

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

Date: Tuesday 15 October 2019
Time: 6.30 pm
Venue: Town Hall, High Street, Maidstone

Membership:

Councillors M Burton, Joy, Khadka, Mortimer (Chairman), Powell (Vice-Chairman), Purle, D Rose, M Rose and Young

The Chairman will assume that all Members will read the reports before attending the meeting. Officers are asked to assume the same when introducing reports.

AGENDA

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| 1. Apologies for Absence | |
| 2. Notification of Substitute Members | |
| 3. Urgent Items | |
| 4. Notification of Visiting Members | |
| 5. Disclosures by Members and Officers | |
| 6. Disclosures of Lobbying | |
| 7. To consider whether any items should be taken in private because of the possible disclosure of exempt information. | |
| 8. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 17 September 2019 | 1 - 6 |
| 9. Presentation of Petitions (if any) | |
| 10. Questions and answer session for members of the public (if any) | |
| 11. Committee Work Programme | 7 - 8 |
| 12. Presentation on Dementia - Kent Arts and Wellbeing | |
| 13. Initial Scoping on Maidstone Approach Improvement Project | 9 - 13 |

PUBLIC SPEAKING AND ALTERNATIVE FORMATS

If you require this information in an alternative format please contact us, call **01622 602899** or email committee@maidstone.gov.uk.

Issued on Monday 7 October 2019

Continued Over/:

Alison Broom

Alison Broom, Chief Executive

In order to speak at this meeting, please contact Democratic Services using the contact details above, by 5 p.m. one clear working day before the meeting (i.e. Friday 11 October 2019). If asking a question, you will need to provide the full text in writing. If making a statement, you will need to tell us which agenda item you wish to speak on. Please note that slots will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

To find out more about the work of the Committee, please visit www.maidstone.gov.uk.

Should you wish to refer any decisions contained in these minutes to the **Policy and Resources Committee**, please submit a Decision Referral Form, signed by **three** Councillors, to the **Head of Policy and Communications** by: **1 October 2019**

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Communities, Housing and Environment Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 17 SEPTEMBER 2019

Present: Councillors M Burton, Joy, Khadka, Kimmance, Powell, Purle, D Rose, M Rose and Young

Also Present: Councillor McKay

39. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

It was noted that apologies for absence were received from the Chairman, Councillor Mortimer.

In the absence of the Chairman, the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Powell, took the chair.

40. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

It was noted that Councillor Powell was in the chair for the meeting as Vice-Chairman.

It was also noted that Councillor Kimmance was substituting for Councillor Mortimer.

41. **URGENT ITEMS**

The Chairman informed the Committee that he had agreed to take an urgent update to Item 11 – Committee Work Programme. The reason for urgency was that several changes had been made to the document after publication of the agenda. It was important that the Committee were aware of the changes to ensure that they were kept fully informed of when reports would be coming to the Committee.

42. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

It was noted that Councillor McKay was present as a Visiting Member, and indicated that he reserved his right to speak on Items 13 – Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-2024 and 14 – Affordable Housing Partnership Update.

43. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

44. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

45. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

46. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 JULY 2019

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed

47. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

48. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

49. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the updated Committee Work Programme and noted that:-

- **Weaving** – As the lawyer assigned to the case had departed from the Service, this casework had been reassigned to another lawyer. A report was to be forwarded to the Committee in December outlining potential next steps and implications.
- **Bio-Diversity** – The report was to be taken to the newly established Climate Change Working Group, prior to the Committee considering the item in October.

The Chairman urged Officers to adhere to the schedule outlined in the Committee Work Programme to ensure that Members were able to effectively plan for the consideration of future items.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

50. 1ST QUARTER PERFORMANCE AND BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Committee considered a report which set out the financial position for the Committee at the end of Quarter 1 2019/20 against the revenue and capital budgets. It also set out the progress of Key Performance Indicators that related to the delivery of the Strategic Plan 2019-2045.

The Director of Finance and Business Improvement stated that the revenue budget was underspent by £0.234m. This was expected to reduce to £0.115m by the end of the financial year. A capital expenditure of £0.583m had been incurred in Quarter 1 for the projects within the Committee's remit. Slippage of £4.270m was projected across a range of projects which would be carried forward into 2020/21.

Additionally, the Information and Corporate Policy Officer informed the Committee that 82% of the key performance indicator (KPI) targets were achieved in Quarter 1. 58% had improved in comparison to Quarter 1 last year and 64% of KPIs showed an improvement in performance compared to Quarter 4.

