

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18
NOVEMBER 2020**

Present: Councillors D Burton (Chairman), Clark, English, Garten, Mrs Grigg, McKay, Munford, Parfitt-Reid and Spooner

Also Present: Councillors Adkinson, J and T Sams

245. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies.

246. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

247. URGENT ITEMS

As the agenda for this Committee meeting had been published on 10 November 2020, the minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2020 were not ready for publication. The Minutes had been published within an amended agenda.

The Committee were informed that Item 17 – Motion – Anti-Idling would be taken after Item 15 – Petition – Housebuilding Targets and Infrastructure, to further accommodate the additional Councillor and Officer present for the item.

248. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor Adkinson was present as a Visiting Member for Item 17 – Motion – Anti-Idling.

Councillors J and T Sams were present as Visiting Members for Item 15 – Petition – Housebuilding Targets and Infrastructure and Item 16 – Local Plan Review Regulation 18 Preferred Approaches Public Consultation Update.

249. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

250. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

All Members had been lobbied on:

Item 15 – Petition – Housebuilding Targets and Infrastructure
Item 16 – Local Plan Review Regulation 18 Preferred Approaches Public Consultation Update

Councillor Mrs Grigg had also been lobbied on Item 14 – Objections to Traffic Regulation Orders.

Councillors English and McKay had also been lobbied on Item 17 – Motion – Anti-Idling.

251. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

252. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 NOVEMBER 2020

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed at a later date.

253. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

254. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were six questions from members of the public.

Question from Ms Geraldine Brown to the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

'We note in the paper for Agenda Item 16 that Regulation 18 consultation is proposed to run from 1 to 22 December. Given the immense time pressures to prepare for Regulation 19, what plans do MBC have in place to ensure that work on the input continues intensively throughout the extended holiday period?'

The Chairman responded to the question

Ms Brown asked the following supplementary question:

'Do you have a timescale by which the appraisal of the consultation responses will be completed?'

The Chairman responded to the supplementary question.

Question from Mr John Horne to the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

'As evidenced by negative effects stated in the published Sustainability Analysis, why are constraints, such as water (both supply and disposal),

not deployed to reduce the assessed Housing Needs figure to a lower, perhaps much lower, Housing Target?'

The Chairman responded to the question.

Mr Horne asked the following supplementary question:

'In Hampshire, the concerns of Natural England and the environment agency has resulted in a ceiling on water usage for new builds. As we in Maidstone rely, to a large extent on imported water, will the supply of water now be re-examined with a view to an application possible of constraints on overall development?'

The Chairman responded to the supplementary question.

Question from Mr John Hughes to the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

'Duty to Cooperate – when will we actually see clear documentary evidence of its exercise to-date, suitably redacted as confidentiality dictates?'

The Chairman responded to the question.

Mr Hughes asked the following supplementary question:

'As infrastructure such as transport or water are major strategic issues for the Local Plan Review and as Maidstone is committed to give detailed consideration to the Leeds-Langley relief road in the Local Plan Review, and given the potential impact of Brexit and Covid-19 on infrastructure provers workloads, are they committed to making their key inputs by March-April 2021, to allow proper consideration by Officers and Members before the Local Plan Review consultation in June, so that Maidstone will not fail the duty to co-operate test as its examination?'

The Chairman responded to the supplementary question.

Question from Mr Peter Titchener to the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

'At your last SPI meeting, it was declared that Gypsy & Traveller sites would be carried forward in a separate planning document. We were assured that the same strict sustainability criteria and, presumably, prior classification into red and green, would be applied as they have been for dwellings for the settled community. Assuming proper consultation, that document may not be ready for Regulation 19 submission at the same time as the rest of the Local Plan Review and, if that were the case, a separate Regulation 19 submission and a separate Examination would presumably be required. That G&T document may then not be adopted before the current Local Plan loses validity after five years. Therefore, from October 2022, what policy would apply when considering subsequent G&T site applications?'

The Chairman responded to the question.

Mr Titchener asked the following supplementary question:

'Can you confirm that no shortcuts will be taken and that very importantly the same rigorous sustainability criteria that have been used to produce the red and green housing proposals definitely apply to gypsy and traveller sites? As all communities should surely be treated equally?'

The Chairman responded to the supplementary question.

