

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT DOCUMENT ADVISORY GROUP

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY 24 FEBRUARY 2010**

Present: **Councillor Lusty (Chairman), and
Councillors English, Harwood, Horne, Marchant,
Moriarty, Paine, Mrs Stockell, J.A. Wilson,
Mrs Wilson and Yates**

Also Present: **Councillors Ash and Greer**

43. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chittenden, Nelson-Gracie, Thick and Robertson.

44. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following substitutions were noted:-

Councillor Paine for Councillor Nelson-Gracie
Councillor Mrs Wilson for Councillor Robertson
Councillor Yates for Councillor Thick

45. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillors Ash and Greer were in attendance.

46. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosure by Members or Officers.

47. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

Councillor English stated that he had been lobbied in respect of Item 9 – Designation of Rural Service Centres for Maidstone Borough.

48. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

49. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 2 December 2009 be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the words "he said" being inserted in the second paragraph, 3rd line of Item 41 after the words "water study,".

50. MAIDSTONE TOWN CENTRE: POLICY DIRECTIONS FOR THE CORE STRATEGY

The Group considered the report of the Assistant Director of Development and Community Strategy regarding Maidstone Town Centre: Policy Directions of the Core Strategy.

Officers were congratulated on the quality of the report. Members discussed the town centre boundary and areas, such as Upper Stone Street, Albion Place and the Tonbridge Road/Terrace Road/Rocky Hill triangle, were suggested as areas to be included within the Town Centre boundary. Members were each asked to mark on their maps the specific areas they would wish included and submit these to Officers at the end of the meeting. Officers would consider the views and include any possible recommended changes to the boundary in the report to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration.

Members were informed that the reference to Policy SP2 and high quality transport interchange facilities meant Officers were looking at connection, connectivity and improved functions for Maidstone East and Maidstone Barracks stations. The Kent Rail Utilisation Strategy published by Network Rail includes two possible options – 1) the Thameslink service being extended through Maidstone East from 2015 and 2) to run an enhanced service on the Medway Valley line to include Maidstone Barracks or, possibly, Maidstone West.

Members requested that "tourism" was included in the draft Vision and that the diversity of the retail offer should be 'enhanced' rather than 'grown'. A new "Village Quarter" was proposed in the area of Albion Place, Union Street and the A20 and Officers will include this proposal in the report to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration.

With regard to the Environmental Quality in the Town Centre, it was proposed that the words "flood storage" be included in Policy Direction 2 and the words "achieve adaptations to climate change and" and "living roofs and walls" be included in Policy Direction 3.

A member felt there was a need for a co-ordinated and integrated policy for cycle lanes in the Borough. Another member indicated it is important to create a safer environment for pedestrians in the town centre and that this should be included in Policy Direction 4.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION: That the basis of the Core Strategy policy for the Town Centre as set out below be approved, subject to the amendments shown in bold:-

- a. The town centre boundary as show on the plan at Appendix 1 of the report of the Assistant Director of Development and Community Strategy – **consideration to be given to the boundary being extended in the areas of Upper Stone**

Street, Albion Place and the Tonbridge Road/Terrace Road/Rocky Hill triangle.

- b. The Vision for Maidstone Town Centre, as amended, being:-

“By 2026, a regenerated and sustainable Maidstone Town Centre will be a first class traditional town centre at the heart of the 21st century County Town which has maintained its place as one of the premier town centres in the region by creating a distinctive, safe and high quality place which has:

- retained its best environmental features, including the riverside, and the enhanced public realm
- provided a variety of well integrated attractions for all ages, including new shopping, service sector-based businesses, leisure, **tourism**, education and cultural facilities; and
- improved access for all.

Key components in realising this Vision are

- Creating a highly sustainable location which is resilient to future climate change;
- Establishing the town centre as an attractive hub for businesses – building on the town centre’s assets and environment as an alternative to isolated business parks;
- Enhance the diversity of the retail offer, supporting a continued balance between independent and multiple retailers ; and

Creating a stronger mix and balance of uses within the centre to support long term viability.”

- c. The town centre quarters shown on the plan at Appendix 2 of the report of the Assistant Director of Development and Community Strategy – **consideration to be given to include a “Village Quarter” in the area of Albion Place, Union Street and the A20**

- d. The policy directions as set out below:-

Policy Directions for Environmental quality

Policy direction 1: In accommodating new development, ensure the conservation and enhancement of the town centre’s historic fabric and public realm.

Policy direction 2: future development on land adjoining the River Medway and River Len should make a positive contribution to

their setting, accessibility, biodiversity, **flood storage** and amenity value.