In response to a question from a Member, the Head of Environment and Public Realm advised that the criterion used to determine acceptable levels of litter and detritus was based on gradings set by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).

RESOLVED: That

1. The revenue position at the end of Quarter 1 and the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances have been identified, be noted.
2. The Capital position at the end of Quarter 1 be noted.
3. The Summary of Performance for Quarter 1 for Key Performance Indicators is noted.

51. HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPER STRATEGY 2019 - 2024

The Housing and Inclusion Manager introduced a report which set out the final Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-2024. This followed a public consultation that took place in the summer of 2019.

It was noted that the majority of the 500 respondents agreed with the four key themes/priorities. These were:-

1. Prevent homelessness
2. Provide accommodation
3. Supporting vulnerable people
4. Tackling rough sleeping

In response to questions from the Committee, Officers said that:-

- It was likely that central government would continue to fund the Council's rough sleeper programme. However, the Council did have some reserves that could still be utilised if required.
- A Members' Briefing would be held on 7th October 2019 which would provide Members with further information about Housing Allocations

Scheme and how these impacted on homelessness.

- Informal discussions with housing providers had been undertaken but a formal consultation was to commence in the new year.
- Funding had been withdrawn for Trinity Foyer and Lily Smith House as KCC had recommissioned their service delivery.
- Although the Council was reducing the amount of face to face contact at the Link, it would still support those who did not have access to digital devices.
- The waiting times for 3 and 4 bedroomed properties was dependant on what properties were coming through from housing association partners. However, the Council was working with private rented landlords to offer incentives and had made some headway in promoting access for clients.
- The housing triage team provide support in many ways. This included face to face assistance at the Link, as well as house visits and a dedicated outreach team tasked with assisting those in the rural areas.
- The last survey to identify street homeless was undertaken in July and revealed that 6 people were sleeping rough. The next survey would be undertaken this month.
- The Public Space Protection Order in place in the Town Centre did not ban alcohol, but it did cover incidents where persons were drinking alcohol and causing a disturbance.
- The proposed Staying Put Incentive encouraged persons to stay in their current accommodation rather than needing temporary accommodation by providing greater opportunity to resolve their housing issues through the Housing Register.
- A glossary of terms would be added to the Strategy.
- A section was to be added to the Strategy, as stated in 3.5 of the action plan of the report, to ensure that the Council works with partners to bring forward improved health services.

In response to a Councillor's account of her recent experience at the Link, the Head of Housing and Community undertook to look into the matter with the relevant Heads of Service.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) The Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy 2019-2024, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, be approved subject to the following amendments as identified by the Committee:-

- a) A glossary of terms be included.
 - b) That 3.5 of the action plan be included in the Strategy to ensure that the Council works with partners to bring forward improved health services.
- 2) The Housing Team be thanked for all their hard work in delivering the homelessness programme.

52. AFFORDABLE HOUSING PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

The Director of Regeneration and Place presented his report which would finalise the strategy to enable the Council to recommence the delivery of affordable housing within the Borough.

The Committee noted that following approval from Members of this Committee and Policy and Resources Committee in November 2018 and 13 February 2019 respectively, Officers had commenced a soft market testing exercise where registered providers were approached to gauge their appetite for such a venture. The results of which affirmed that although the registered providers were keen to work with the Council, they were content to continue receiving Section 106 contributions rather than borrowing from the Council.

In response to questions from Members, the Director of Environment and Place advised that:-

- In order for the Council to manage its own affordable housing stock, a considerable investment was required.
- Lending money to a smaller registered housing provider was considered to be a greater risk.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) The creation of a Housing Delivery Partnership be delayed, pending further information relating to a garden community proposal.
- 2) Officers seek direction from the Secretary of State to acquire up to 200 no. social rented homes on smaller developments (at a value of not more than £30m over the 5 year MTFS period).
- 3) The services of a Registered Provider (RP), as a managing agent, be explored together with an in-house housing provider to acquire up to 200 no. social rented homes.
- 4) The required financial hurdles for a positive investment decision be 5% Internal Rate of Return and a positive Net Present Value, as per the Council's current investment criteria for private rented sector housing (for Maidstone Property Holdings).

53. NOMINATIONS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Committee considered the report of the Principal Democratic Services Officer in regard to nominations to outside bodies.

Members were advised that there was an amendment to paragraph 2.4 which should read – “Action for Rural Communities – 1 vacancy (2 positions)”.

