MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 14 JULY 2015

Present: **Councillor Burton (Chairman), and Councillors Burton, English, Mrs Gooch, Mrs Grigg, Harwood, Paine, Springett, de Wiggondene and Mrs Wilson**

Also Present: **Councillors Brice, Chittenden, Cuming, McKay, Munford, Perry, Mrs Ring, J Sams, Sargeant, Mrs Stockell, Thick and Willis**

23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

24. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

25. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman stated that, in his opinion, the updates received for Agenda Items 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17 should be taken as urgent items.

26. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

The following Members were in attendance:-

Councillor Munford (Agenda Items 14 and 17), Councillor Willis (Agenda Item11), Councillor Mrs Ring (Agenda Item 15), Councillor Chittenden (Agenda Item 16), Councillor Cuming (Agenda Item 14), Councillor McKay (Agenda Items 14, 15 and 16), Councillor Thick (Agenda Items 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17), Councillor Perry (Agenda Items 14, 15 and 17), Councillors Mrs Stockell (Agenda Items 14, 15, 16 and 17), Councillors Brice and J Sams (Agenda Item 17) and Councillor Sargeant indicated that he was just observing the meeting.

27. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Councillor Springett declared an Other Significant Interest for Agenda Item 16 – Maidstone Borough Local Plan – mixed use allocations.

Councillor Burton, the Chairman, declared an Other Significant Interest in Site H1 (10) Land South of Sutton Road, Langley for Agenda Item 17 of

the agenda – Reconsideration of previously rejected Maidstone Borough Local Plan Regulation 18 Draft and 2014 SHLAA Housing Sites. Councillor Burton explained that he would withdraw from the meeting and in his absence the Vice Chairman would take the chair.

28. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

All Members stated that they had been lobbied on Agenda Item 17 of the agenda.

29. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 JUNE 2015

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 June 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed.

30. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

31. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Ms Geraldine Brown, Chairman of the Kent Association of Local Councils asked the following question of the Chairman:-

"Do you agree that the graph in Paragraph 22 of the PSL Research critique of KALC's figures supports our contention that there was a "blip" in population and housing growth over the ten year period used to calculate the current Maidstone Borough Council Objectively Assessed Housing Need?"

The Chairman responded as follows:-

"Before responding to the specific question, I would like to point out that the Objectively Assessed Need figure and the evidence underpinning has been considered on three separate occasions over the past 18 months by this Committee, and its predecessor Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Cabinet. Councillors agreed the Objectively Assessed Need figure and the Strategic Housing Market Assessment methodology used to derive it.

KALC has undertaken its own assessment of the borough's housing need. KALC's assessment has been critiqued by PSL Research in a dedicated report. PSL's report analyses the graph referred to in KALC's question as follows:

> "There is no conclusive evidence from the chart to suggest that there was a 'blip' in population growth in Maidstone from 2001-2008. Three phases of growth are apparent since 1981: (a) a period of relatively rapid growth from 1981 to 1989; (b) a period of mixed change, including some year on year falls in population, from 1990 to about 1999; (c) a sustained period of more rapid growth from 1999-2013, which accelerated until 2007, but even

in 2013 remained higher than at almost any point before 2005."

I concur with this expert analysis. Ultimately KALC and anyone else who objects to the Objectively Assessed Need figure can participate in the Local Plan Examination to have their challenges on the Strategic Housing Market Assessment considered by the independent planning inspector".

32. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

33. FOR INFORMATION - COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Members' attention was drawn to the paper setting out the Committee's Work Programme for the year.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

34. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - PLANNING, TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY - RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM THE REVIEW OF TRANSPORT IN MAIDSTONE - ALTERNATIVES TO USING THE CAR

Members noted that the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Review of Transport in Maidstone Borough – alternatives to using a car had been published in May 2015 and had come up with a significant number of recommendations for this Committee to carry forward.

RESOLVED:

1) That the Committee agree to review the recommendations made in the Planning, Transport and Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee's review report on "Transport in Maidstone – alternatives to using the car";

2) That the Committee agree to plan into the Committee's Work Programme officer update reports on the recommendations and the Committee Chairman and Vice Chairman take this forward at the earliest possible timescale; and

3) That the Committee agree the posts on outside bodies as recommended in the review report and that the Chairman invites nominations for those posts to be submitted to the Democracy Committee by the required deadline.

35. VERBAL UPDATES - TASK AND FINISH GROUPS

Members were given an update of progress on the four Task and Finish Officer Groups that were set up some months ago to address issues of local deficiencies in infrastructure provision. These issues had been

originally expressed by Members, local residents and other groups mainly in the rural service centres.

