

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COUNCIL

25 FEBRUARY 2015

REPORT OF THE CABINET HELD ON 17 DECEMBER 2014

UPDATE ON MOTION REFERRED TO THE CABINET BY COUNCIL

The Cabinet, at its meeting held on 17 December 2014, considered a motion referred to it by the Council. The motion related to the Waterside Park – 14/501895 (Junction 8) decision. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the action taken by the Cabinet in respect of this motion.

Recommendation Made:

That the action taken by the Cabinet in respect of the motion referred to it by the Council relating to the Waterside Park at Junction 8 decision and the update by Officers be noted.

At the extraordinary meeting of the Council held on 10 November 2014, the following motion was moved by Councillor Harper, seconded by Councillor McKay:

The local economy has been underperforming since 2008 compared to large parts of Kent and the South East. More and more residents have to look for work outside of the Borough. Now it looks like the Borough of Maidstone is shut for business. The shocking and damaging statement sent out to the business community by Members of this Council who refused permission for the Waterside Park J8 site (planning ref: 14/501895) put forward by ADL and Scarab two major local businesses.

These firms have out grown their current sites and need to relocate, either within the Borough or to authorities only too happy to take jobs from Maidstone.

The fact is that Maidstone is in deep need of a range of sites for business and employment, including non-centre locations with good access to the rail, motorway and main road network for business zones. The entire town is ringed with green land, but it needs to go somewhere and this application was ascetically pleasing. To ensure our town and Borough have a future the Council must take responsibility for proactively identifying non-centre locations for business zones.

This Council resolves to:

1. Urgently identify alternative sites within the Borough of Maidstone.
2. Work closely with companies who wish to relocate within Maidstone or improve infrastructure to their current sites if that is an alternative.

3. Ensure that the Local Plan is pro jobs and that there are sufficient and appropriate sites identified for employment.
4. Adopt in the Local Plan policies to oppose the loss of employment land unless compensating space is locally available.
5. Support the principle of the development of an Enterprise Hub.
6. Report back to the next full Council meeting on all points above.

The Council resolved that the motion be referred to the Cabinet, as the decision making body, for consideration.

Decision Made by the Cabinet:

That it be noted that the draft Economic Development Strategy is out for consultation and that the results will not be available until late January 2015. These will then be considered by the relevant Scrutiny Committees which will make recommendations to Cabinet.

Further Update by Officers:

The original intention was to report the findings of the consultation process, together with any changes proposed to the draft EDS, to Cabinet on 11th February 2015. This reporting timetable was established in order to align with the Local Plan consultation process, particularly the work setting out the proposed changes to the allocation policies for employment (Policy EMP1) and mixed use (Policy RMX1) sites in response to the representations made to these policies during the Regulation 18 public consultation held between March and May 2014.

However, the combined factors of the extended Committee and Cabinet decision making process on the proposed Local Plan housing sites and the number and detail of the comments received to the draft EDS has meant that it was not possible to submit a report to the meeting of the Cabinet on 11 February 2015 and an alternative date is yet to be fixed. The extension has given the Economic Development Team more time to fully consider and respond to the wide range of submissions received.