

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 12 DECEMBER 2023

Attendees:

Committee Members:	Councillors Knatchbull (Chairman), Hastie, Jeffery, Khadka, Rose and Wilby
Cabinet Members:	Councillors Burton (Leader of the Council) Garten (Cabinet Member for Environmental Services) Parfitt-Reid (Cabinet Member for Housing and Health)

91. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Joy, Mortimer, Riordan and Springett.

92. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor Wilby was present as a Substitute Member for Councillor Mortimer.

93. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

94. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

95. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

96. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

97. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

98. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 NOVEMBER 2023

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

99. FORWARD PLAN RELATING TO THE COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan relating to the Committee's Terms of Reference be noted.

100. CAP ON SAFE AND LEGAL ROUTES GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION

The Leader of the Council introduced the item and advised that the issue would be decided by him rather than the Cabinet Member for Housing and Health as Kent Leaders would also send a response. The Leader stated that the decision no longer needed to be treated as urgent as the deadline for response to the consultation had been extended until 9 January 2024.

The Leader outlined that the Council did not have the capacity to accept more immigration as there were already between 700 to 900 people on the housing register and nearly 300 in temporary or emergency accommodation. There was also very little to no capacity in schools or for GPs. This could not be easily resolved by investing funds as it took years to build housing or train medical staff.

Questions were raised around housing capacity and the committee debated the need to help Maidstone residents and the needs of asylum seekers and those in desperate situations. Concerns were raised that this consultation was being used to further the agenda of national government and that the Council should not provide figures.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the LEADER of the COUNCIL: That a blank response to the consultation be approved so as not to be drawn into the national government's politics on this issue.

Note: Councillor Hastie arrived at 6.43 p.m. during consideration of this item.

101. FEES AND CHARGES 2024/25

The Cabinet Member for Environmental Services introduced the report and advised that charges would broadly increase by 5%, which was less than inflation. There would be some discrepancy with the discretionary services such as the crematorium and bereavement services which would be increased following market rules and be decided by the manager of the business. With these there would be steep increases at some points and none at other times.

The report contained the incorrect figures for fixed penalty notices for waste crime as a decision had recently been taken to increase those. The uplifted figures would be provided to Cabinet when agreeing the fees and charges.

A concern was raised that there had been no opportunities in the consultations for local residents to state that they would want an increase in services.

RESOLVED: To

1. Note the contents of the report;
2. Recommend to the Cabinet that the Fees and Charges as detailed in Appendix A to the report with the updated figures for fixed penalty notices

for waste crime be approved; and

3. Note the Fees and Charges Policy as detailed in Appendix B to the report.

102. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.21 p.m.