

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 8 JUNE 2021

Present: Councillors Clark, Cooper (Chairman), Garten, Mrs Grigg, McKay, Munford, Russell, Spooner and Springett

Also Present: Councillors Harper, Perry, J and T Sams

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

2. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

3. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Cooper be elected as Chairman of the Committee for the Municipal Year 2021/22.

4. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED: That Councillor Springett be elected as the Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the Municipal Year 2021/22.

5. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

6. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor Harper was present as a Visiting Member for Item 16 – Reference from Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee – Review of the Section 106 monies associated with McDonalds (2-8 Hart Street) Planning Approval and Item 18 – Cycle Parking Infrastructure.

Councillors Harper and Perry were present as Visiting Members for Item 17 – Options to Procure a Cycle/Scooter Hire Scheme in Maidstone.

Councillors Perry and J Sams were present as Visiting Members for Item 19 – Lenham Neighbourhood Plan (Regulation 19) and Item 22 – Local Plan Review Update.

7. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

8. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

Councillor Garten had been lobbied on Item 3 – Election of Chairman.

Councillors Garten, Grigg, McKay, Russell and Spooner had been lobbied on Item 17 – Options to Procure a Cycle/Scooter Hire Scheme in Maidstone.

Councillors Garten and Spooner had been lobbied on Item 18 – Cycle Parking Infrastructure.

Councillor Munford had been lobbied on Item 20 – Boughton Monchelsea Neighbourhood Plan (Regulation 19).

Councillors Clark, Garten and Mrs Grigg had been lobbied on Item 21 – Consultation on the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Pre-Submission (Regulation 19) Plan and Item 22 – Local Plan Review Update

Councillor McKay had been lobbied on Item 22 – Local Plan Review Update.

9. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

10. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 APRIL 2021

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 April 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed.

11. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

12. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There was one question from a Member of the Public.

Question from Mrs Susan Harwood to the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

'With respect to Medway Council's Duty-to-Co-operate with the Lidsing Garden Village Proposal on the Local Plan, are Medway indicating that they are supporting or objecting to the proposal?'

The Chairman responded to the question.

Mrs Harwood asked the following supplementary question:

'How can you justify ignoring the objections of over 1700 people, local to Lidsing, to continue the proposal'.

The Chairman ruled that the question did not relate to the original question or answer provided, but that a written response would be provided.

The full response was 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=4n-Z6iMRyJ4>

13. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

14. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

It was requested that a report be presented to the Committee on the membership, effectiveness and performance of the Maidstone Strategic Infrastructure Working Group since its creation in 2019.

RESOLVED: That the revised Committee Work Programme be noted.

15. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports of Outside Bodies.

16. REFERENCE FROM THE ECONOMIC REGENERATION AND LEISURE COMMITTEE - REVIEW OF THE SECTION 106 MONIES ASSOCIATED WITH MCDONALDS (2-8 HART STREET) PLANNING APPROVAL

Councillor Harper introduced the report as the Chairman of the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee at the time of the referral. The reasons for the referral were outlined.

In response to questions, the Head of Planning and Development stated that whilst the Council collected Section 106 monies, it was the responsibility of the infrastructure providers to submit a bid for and use those monies from the Local Planning Authority.

During the debate, it was felt that further information on the use of Section 106 monies in the area surrounding the Lockmeadow complex was required.

RESOLVED: That a report be brought back to a future meeting of the Committee to monitor the performance of the spending of Section 106 funds in the Lockmeadow vicinity in relation to what was required by the statutory consultees on infrastructure at the time of the planning application(s).

17. OPTIONS TO PROCURE A CYCLE/SCOOTER HIRE SCHEME IN MAIDSTONE

The Senior Business Analyst introduced the report and informed the Committee that since the report's publication, the Department for Transport had stated that electronic scooters could not be used as proposed, until further feedback of their initial use by other Authorities had been received. Option three of the report remained the preferred option.

The options within the report focused on three demographics, to promote usage for leisure, commuting and a hybrid model encompassing both options. As the national lockdown associated with Covid-19 was eased, the Council wished to provide an alternative and convenient method of active transport.

The hybrid model was the preferred option as it would likely maximise the schemes usage through targeting both types of user, to be more financially viable and allow for improved data collection on the schemes use. The data would be collated after the scheme's third year, to assess its success against the Council's strategic goals. If agreed, a tender exercise would be undertaken with a contractor appointed between September-October 2021.

The Committee considered deferring the item to allow for further information to be provided on the sites proposed and the financial costings of the scheme. In order to progress the scheme however, it was agreed that further Member engagement exercises be undertaken by August 2021 to allow for a decision to be made as soon as possible.

RESOLVED: That officers:

1. Investigate options to provide a micro-mobility hire scheme, encompassing both leisure and commute demographics to include, but not be limited to, the sites identified in paragraph 3.35 of the report;
2. Organise a Member workshop in August 2021 to inform a soft marketing exercise; and
3. Report back to the Committee with the available options.

18. CYCLE PARKING INFRASTRUCTURE

The Senior Transport and Development Planner introduced the report, stating that the proposal would be funded by the Business Rates Retention pilot scheme, with a budget of £54,000. It was noted that 20% of the budget would be attributed to maintenance costs.

An audit had been conducted by Sustrans a year ago, with the outcomes discussed during Member workshops. A prioritisation exercise had followed to select the sites that could be delivered rapidly, with the preferred order shown in Appendix 3 to the report. The first tranche of

parking infrastructure could be delivered with a minimum number of partners as some of the land was owned either by the Council or Kent County Council.

