater joined up decision making for transport	“More productive joined up decision making for transport, working with partners ”	To give greater clarity that the Council works with partners to achieve this. Cycling to be included in the how.
The air quality impacts of transport are reduced	No change	
Objective 7 – People Fulfil their Potential		
Deprivation is reduced	No change	
Skills levels and earning potential of our residents are raised		Officers to specify adults and children to give more emphasise to education. Overall education is missing.
Health and well-being inequalities are reduced	No change	
Social mobility is improved	No change	
Objective 8 – A Thriving Economy		
Business start ups and survival rates are improved and we are the best in Kent		Officers to reword the outcome to change the phrase ‘survival rate’ Quality apprenticeships

		should be reflected in the how. Volunteering to be reflected in the how.
A revitalised town centre	"A revitalised county town and villages "	
Improved high speed broadband	"Improved high speed broadband and future technology embraced digital infrastructure"	
The Kent Medical Campus is delivered	For further consideration	Members were not clear why this should be specifically mentioned and wanted this to be revisited in the round

RESOLVED: That the comments on the draft vision, objectives and outcomes from this Committee be presented to Policy and Resources Committee as part of the development of the new Strategic Plan.

Voting: Unanimous

71. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 8.45 p.m.