It was noted that Members received an email recently which advertised all vacancies for outside bodies within the responsibility of this Committee. Only one nomination was received. This was from Councillor Harper for the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Members made the following comments:-

- That outside body organisations where vacancies still existed should be invited to attend a future meeting to give a presentation to the Committee on the work of their organisation.
- That where a vacancy still existed within a month of a presentation, the Committee would make a recommendation to Council that the vacancy is advertised to the wider community.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) The appointment of Councillor Harper to the position on the Citizens Advice Bureau be approved.
- 2) The Chairman invites organisations where vacancies exist to give a presentation to a future meeting.
- 3) Where a vacancy still existed after one month following the organisation’s presentation to Committee that a recommendation be made to Council to advertise the vacancy out to the wider community.

54. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 8.15 p.m.

2019/20 WORK PROGRAMME

	Committee	Month	Lead	Report Author
Charges for Pre-Application and Professional Advice for Noise, Air Quality and Contaminated Land	CHE	Nov-19	John Littlemore	Tracey Beattie
Biodiversity Strategy	CHE	Nov-19	Jennifer Shepherd	Andrew Williams
Housing Allocation Scheme	CHE	Nov-19	John Littlemore	Tony Stewart
Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2020/21 - 2024/25	CHE	Nov-19	Mark Green	Mark Green
Review of Accessibility to Services for Residents - Scoping Report and Working Group Set Up	CHE	Nov-19	Angela Woodhouse	Orla Sweeney
Bedgebury Food Outlet	CHE	Nov-19	John Littlemore	Tracey Beattie
Charging for Food Hygiene Advice	CHE	Nov-19	John Littlemore	Tracey Beattie
Q2 Performance and Budget Monitoring Report	CHE	Nov-19	Mark Green	Chris Hartgrove/ Anna Collier
Review of Charges for Contaminated Land	CHE	Nov-19	John Littlemore	Tracey Beattie
Maidstone Approach - Improvement Project	CHE	Nov-19	Jennifer Shepherd	John Edwards
Local Nature Reserves	CHE	Nov-19	Rob Jarman	Deanne Cunningham
MBC Provided Gypsy and Traveller Sites - requested by Cllr Harwood	CHE	Dec-19	William Cornall	John Littlemore
Weaving - Village Green Status	CHE	Dec-19	William Cornall	Jayne Bolas
Mobile CCTV - Update	CHE	Dec-19	John Littlemore	Martyn Jeynes

2019/20 WORK PROGRAMME

	Committee	Month	Lead	Report Author
Draft Budget Proposals 2020/21	CHE	Jan-20	Mark Green	Chris Hartgrove
Q3 Performance and Budget Monitoring Report	CHE	Feb-20	Mark Green	Chris Hartgrove/ Anna Collier
Annual Reports of Outside Bodies and Consideration of Outside Bodies for the Next Municipal Year	CHE	Feb-20	Angela Woodhouse	Mike Nash
Crime and Disorder Committee	CHE	Mar-20	John Littlemore	Martyn Jeynes
Waste and Street Cleansing - Future Provision	CHE	TBC	Jennifer Shepherd	John Edwards
Advertising and Selling Pesticides	CHE	TBC	Item Requested by Cllr Purle & Cllr	
Environmental Services - Commercial developments	CHE	TBC	Jennifer Shepherd	Jennifer Shepherd
Local ^{oo} Care Hubs	CHE	TBC	Alison Broom	
MBC Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)	CHE	TBC	William Cornall	Mark Egerton

Communities, Housing and Environment Committee

15 October 2019

Initial Scoping on Maidstone Approach Improvement Project

Final Decision-Maker	Communities, Housing and Environment Committee
Lead Head of Service	William Cornall, Director of Regeneration and Place
Lead Officer and Report Author	Jennifer Shepherd, Head of Environment and Public Realm
Classification	Public
Wards affected	Bearsted, Boxley, Shepway North and High Street

Executive Summary

The Maidstone Approach Improvement Project is an initiative to pilot improvements to the street scene and landscaping on a key arterial route. The Ashford Road from Willington Street to King Street was chosen as the initial pilot as it offers the greatest opportunity including open spaces, street furniture and range of landownership. With a budget of £74,000 from the Business Rates Retention Pilot, a range of actions and concepts have been identified. These will be presented to the Committee to consider and discuss to enable Officers to further scope the project. The final proposals will be submitted to the Committee for decision in November 2019.

Purpose of Report

Discussion.

