

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 25 JUNE 2019

Present: Councillors D Burton (Chairman), Clark, English, Garten, Mrs Grigg, McKay, Munford, Spooner and de Wiggondene-Sheppard

Also Present: Councillor Round

6. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Parfitt-Reid.

7. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

It was noted that Councillor Spooner was present as a Substitute for Councillor Parfitt-Reid.

8. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

9. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

It was noted that Councillor Round was present as a Visiting Member, but did not register to speak.

10. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

11. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

All Councillors stated that they had been lobbied on Item 17. Loose Neighbourhood Plan.

12. **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.

13. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21 MAY 2019**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 May 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed.

14. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

15. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

16. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Head of Planning and Development informed the Committee that:

- The "Conservation Area Appraisals Programme" item was to be renamed to "Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans Programme".
- An update report on the "Greensand Ridge AONB" item was to be presented to the Committee before January 2020.
- The "Town Centre Opportunity Areas: Planning Briefs" was to be rescheduled to 10 September 2019.
- Items relating to the Local Plan Review and Neighbourhood Plans were to be added to the future Work Programme.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

17. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports of Outside Bodies.

18. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2018/19

The Data Intelligence Officer highlighted that all the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for 2018/19 had achieved the Fourth Quarter targets. It was stated that the Policy and Resources Committee had agreed two new KPIs for the 2019/20 municipal year relating to Planning Enforcement matters.

The Committee commented that the "Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)" did not reflect Local Plan Policy SP20. The number of houses delivered for shared ownership and/or immediate rent exceeded the number of houses that had been delivered for affordable or social rent.

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

- Although the target for the "Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)" had been met, Officers were aware of concerns regarding the type of affordable housing that was delivered in the Borough. Consequently, an Affordable and Local Needs Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was being progressed.

This provided clarity to stakeholders regarding the expectations of affordable housing in the Borough.

- A quarterly KPI to assess the total number of enforcement cases received had been introduced for the 2019/20 municipal year.
- A further KPI, regarding the percentage of affordable homes delivered as a percentage of all net housing in the Borough was to be introduced. This demonstrated the proportions of housing delivered in the Borough.

The Committee thanked Officers for their work during the 2018/19 municipal year.

RESOLVED: That the summary of performance for Quarter 4 of 2018/19 for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) be noted.

19. FOURTH QUARTER BUDGET MONITORING

The Interim Head of Finance explained that an external audit was underway. It was stated that until the audit had been completed, the figures in the report were provisional. The Interim Head of Finance outlined that there was an overspend against the revenue budget of £54,000, while there had been a slippage of £161,000 in the capital budget. The report also outlined projected costs associated with the completion of the forthcoming Local Plan Review.

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

- The current Local Plan had been adopted in 2017, and therefore the development cycle was at a mature stage. This meant that the number of Major Planning Applications had slowed, which resulted in an adverse variance when compared to estimates.
- The budget for "Development Control Majors" was to be shared with the Committee via email.

RESOLVED: That:

1. The financial performance for 2018/19 be noted.
2. The slippage within the capital programme in 2018/19 be noted.
3. The projected costs for completing the Local Plan Review be noted.

20. MAIDSTONE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN - DUTY TO CO-OPERATE

The Principal Planning Officer explained that the Duty to Co-Operate was a statutory element of the Local Plan Review process. This required Local Authorities to seek input from relevant Authorities into the creation of the Local Plans and Local Plan Reviews, with a focus on strategic cross-boundary matters. Statements of Common Ground were expected to

emerge throughout the Local Plan Review process and were likely to evolve as this progressed.

The Committee commented that it was unclear who had authority to sign Statements of Common Ground. A report was requested to clarify the issue.

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

- Statements of Common Ground were designed to clarify where Authorities agreed and disagreed on matters. Areas of disagreement between Local Authorities were likely to be given particular consideration by the Inspector during the Local Plan Review examination process.
- The minutes of meetings with other Local Authorities, were to be made publicly available alongside the Statements of Common Ground.

RESOLVED: That the proposed set of cross-boundary issues and engagement activities to be undertaken to ensure the Council complies with Duty to Co-operate in the preparation of the Maidstone Borough Council Local Plan Review be noted.

21. MAIDSTONE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW: SCOPING THEMES & ISSUES CONSULTATION DOCUMENT (REGULATION 18)

The Principal Planning Officer explained that the report represented the first stage of consultation on the Local Plan Review, which was scheduled to start on 19th July 2019. This allowed consultees to contribute to the Local Plan Review scope. The documents provided sufficient background information to enable consultees to submit an informed response but did not set a specific policy direction.