Policy direction 3: change in the town centre should maximise the opportunities to **achieve adaptations to climate change and** enhance existing green spaces, and access to them, and to further 'green' the town centre and its streets including by the creation of new spaces, **living roofs and walls**, to form a network.

Policy Direction for Transport

Policy direction 4: In accommodating new development, increase accessibility to the town centre by sustainable modes of transport.

51. DESIGNATION OF RURAL SERVICES CENTRE FOR MAIDSTONE BOROUGH

The Group considered the report of the Assistant Director of Development and Community Strategy regarding the Designation of Rural Service Centres for Maidstone Borough.

Members congratulated officers for the rigorous research that had been undertaken and the evidence that had been produced within the report.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION: That the designation of Staplehurst, Marden, Headcorn, Lenham and Harrietsham villages as Rural Service Centres as part of the settlement hierarchy and spatial distribution strategy contained within the next public consultation draft of the Core Strategy be approved.

52. THE DEVELOPMENT OF A GREEN AND BLUE INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGY FOR MAIDSTONE BOROUGH

The Group considered the report of the Assistant Director of Development and Community Strategy regarding the Development of a Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy for Maidstone Borough.

A member felt that high quality agricultural land should be included as there is little of this land left in the Maidstone Borough and should be protected.

A grammatical amendment to the wording of draft Policy CS15 was suggested and agreed and is included in the recommendation below.

An A3 map of the proposed Strategic Green and Blue Infrastructure Network was circulated at the meeting. A slight re-positioning of one of the stars (depicting the Rural Service Centres) was suggested to ensure Marden's railway station was shown and one member felt that there was a further "Flood Zone 3a" in the northern area of the map.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR
REGENERATION:

1. That the aims of the outlined draft policy CS15 Green and Blue Infrastructure as set out below be approved:-
 - a) Help to meet the challenge of climate change;
 - b) Connect and enrich biodiversity habitats;
 - c) Improve and enhance the strategic importance of the River Medway corridor and its tributaries;
 - d) Meet the recreation needs of the Borough;
 - e) Develop and enhance safe, sustainable transport routes for people and extensive networks for wildlife;
 - f) Enhance landscape character and respect local distinctiveness;
 - g) Realise the potential of historical and cultural heritage features to contribute to local identity and sense of place;
 - h) Meet the needs of both existing and new communities in Maidstone Borough.
 - i) Provide attractive and inspirational environments in which people want to live, work, learn and play; in which communities thrive and businesses want to invest;
 - j) Promote regeneration and tourism opportunities
 - k) Water resource/flood management.
 - l) Inform the future planning and management of the urban form of Maidstone urban area at the strategic scale

2. That the further development of a draft wording of Policy CS15, as shown below, together with other associated Policies and diagrams, to be included in the draft Core Strategy be agreed: -

“Draft - Policy CS15: Green and Blue Infrastructure

Open spaces provided as part of new development, either on-site or off-site, must, wherever practicable, be located where they can provide a safe connection, either directly or in the form of a stepping stone, with the existing network of open spaces and wildlife corridors as identified on the Strategic Green and Blue Infrastructure Network Diagrams Figures XXXX.

Such connections will be required, where practicable, to provide opportunities for movement ,by walking, cycling and, where appropriate, by horse riding and water between and through open spaces, as well as opportunities for natural habitat creation and species migration.

New open spaces provided in association with new development must be designed and managed to facilitate natural habitat creation and to allow, wherever practicable, for species migration across the Green Infrastructure Network.”

53. CORE STRATEGY DPD (PRE-PUBLICATION CONSULTATION): FORMAT AND DRAFT CONTENT

The Group considered the report of the Assistant Director of Development and Community Strategy regarding the Core Strategy Development Plan Document ("DPD") (Pre-Publication Consultation): Format and Draft Content.

It was proposed by a Member that contact and working with the new Kent County Council Flood Risk Management Committee would provide synergy benefits and the Group agreed this approach.

Officers were asked to ensure that Policy CS1 is extremely robust and that inward investment is crucial to ensure the correct infrastructure is in place before the regeneration of sites.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR REGENERATION:

1. That the format and draft content of the Core Strategy DPD (Pre-Publication Consultation), as set out below be adopted.
 - a) Introduction to the Core Strategy
 - b) Key Influences
 - c) Spatial Portrait
 - d) Vision and Objectives
 - e) Spatial Strategy
 - f) Spatial Policies
 - g) Core Policies
 - h) The Delivery Framework
 - Appendices
2. That a greater synergy be made with the Kent County Council Flood Risk Management Committee.

54. DURATION OF MEETING

6.00 p.m. to 7.50 p.m.