

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PLANNING, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 9 JANUARY 2018

Present: Councillor D Burton (Chairman) and Councillors English, Prendergast, Springett, de Wiggondene-Sheppard, Wilby and Willis

112. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies were received from Councillors Cox and Munford.

113. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

114. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

115. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

116. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

117. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

118. EXEMPT INFORMATION

RESOLVED: That Agenda Item 17 – Maidstone Town Centre – Regeneration Opportunity Areas be taken in private due to the possible disclosure of exempt information.

119. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 DECEMBER 2017

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the addition on Page 5 of the minutes, which can be seen in bold below:

Therefore, Councillor English did not vote on this item **although he was entitled to do so.**

120. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

121. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

122. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Work Programme for 2017/18.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme for 2017/18 be noted.

123. OUTSIDE BODIES - VERBAL UPDATES FROM MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor English reminded the Committee that the subject of whether the Council had representation on certain Outside Bodies was to be discussed at Democracy Committee on 10 January 2018.

124. REFERENCE FROM POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - STRATEGIC PLAN ACTION PLAN 2015-20, 2018-19 REFRESH

The Committee agreed to consider the reference from Policy and Resources Committee in conjunction with Agenda Item 14 – Strategic Plan 2015-20, 2018-19 Refresh, as the items were related. Therefore the discussion of the reference can be found in Agenda Item 14.

RESOLVED: That the reference be taken in conjunction with Agenda Item 14 – Strategic Plan 2015-20, 2018-19 Refresh.

125. STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-20. 2018-19 REFRESH

Mrs Angela Woodhouse, the Head of Policy, Communications and Governance, presented a report on the 2018-19 Refresh of the Strategic Plan 2015-20 to the Committee.

It was noted that:

- Policy and Resources Committee had agreed that the top three priority areas for 2017-18 would be maintained in 2018-19, which were:
 - A Home for Everyone;
 - Providing a Clean and Safe Environment; and
 - Regenerating the Town Centre.
- Policy and Resources Committee requested that this Committee gave consideration to the wording under the 'Securing Improvements to the Transport Infrastructure for our Borough', in relation to moving around the Borough 'by car'.

The Committee considered the reference from Policy and Resources Committee and decided that the wording need not be amended as when the priority area was looked at as one it was sufficient, especially as it mentioned the Integrated Transport Strategy and Walking and Cycling Strategy implicitly.

The Committee considered that the relevant policies did not need to be cross referenced under the 'We will commit to' heading as they were implicit in the delivery of the Strategic Plan itself and the wording could be limiting.

RESOLVED: That the following recommendations are made to the Policy and Resources Committee:

1. That the changes identified in red in Appendix A be supported;
2. That no further changes need to be made; and
3. That consideration be given to the need for detail of cross referencing to relevant policies since this is implicit in the delivery of the Strategic Plan itself.

Voting: Unanimous

126. PLANNING APPEAL COSTS

Mr Mark Green, the Director of Finance and Business Improvement, presented a report on costs of planning appeals to the Committee.

It was noted that:

- The Committee requested this report following the meeting on 7 November 2017 when the second quarter budget monitoring report was presented and it set out a projected overspend in development control appeals.
- This report highlighted the budgeted and actual costs arising from development control appeals over the previous five years.

In response to a question from the Committee, Mr Green replied that the figures from ongoing appeals had not been included as they were subject to work going on and the exact figures were not yet known.

In response to a question from the Committee, Mr Rob Jarman, the Head of Planning and Development, replied that several of the appeals found in Table 1.9 had been allowed because the Council could not demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply. As the Council now had a housing land supply of over 6 years this was no longer the case.

RESOLVED: That the information regarding the financial impact of planning appeals since 2013/14 be noted.

127. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY & BUDGET PROPOSALS 2018/19

Mr Mark Green, the Director of Finance and Business Improvement, presented a report on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget Proposals 2018/19 to the Committee.

It was highlighted to the Committee that there were three new budget savings for services within this Committee's remit:

- An increase in Pay & Display income budget;
- The funding of staff costs from the Community Infrastructure Levy; and
- An increase in the Local Land Charges fee income.

Mr Green informed the Committee that, since the agenda had been published:

- The Local Government Finance Settlement had been introduced. In the Settlement, the Government agreed to increase the referendum threshold for Council Tax increases and this was to be considered at the meeting of Policy and Resources Committee in February 2018.
- Kent and Medway Councils had been chosen to be a part of the 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot for 2018/19. This could mean an extra £600,000 of income for the Council. This would be considered at the meeting of Policy and Resources Committee in January 2018.
- The Government was to reconsider the negative Revenue Support Grant. The Council was due to pay £1.6million back in 2019/20 and the reconsideration of this may mean the Council did not have to.

The Committee was concerned that the report due to be brought to this Committee on 22 January 2018 relating to the Maidstone Tri-Study and Park and Ride Operational Review could impact the figures in this report. Therefore this report was deferred until the meeting of this Committee on 22 January 2018 as the Committee could not provide any meaningful comment.

RESOLVED: That this item be deferred until the meeting of this Committee on 22 January 2018.

128. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That the press and public are excluded from the meeting due to the possible disclosure of exempt information.

129. MAIDSTONE TOWN CENTRE - REGENERATION OPPORTUNITY AREAS

Mrs Sarah Lee, the Principal Planning Officer – Strategic Planning, presented a report on Maidstone Town Centre – Regeneration Opportunity Areas to the Committee.

Mrs Lee highlighted to the Committee that:

- The output of the project would be a Maidstone Town Centre Opportunity Areas Brochure, which would focus on design guidance, potential uses of the opportunity areas and the capacity of them. This brochure would be pivotal in engaging with developers and marketing the Town Centre in general and the opportunity areas in particular.
- An internal officer steering group had been set up to facilitate the initial work and oversee the project as a whole. The steering group had divided the project into areas that would be best suited to in-house resources and areas that would require external specialists. The external skills required were urban design, property economics and graphics, and potentially heritage and transportation.
- The costs for this project would be the subject of a funding bid to the DCLG for its Planning Delivery Fund. If the bid was unsuccessful then alternative funding options would need to be explored.
- This project displayed the Council's proactive approach to bringing forward brownfield sites for development in the Town Centre.
- A future report would be brought to this Committee once the draft planning guidance had been prepared and would provide an update on wider aspects of the project.
- In the longer term, this project could provide evidence of development deliverability for the Local Plan Review.

The Committee advised that the scope for leisure and community facilities should be included in the project brief and Officers confirmed that they would be.

It was noted that the Committee were encouraged by the project and excited about delivering these opportunity areas to an outcome.

RESOLVED: That the project scope set out in Section 1 of the report and the opportunity areas listed in paragraph 1.3 be agreed.

130. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 8.09 p.m.