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

To consider the proposed scope of the Maidstone Approach Improvement Project.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Communities, Housing and Environment Committee	15 October 2019

Initial Scoping on Maidstone Approach Improvement Project

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The key objective of this project is to improve the appearance of one of Maidstone's arterial routes. The improvements are designed to contribute to achieving two of the Council's Strategic Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Safe, Clean and Green</i> • <i>A Thriving Place</i> 	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The proposed plans consider the heritage of the Borough through highlighting key areas the Borough and County are known for including being the Garden of England.</p> <p>The landscaping designs focus on enhancing biodiversity which allowing visitors and residents to understand the importance of this. The project will incorporate the Go Green Go Wild initiative into its designs.</p> <p>The report supports the achievements of the Heritage and Biodiversity cross cutting objectives.</p>	Head of Environment and public Realm
Risk Management	<p>This report is for scoping only and therefore exploration of the risks associated with the proposals will be presented to the Committee when the report is presented for decision in November.</p>	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Financial	<p>The proposals set out in the recommendation are all within already approved budgetary headings and so need no new funding for implementation.</p> <p>The Policy and Resources Committee have already approved a budget of £74,000 from the Business Rates Retention Pilot to fund this project.</p>	Director of Finance and Business Improvement

Staffing	<i>We will deliver the recommendations with our current staffing.</i>	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Legal	This report is for scoping purposes only and therefore any legal considerations will be included when the report is presented to the Committee for decision in November.	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Privacy and Data Protection	This is a report for scoping only and therefore there are no impacts on privacy and data protection.	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Equalities	The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Public Health	A key feature of the proposals is to increase walking and cycling on this route into the Town Centre. We recognise that the recommendations will have a positive impact on population health or that of individuals.	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Crime and Disorder	There will be no impact.	Head of Environment and Public Realm
Procurement	This is a scoping report only. The purchase of all equipment and supplies required for the project will be carried out according to the Procurement Rules.	Head of Environment and Public Realm

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 In June 2019, the Policy and Resources Committee approved a budget of £74,000 from the Business Rates Retention Pilot to fund improvements to one of Maidstone's arterial routes – Ashford Road (Willington Street to King Street).

2.2 The Maidstone Approach Improvement Project will incorporate street scene and landscaping improvements to deliver a number of objectives:

- Improve the visual appearance of the Ashford Road for visitors to Maidstone

- Support the Council's Strategic Objectives for **A Thriving Place** and a **Safe, Clean and Green** environment
 - Highlighting the heritage of the Borough
 - Enhancing biodiversity along one of Maidstone's busy arterial routes
 - Encouraging walking and cycling into the Town Centre
- 2.3 Initial discussions have been held with Kent Highways and Soft Estates who are supportive of the proposals. The presentation was also given at the Depot Open Day in September and was received positively by the Members who attended.
- 2.4 The following key actions have been identified:
- Deep clean – removal of detritus from along Mote Park wall
 - Cut back of vegetation and removal of self-sown saplings growing along the wall
 - New bus shelter at junction with New Cut Road
 - New bollards
 - Improved appearance of railings
 - Planting of bulbs to increase colour
 - Shaping of wild areas to enhance biodiversity and enable habitat development
 - Planting of new trees
 - New signage including heritage board and "Welcome to Maidstone" sign
 - New street name plates
 - Creation of heritage features with interpretation board
 - Repainting street lights
- 2.5 During the meeting a presentation will be given to outline some of the proposals for the planting schemes, the heritage features and signage. This includes the concept of using silhouettes to create focal points such as bicycles through the ages, the Iguanodon which forms part of the Borough's Crest and Kent orchards and hop growing.
- 2.6 A permit has been approved by Kent Highways for traffic management to be in place the week commencing 21 October when the clearance and some of the standard street scene work will take place.

- 2.7 The Committee is asked to consider the proposals for the improvements, which will enable officers to further scope the project prior to bringing final proposals to the Committee in November for decision.
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3. RISK

- 2.8 As this report is solely to scope the Maidstone Approach Improvement Project prior to Committee decision in November, the only risk at this stage is that any suggestions may not be able to be delivered within budget.
- 2.9 A budget of £74,000 has been set for the project and the proposals set before the Committee can be delivered within budget. However, any significant changes to the proposals could also affect the budget and therefore there is a risk they would not be deliverable.
- 2.10 A full risk assessment of the project will be carried out and presented as part of the report in November to enable the Committee to make an informed decision.
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4. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 4.1 This report is intended to consult with the Committee on the proposals and this will be incorporated into the report for decision in November.
- 4.2 Ward Members and key stakeholders are being consulted throughout the project.