The Task and Finish Groups comprised of representatives from appropriate infrastructure stakeholders to address existing and potential issues as they arise and they report back initially to the Chief Executive and then to this Committee.

The progress to date for the four Groups were reported as follows:-

Waste Water and Sewerage – it was noted that the scope of this group had been widened to reflect concerns about storm drainage and flooding. Meetings with Southern Water had been positive and following meetings in June, the Environment Agency had expressed a willingness to engage with Southern Water on areas of common interest. The Environment Agency introduced to the Council a potential draft statement of common ground between all utilities and agencies which provided an agreed position on future development requirements, to alleviate concerns on existing problems and to ensure that there would be no detrimental effects when future planning takes place. Such a statement would reduce the potential for inaccurate information and would be prepared following the final Regulation 18 consultations on the allocated sites.

It was noted that the Environment Agency had suggested that the Water Cycle Study be updated and that the recent Amey Consultant's Study prepared for Kent County Council on waste water drainage etc had been reviewed and it was generally felt that it added little to present knowledge and the assertions made regarding waste water were not supported by the statutory undertakers.

Consultants for Southern Water had reported significant progress on the Staplehurst surface water management plan. A detailed presentation of the results would take place in the next few weeks in Staplehurst for project partners.

Transport Group – issues are concentrated on the interpretation of the transport modelling. It was noted that regular meetings are held with KCC Officers. The results of the modelling were first presented to Group Leaders at the beginning of June. Progress will largely depend on Members support for sustainable transport policies and attempts are being made to develop a consensus on future road projects, specifically whether a Leeds/Langley Relief Road should be supported or not.

Local Projects have been initiated in areas suggested by Parish Councils or Ward Members looking at existing capacity issues at junctions and modelling future growth and the Consultants have also sought to provide appropriate mitigation solutions, cost implications etc.

Health Group – this group had been investigating whether there are deficiencies in local health care provision which could be addressed. Responses on immediate programmes of work to provide additional facilities in local health centres have been gained from local property

services and these are regularly updated in the Infrastructure Development Plan. Approaches have also been made to the NHS Central Commissioning Group and it had now confirmed that the CCG would participate in looking at the medium term and future needs.

Education Group – the group had yet to make any significant progress but regular meetings are held with KCC Education Department. The analysis of capacity and demand is taking place on a regular basis. The group will continue to act as a conduit to pass information to KCC.

RESOLVED: That the verbal update on progress be noted.

36. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - MBLP POLICY DM11 OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Members considered the report of the Head of Planning and Development which related to the process of identifying local standards for open space provision.

Members raised concerns about the lack of open space provision on new housing developments, particularly on smaller sites.

RESOLVED:

1) That the proposed Open Space Standards for inclusion in Policy DM11 of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan for Regulation 18 consultation be approved;

2) That the amendments to Policy DM11 and supporting text for Regulation 18 Consultation be approved subject to:

   (a) further amendments to the supporting text in relation to small sites of less than 0.1 of a hectare, where no open space is being provided and it can be proven that none can be provided, the relationship between structural landscaping and open space be considered and that there should be significant structural landscaping to compensate for the non-provision of open space; and

   (b) that the definition as set out in paragraph 11.54 (b) of the Policy be broadened and no preference be indicated for limited companies.

3) That the proposed draft Open Space Quality Standards at Appendix A to the report be noted.

For: 9 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

37. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - LANDSCAPES OF LOCAL VALUE

Members considered the report of the Head of Planning and Development which set out the process of identifying landscapes of local value for protection by policies within the Maidstone Borough Local Plan.

After concerns were raised by Members on the Low Weald and the Loose Valley, it was agreed that this item be deferred until the next Committee meeting to enable Officers to conduct some additional work.

RESOLVED: That the item be deferred until the next Committee meeting due to be held on 18 August 2015 to enable Officers to provide further consideration of the Low Weald and to produce a larger scale map of the area under consideration.

For: 9 Against: 0 Abstain: 0

38. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - AFFORDABLE HOUSING POLICY

Members considered the report of the Head of Planning and Development relating to Affordable Housing Policy.

Concern was raised about identifying social housing developments in rural areas where some of those residents may not have access to a car or could not afford to use public transport which could lead to them feeling isolated.

It was felt that this item needed more debate before a conclusion could be reached.

RESOLVED: That this item be deferred until the adjourned meeting on 23 July 2015 pending some redrafting based upon the discussions held at this meeting.

39. ADJOURNMENT OF THE MEETING

Following the deferral of the report of the Head of Planning and Development relating to the Affordable Housing Policy the Committee considered whether to adjourn the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the meeting be adjourned until 5 p.m. on 23 July 2015 when the remaining items on the agenda would be discussed.

40. DURATION OF THE MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 10.40 p.m.