The second priority was to install a cycle hub at Maidstone Hospital, with discussion having taken place with the NHS in previous years. Following engagement with the Council's planning department, it was preferred that cycle lockers and adapted cycle stands be pursued through the use of Community Infrastructure Levy payments or Section 106 monies.

It was noted that the use of CCTV had not been pursued due to the significant cost associated its provision. If agreed, further engagement with delivery partners and a procurement exercise would take place. An update could be provided to the Committee at its next meeting.

The Committee expressed support for the proposed scheme and the importance of delivering the parking infrastructure in good time. The need for greater infrastructure in the rural areas of the borough was raised. The Head of Planning and Development reiterated that designated Section 106 monies and CIL payments could be used through local community bids.

RESOLVED: That

1. The recommendations of the Sustrans report, as shown within Appendix 1 to the report, be noted;
2. The remaining £54,000 budget be released from reserves for the project;
3. The schemes be prioritised and delivered in partnership with the relevant organisations/landowners as detailed in Appendix 3 to the report;
4. Officers be requested to investigate how Section 106 monies could be used to expand the schemes proposed; and
5. In considering non-spatial policies, the relevant officers be requested to explore further creative ways to expand the scheme in the future.

19. LENHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (REGULATION 19)

The Planning Policy Officer introduced the report and highlighted that the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan had been subject to referendum on 6 May 2021; 92% of the votes received were in favour of the plan.

In accordance with the agreed Neighbourhood Planning Protocol, it was proposed that a recommendation be made to full Council.

RESOLVED: That

1. The result of the referendum held on 6 May 2021 on the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan, be noted; and
2. Council be recommended to make the Lenham Neighbourhood Plan

20. **BOUGHTON MONCHELSEA NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (REGULATION 19)**

The Planning Policy Officer introduced the report and highlighted that the Boughton Monchelsea Neighbourhood Plan had been subject to referendum on 6 May 2021; 89% of the votes received were in favour of the plan.

In accordance with the agreed Neighbourhood Planning Protocol, it was proposed that a recommendation be made to full Council.

RESOLVED: That

1. The result of the referendum held on 6 May 2021 on the Boughton Monchelsea Neighbourhood Plan, be noted; and
2. Council be recommended to make the Boughton Monchelsea Neighbourhood Plan.

21. **CONSULTATION ON THE TUNBRIDGE WELLS BOROUGH COUNCIL PRE-SUBMISSION (REGULATION 19) PLAN**

The Senior Planner introduced the report that outlined the details of Tunbridge Wells Borough Council's (TWBC) Local Plan Review Regulation 19 consultation, prior to the plan's submission for examination.

The Council welcomed TWBC's intention to meet their housing need, with a buffer of circa 1,000 dwellings in place. A range of supporting evidence documents were available and the Regulation 19 plan had been tested against the existing habitat regulations. The dwellings' delivery would occur through a dispersed growth strategy, through two sites at Paddock Wood/Capel and Tudeley Village. The former site shared a boundary with the Council, and a strategic flood risk assessment had been completed. The Council had requested that the dwellings placement would not adversely affect any areas of Maidstone located downstream of the proposed site.

TWBC had undertaken a Green Belt study, with air quality and transport mitigations proposed to reduce the impact on local roads within the Tunbridge Wells and Maidstone areas. The Council had requested the TWBC give consideration to delivering joint projects in the future, within areas such as active travel and public transport.

It was noted that the draft response outlined in Appendix 1 to the report had already been submitted to TWBC as the deadline was the 4 June

2021; any comments from the Committee would be submitted as an update to the response provided.

A grammatical correction to Appendix 1, to reflect that TWBC was seeking to meet its gypsy pitch need, was requested.

RESOLVED: That

1. The current consultation on the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council Draft Local Plan, be noted; and
2. The officer level response to the consultation, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be agreed subject to the insertion of the word 'to' to the second to last full sentence on the first page to read:

'Additionally, we note that TWBC is seeking to meet its gypsy pitch need'.

22. LOCAL PLAN REVIEW UPDATE

The Strategic Planning Manager introduced the report and stated that significant progress had been made on the Local Plan Review (LPR) Regulation 19 'draft for submission' documents. The various studies and topic papers that would form part of the wider evidence base were highlighted, alongside the viability assessment and Sustainability Appraisal, which required additional work.

The complexity of the Garden Community proposals and changes to Central Government policy such as the introduction of 'First Homes' and changes to the Use Class order were referenced.

The Committee would be briefed on the latest information and proposals available prior to the Regulation 19 document's public consultation process. The importance of the evidence base was reiterated, due to the tests of soundness and legal compliance that the Regulation 19 document would have to meet.

To reduce the likelihood of further evidence collection or consultation having to take place after the initial Regulation 19 document public consultation, an amended Local Development Scheme (LDS) would be presented to the Committee at the July 2021 meeting. In the meantime, a note would be placed on the Council's website setting out that the LDS was under review.

The Committee expressed concerns at the delay proposed and requested that it be as short as possible, to minimise the likelihood of the Council's adopted Local Plan expiring before the new Local Plan was adopted. In response, the Strategic Planning Manager stated that an exact time frame could not be provided, but that a short delay was likely. The Interim Local Plan Review Director stated that the significant amount of responses received to the Regulation 18b public consultation had affected the timescale, due to the importance of working through all of the responses.

The Strategic Planning Manager confirmed that the Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment was ongoing, with a Development Plan Document to be undertaken. In referencing the previous decision made by the Committee to accelerate the LDS timescale, it was noted that the new standard methodology proposed by the Government had been discarded. It had been decided however to continue with the LDS timescale as previously agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

23. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 9.06 p.m.