Question from Ms Cheryl Taylor-Maggio to the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

'For windfall dwellings, paragraph 8 of the Housing Land Supply Update Analysis Paper dated 1 April 2020 stated 114 p.a. for small sites and, for large sites, 90 p.a. for 2024/25 to 2028/29 and 180 p.a. for the following two years. If those per annum assumptions are extrapolated through the Local Plan Review period, that would infer a total of 3600 windfall dwellings. Why not use that figure, and reduce future need by almost 900 dwellings, rather than using 2718 as stated in paragraph 5.12 of the draft Regulation 18 document?'

The Chairman responded to the question.

Question from Mr Peter Coulling to the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

'Paragraph 5.9 of the draft Regulation 18 submission states that, on top of the 7741 dwellings, according to the "5-year Housing Land Supply at 1 April 2020", completed in the Adopted Local Plan period up to 31 March 2020, a further 3214 dwellings will be delivered before commencement of the Local Plan Review period. That would represent delivery of a surplus of 1242 dwellings over the Adopted Local Plan 883 p.a. requirement up to commencement of the Review period. That means that, of the 5790 to be identified within the Local Plan Review, 1242 would not have been necessary, if delivery had been better shaped. Is there anything that MBC can do better to align roll-out with requirement and, even now, to get that 1242 removed from the 5790 requirement for the Local Plan Review period, for the benefit of the whole of our Borough?'

The Chairman responded to the question.

Mr Coulling asked the following supplementary question:

'May I ask that you require officers to once again look at the 5790 for all possible ways, if the government regulations don't change, to reduce that legitimately perhaps taking a bit more risk?'

The Chairman responded to the supplementary question.

The full responses were recorded on the webcast and made available to view on the Maidstone Borough Council website.

To access the webcast recording, please use the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WJR08761LuY>

255. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

256. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee was informed that the Chair and Vice-Chair had requested a report on the protocol used for the duty to cooperate. This would be presented in January 2021.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

257. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports of Outside Bodies.

258. OBJECTIONS TO TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS

The Operations Engineer introduced the report and noted that it had been presented to the Maidstone Joint Transportation Board on 14 October 2020, with support given for the proposal.

Restrictions had been advertised in 14 locations with representations received for Loose Road and Northdown Close. The Council had previously been petitioned by the residents of Northdown Close to introduce parking restrictions, with 30 of the 39 residents supportive of the proposal. 14 representations had been received in support of the recommendations. Seven objections were received on the basis that the restrictions would negatively impact residents, visitors and cause vehicle dispersion into the surrounding roads.

The Operations Engineer confirmed that the restrictions proposed were as minimal as feasible to reduce disruption, with a survey for further restrictions to be considered if necessary.

In response to questions, it was confirmed that other roads in the local area had the same or similar restrictions in place with enforcement officers frequenting the area.

RESOLVED: That

1. The proposed parking regulations for Northdown Close proceed; and

2. The objectors be informed of the outcome and Kent County Council, as the Highway Authority, be recommended to make and implement the order.

259. PETITION - HOUSEBUILDING TARGETS AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Mr Steve Heeley addressed the Committee on behalf of the Save Our Heathlands Action Group.

In receiving the petition, the Committee referenced the importance of avoiding an increase in housebuilding targets and the challenges presented by the overarching Government policy in place. The relationship between housing and infrastructure, the importance of local views and evidence collection were mentioned.

RESOLVED: That:

1. The petitioners be thanked for their petition; and
2. The petition be accepted as a formal consultation response, with the weight of all 4,000 signatures noted.

260. MOTION - ANTI-IDLING

Councillor Adkinson addressed the Committee as the mover of the motion at the Council meeting held on 30 September 2020.

The Head of Housing and Community Services stated that given the significant resource pressures experienced by the Community Protection and Environmental Health Teams, it was unlikely that there would be the capacity within the next six-months to focus on anti-idling or enforcement against it. This was due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

The Committee understood the resources implications but felt that the possibility of an anti-idling policy should be further explored, particularly for future use. It was noted this would signify a further commitment to green policies.

RESOLVED: That the recommendation to move forward with an anti-idling policy is accepted in principle, and officers be asked to bring a full report to a future meeting on how such a policy could move forward in practice with a balanced assessment on how this would operate.

261. LOCAL PLAN REVIEW REGULATION 18 PREFERRED APPROACHES PUBLIC CONSULTATION UPDATE

The Strategic Planning Manager introduced the report and highlighted that the Regulation 18 Preferred Approaches Public Consultation Document and Sustainability Appraisal would be published on 1 December 2020 as intended. A pre-consultation engagement exercise to involve parishes, developers, key stakeholders and adjoining Local Authorities had begun.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

262. DURATION OF MEETING.

6.30 p.m. to 8.12 p.m.