

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 16 APRIL 2019

Present: Councillors M Burton, Garten, Joy, D Mortimer (Chairman), Powell, Purle, Mrs Robertson, Rose and Webb

200. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Purle.

201. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

202. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

203. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

204. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

205. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

It was noted that the following Councillors had been lobbied on Item 15. Heather House Consultation:

- Councillor Mortimer
- Councillor Powell
- Councillor Joy
- Councillor Robertson
- Councillor Webb
- Councillor Garten
- Councillor Rose

- Councillor Burton

206. TO CONSIDER WHETHER ANY ITEMS SHOULD BE TAKEN IN PRIVATE BECAUSE OF THE POSSIBLE DISCLOSURE OF EXEMPT INFORMATION.

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

207. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 MARCH 2019

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed.

208. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

209. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (IF ANY)

There were no questions from members of the public.

210. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Mr John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Community Services, explained that a Strategic Housing Market Assessment was to be undertaken prior to the consideration of the "MBC Provided Gypsy and Traveller Sites - requested by Cllr Harwood" item. The item was therefore to be postponed until later in the 2019/20 municipal year.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

211. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

RESOLVED: That the Outside Body Report be noted.

212. GP PROVISION UPDATE

Mrs Alison Broom, Chief Executive, introduced Dr Tony Jones, Ms Gail Arnold and Ms Alison Burchell to the Committee. Mrs Broom stated that a workshop had taken place on 25 February 2019. At the workshop, Members had raised concerns about the infrastructure and staffing for General Practitioner (GP) provision. Additionally, the issue of historical Section 106 (S106) agreements had been debated. This issue had been considered in further detail with the Chairman of the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation (SPST) Committee.

In response to questions from the Committee, Officers stated that:

- Changes to GP Practice staffing had been implemented in line with the NHS 10 Year Plan. This was expected to increase the capacity available for managing complex issues.

- The NHS West Kent Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) had taken positive steps to implement the high impact recommendations in the NHS England Time to Care Scheme. These changes were expected to have a positive impact on staffing capacity.
- CCGs monitored risks to continuity of service, such as closures of GP Practices. Conversations between the CCG and GP Practices were undertaken to promote resilience and sustainability.
- The potential links between areas of deprivation and issues with recruitment and retention at GP Practices had not been researched at a local level.
- The development of new houses resulted in an increased need for GP Practices. This meant that available business space needed to be maximised, while appropriate recruitment also needed to be undertaken.
- It was important to promote Maidstone as an attractive place to live and work. This encouraged people to move to the area and deliver services required by residents.
- Maidstone Borough Council worked closely with other organisations to ensure that projects to expand GP Practices and deliver infrastructure were completed in a collaborative and effective manner.
- Maidstone Borough Council had worked with the West Kent CCG to support the allocation and use of S106 monies. There were, however, challenges when spending this funding. Firstly, the money was only to be spent on improving the capacity of health facilities in order to meet the needs of a population. Secondly, S106 funding was made available to the CCG at agreed milestones. Projects could therefore not be commenced until the S106 monies had been released to the CCG. Finally, S106 funding was considered to be a capital contribution. This meant that there were restrictions on how the money could be spent and often required match-funding from GPs or other property owners.
- In some instances, S106 money was pooled to enable large scale extensions.
- The local media could share information and raise awareness about how to appropriately use services. This could include information regarding social prescribing, to ensure that professionals and residents had a common understanding of this and the potential it had to improve health.

Mrs Broom stated that the queries and suggestions were to be collated and submitted to the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee in 2019/20 to ensure that dialogue on key issues continued.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Note: Councillor Purle arrived at 6.45 p.m. during consideration of this item.

213. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2019-20

Mrs Clare Harvey, Data Intelligence Officer, stated that as the new Strategic Plan had been agreed by Council, performance indicators needed to be reassessed to ensure that they were fit for purpose. Mrs Harvey outlined that in the new municipal year, the quarterly Key Performance Indicator (KPI) and Budget Monitoring reports were to be combined. This enabled Service Committees to take a strategic view of trends. The performance indicators for the 2019/20 municipal year had been drafted following engagement with Members and Officers.

The Committee commented that "business rates income from town centre businesses" was an important KPI to monitor. This provided a measure of business success in Maidstone, while it also ensured that opportunities to improve income were identified.

In response to questions from the Committee, Officers stated that:

- Officers were to provide information to Members via email regarding the current processes for measuring the weight of fly tipped materials.
- The number of people using parks and open spaces was monitored with an annual survey.
- Targets were to be profiled to reflect seasonal trends where appropriate.

RESOLVED: That the draft Key Performance Indicators for 2019-20, attached as Appendix 1, be recommended to the Policy and Resources Committee, subject to the Director of Finance and Business Improvement suggesting an appropriate target for "business rates income from town centre businesses".

Voting: Unanimous

214. HEATHER HOUSE CONSULTATION

Mrs Harvey informed the Committee that a survey had been distributed to 3566 households in the Park Wood ward. 320 responses had been received.

The Committee commented that:

- The summary of findings on pages 31 – 32 and 45 – 46 had the potential to misconstrue the results of the survey if it was read in isolation. As the summaries did not include any additional

information, they were to be excluded from the evidence base used to inform the business case.

- The petition presented at the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee on 14 November 2017 was an additional source of information that was to be incorporated into the evidence base.
- Although the survey results were a useful tool, consideration needed to be given to the future potential of the facility when the business case was being formed.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mrs Harvey stated that:

- The survey was conducted by post. A freepost envelope was included with the survey to enable residents to respond without incurring a cost.
- Demographic questions were included in every survey, as the responses were used to understand the views of different sections of the community. This helped to inform consideration of equalities issues.

RESOLVED: That:

1. The results of the consultations with residents and stakeholders on Heather House be agreed for inclusion in the evidence base to inform the decision on whether to make further investment in the facility, excluding the summary of findings.
2. The petition presented at the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee on 14 November 2017 be agreed for inclusion in the evidence base to inform the decision on whether to make further investment in the facility.

Voting: Unanimous

Note: The meeting was adjourned from 8.46 p.m. to 8.49 p.m.

215. CCTV NEXT STEPS

Mr Littlemore outlined that steps could be taken to improve the public realm CCTV provision. As the Town Hall had previously flooded, and recording equipment had been damaged, it was suggested that the equipment be relocated to Maidstone House. It was stated that the proposed improvements ensured that better quality cameras and recording equipment were available to be used by Maidstone Borough Council.

The Committee commented that:

- Preventative measures to reduce crime needed to be undertaken alongside the CCTV upgrade.
- CCTV had recently been used effectively to identify suspected criminals.
- The new system was designed to allow external partners to use the system, should this functionality be required.

In response to questions from the Committee, Mr Littlemore stated that:

- The £110,000 cost was an estimate provided by a consultant.
- Conversations with partners such as Kent Police demonstrated that the public realm CCTV was considered to be a valuable asset.
- The current equipment was to be completely replaced. This resulted in reduced operating costs, but also ensured that camera footage quality was improved.

RESOLVED: That:

1. The public realm CCTV cameras be upgraded.
2. The CCTV recording equipment be relocated from the Town Hall to Maidstone House.
3. Policy and Resources Committee be recommended to identify £110,000 to enable the upgrade and relocation of CCTV.

Voting: For – 8

Against – 1

Abstentions – 0

216. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

The Chairman thanked the Committee for the work undertaken during the municipal year.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

217. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 9.04 p.m.