The Committee commented that, prior to publication of the documents, further consideration needed to be given to:

- Placing greater emphasis on Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), climate change and economic development.
- The removal of the traffic light system in the policy review summary.
- The type of illustrations and pictures used throughout the documents, to ensure that these reflected the serious tone of the work.
- Extending the consultation end date to Monday 30th September 2019 to allow a further weekend for consultees to respond.
- The removal of question TQ3 "Do you agree with our housing land supply calculation at this stage?".

- Using the terms “protect and enhance” rather than “protect and manage” in relation to conservation.
- Relocating question TQ32 “Are there any other themes, issues and considerations that you believe we should address as part of this Local Plan Review?” to the beginning of document.

The Committee recognised the need to adhere to the planned timetable for the Local Plan Review. The Committee therefore requested that Officers incorporate the comments made by the Committee and circulate updated documents to Members of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure (SPI) Committee via email. Members of the SPI Committee were to provide comments within 48 hours, before the Head of Planning and Development used delegated authority to finalise the documents.

RESOLVED: That:

1. Delegated authority be granted to the Head of Planning & Development to modify the documents, subject to consultation with Members of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee via email.

Voting: For – 6 Against – 3 Abstentions – 0

2. The modified documentation be used for public consultation.

Voting: Unanimous

22. LOOSE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Planning Policy Officer outlined that the Independent Examiner had recommended fourteen modifications to the Loose Neighbourhood Plan. Further factual updates had been agreed, which did not represent fundamental changes to the document.

The Committee noted that the designation of the “Field to the rear of Herts Crescent” as a Local Green Space had been removed by the proposed modification PM10. It was further noted that Maidstone Borough Council had objected to the designation of the site as a Local Green Space in its role as a landowner. It was stated that the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee had initially been asked to endorse this objection, **but it was inappropriate to use a position as a planning authority to advance the Council’s position as a landowner.** The issue had therefore been referred to the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.

RESOLVED: That:

1. The modifications to the Loose Neighbourhood Development Plan as set out in the Examiner’s report be agreed.

2. The minor modifications agreed with Loose Parish Council, as set out in paragraph 1.14 of this report, be agreed.
3. The Loose Neighbourhood Development Plan proceeds to referendum.

Voting: For – 7 Against – 0 Abstentions – 1

Note: Councillor McKay left the meeting during consideration and voting on this item and returned ahead of the commencement of the “Maidstone Borough Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) Update” item.

Note: Councillors English and de Wiggondene-Sheppard requested that their dissent be noted regarding Maidstone Borough Council objecting to the designation of the Field to the rear of Herts Crescent as a Local Green Space.

23. MAIDSTONE BOROUGH INTEGRATED TRANSPORT STRATEGY (ITS) UPDATE

The Planning Projects and Delivery Manager introduced the report. It was explained that the report provided an update on the 44 actions within the Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS). Following an appraisal of risk to delivery, 9% of the actions had been rated as a “red” risk. The key actions within the ITS that required Officer attention were:

- H1 “Targeted implementation of highway improvements at key strategic locations to relieve congestion and to aid public transport.”
- PT1 “Provide bus priority measures on strategic routes linking the town centre to residential developments and key local amenities.”
- PT2 “Facilitate an improvement of bus services to ensure a good frequency of service is provided on all radial routes to the town centre within the Maidstone Urban Area.”

The Committee commented that a significant update on the progress of the Maidstone Integrated Transport Package (MITP), which contained measures in the ITS, was to be considered at the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board on 10 July 2019. Furthermore, the Committee stated that it was important that the Thameslink service to London Bridge was delivered, while lobbying for a service to Cannon Street was not necessary.

In response to a question from the Committee, the Planning Projects and Delivery Manager explained that required changes to the actions would be considered as part of the overall review of the ITS. This would be considered as part of the Local Plan Review Programme.

RESOLVED: That:

1. The progress made to date on the actions contained within the Maidstone Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS) be noted.
2. Officers focus their efforts on advancing specific ITS actions H1, PT1 and PT2.
3. The "Route Corridor Walking and Cycling Assessment: The A20 London Road, Maidstone (May 2019)" (Appendix 2) be agreed and approved for publication.

Voting: Unanimous

24. DURATION OF MEETING

6.31 p.m. to 8.45 p.m.