

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PLANNING, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 22 JANUARY 2018

Present: Councillor D Burton (Chairman) and Councillors Clark, English, Munford, Perry, Prendergast, Springett, Willis and Mrs Wilson

Also Present: Councillors M Burton, Cuming and Spooner

131. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies were received from Councillor Cox, de Wiggondene-Sheppard and Wilby.

132. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following Substitute Members were noted:

- Councillor Mrs Wilson for Councillor Cox;
- Councillor Perry for Councillor de Wiggondene-Sheppard; and
- Councillor Clark for Councillor Wilby.

133. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman informed the Committee that he had agreed to accept two urgent updates which related to Agenda Item 13 - Outcomes of Bus Interchange Study, Parking Strategy and Park and Ride Study, and Park and Ride Operational Review because they would provide greater clarity to the report.

134. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillors M Burton, Cuming and Spooner were present as Visiting Members and wished to observe the meeting.

135. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

136. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

137. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the Exempt Appendix to the Outcomes of Bus Interchange Study, Parking Strategy and Park and Ride Study, and Park and Ride Operational Review be taken in private due to the possible disclosure of exempt information.

138. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 JANUARY 2018

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 January 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed.

139. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

140. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

141. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Work Programme for 2017/18.

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

142. OUTSIDE BODIES - VERBAL UPDATES FROM MEMBERS

The Chairman informed the Committee that he attended the Quality Bus Partnership on behalf of the Committee.

143. OUTCOMES OF BUS INTERCHANGE STUDY, PARKING STRATEGY AND PARK AND RIDE STUDY, AND PARK AND RIDE OPERATIONAL REVIEW

The Chairman reminded the Committee that there were two urgent updates relating to this item.

Mr Mark Egerton, Strategic Planning Manager, presented this item to the Committee.

It was highlighted to the Committee that this report had two fundamental elements. The first element brought together the findings of the tri-study and the Park and Ride operational review. The second element set out a series of Officer-led proposals relating to the above.

In response to a question from the Committee, Mr Jeff Kitson, Parking Services Manager, replied that car parking charges could be changed at any time throughout the year, as long as the correct consultation process was carried out and any objections formally reviewed.

The Committee requested that a separate report setting out proposed car parking charges be brought to the Committee at the same time as the

Innovation in Car Parks report was due to be considered in February 2018.

The Committee raised the following concerns about Park and Ride:

- The service provided poor value for money and therefore a seven year contract would not be practical;
- No suitable alternative modes of sustainable transport had been provided;
- If the Park and Ride was closed down now there would be nothing to replace it;
- The current form of Park and Ride was not being well utilised and therefore the required benefits were not apparent;
- In the Maidstone Borough Local Plan, Park and Ride was included as a mode of sustainable transport and if it were to close down problems could arise when the Local Plan was reviewed; and
- The locations of the Park and Ride sites were not easily accessible from all areas of the Borough.

The Committee agreed that Option 4, which included the extension of the current contract for one year, increasing the duration of the service to 7 p.m. and the introduction of a pay to park charging structure, was the best option, provided that costs be reduced by retaining the existing 20 minute bus frequency. The Committee therefore decided against increasing the bus frequency to every 15 minutes as this would amount to an extra cost of £153,380 for the year. Also, the summary of the most recent Park and Ride improvement survey (found at Appendix 2) showed that 56.4% of those that responded to the survey thought that buses should depart every 20 minutes in each direction throughout the day.

The Committee requested that a report be presented back to the Committee by October 2018 with data of peak usage so that Members could review the new service and make an informed decision on whether to keep Park and Ride after the one year extension had been completed. The Committee also requested that alternative sustainable transport options be considered and presented to the Committee by October 2018.

In response to a question from the Committee, Ms Georgia Hawkes, the Head of Commissioning and Business Improvement, clarified that the pay to park charge would be £2.50 per car (the detail of which could be found in paragraph 2.19 of the report).

RESOLVED:

1. That the tri-study report be agreed for publication.

2. That improvements and potential investment into Maidstone bus station be investigated.

Voting: Unanimous

3. That the matter of revising car park charges be held until the innovation of car parks is reviewed next month.

Voting: Unanimous

4. That option 4 be accepted with the difference that the frequency of buses remains at 20 minutes.

5. That a full report be brought to this Committee by October 2018 which sets out the alternative sustainable transport options and which measures the success or otherwise of park and ride based on peak usage.

Voting: For – 5 Against – 4 Abstentions – 0

6. That the pay to park charging structure for the park and ride be agreed.

Voting: For – 5 Against – 0 Abstentions – 4

144. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND BUDGET PROPOSALS

Mr Mark Green, Director of Finance and Business Improvement, presented this item to the Committee.

It was noted that this report had been deferred from the meeting of this Committee held on 9 January 2018, as there was the potential for the budget proposals to change following consideration of the preceding item on today's agenda. In the event, the decisions made by the Committee did not require any changes to the budget proposals and the recommendation remained the same as set out in the report.

RESOLVED:

1. That the budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee as set out in Appendix C be approved for submission to Policy and Resources Committee.

Voting: Unanimous

145. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 8.18 p.m.