

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 6 NOVEMBER 2018

Present: Councillors D Burton (Chairman), Clark, Cox, Field, Garten, Mrs Grigg, Munford, Parfitt-Reid and de Wiggondene-Sheppard

Also Present: Councillors Daley, McKay, Newton, Perry and Round

94. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor de Wiggondene-Sheppard.

95. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

It was noted that Councillor Perry was substituting for Councillor de Wiggondene-Sheppard until he arrived.

96. **URGENT ITEMS**

It was noted that urgent updates had been accepted for the following items:

- Item 17. Park and Ride Alternatives. The reason for urgency was that the urgent update was a letter from Kent County Council which was submitted after the deadline for publication. It was in the interests of Committee Members and members of the public to have full sight of the document when this item was being considered.
- Item 20. Tonbridge & Malling Local Plan Reg. 19 Consultation. The reason for urgency was that the update provided additional clarity regarding housing impact and air quality.

97. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

The following Visiting Members were present:

- Councillor Round, who reserved his right to speak on Item 19. Local Enforcement Plan.

- Councillor Newton, who reserved his right to speak on Item 16. Park and Ride – Pay to Park Trial and Item 17. Park and Ride Alternatives.
- Councillor McKay, who reserved his right to speak on Item 16. Park and Ride – Pay to Park Trial and Item 17. Park and Ride Alternatives.
- Councillor Daley, who reserved his right to speak on Item 16. Park and Ride – Pay to Park Trial and Item 17. Park and Ride Alternatives.

98. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

99. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

All Members disclosed that they had been lobbied on:

- Item 16. Park and Ride – Pay to Park Trial;
- Item 17. Park and Ride Alternatives;
- Item 18. Protection of the Greensand Ridge; and
- Item 20. Tonbridge & Malling Local Plan Reg.19 Consultation

100. 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.

101. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 OCTOBER 2018

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

Voting: Unanimous

102. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

103. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

104. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Mr Mark Egerton, Strategic Planning Manager, informed the Committee that:

- The “Local Plan Review Evidence Base and Need” item scheduled for 4 December 2018 was no longer necessary.
- The “Local Plan Review Spatial Approach” was to present the Local Plan Review Call for Sites Information Pack, per the resolution of the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee on 9 October 2018.
- A response to the Government’s National Planning Policy Framework and National Planning Policy Guidance consultation, which focussed on changes to the standardised methodology and habitat regulations assessment, was to be brought to the Committee on 4 December 2018.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

105. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

RESOLVED: That the Reports of Outside Bodies be noted.

106. DRAFT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2019/20 - 2023/24

Ms Ellie Dunnet, Head of Finance, informed the Committee that the Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 - 2023/24 was presented for consideration and comment. Ms Dunnet explained that as there was financial uncertainty for the period of 2020 onwards, three scenarios had been modelled to reflect neutral, adverse and favourable revenue projections.

In response to questions from the Committee, Ms Dunnet explained that the document was a draft and reflected the current draft consultation version of the Council’s Strategic Plan. The strategic objectives in the final Strategy would reflect the objectives of the Strategic Plan once it had been agreed by Council.

RESOLVED: That the Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 - 2023/24 report be noted.

Note: Councillor de Wiggondene-Sheppard arrived during consideration of this item.

107. Q2 PERFORMANCE REPORT 2018/19

Mr Rob Jarman, Head of Planning and Development, informed the Committee that all Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) were on target.

The Committee expressed their thanks to Officers, and commented that this represented excellent progress. It was stated that KPIs could be adjusted to ensure that the most relevant matters were subject to monitoring.

RESOLVED: That the summary of performance for Quarter 2 of 2018/19 for Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) be noted.

108. Q2 BUDGET MONITORING 2018/19

Ms Dunnet informed the Committee that there was a negative variance against the budget during Quarter 2, and this was forecasted to total £231,000 by the end of the financial year. Contributing factors to the negative variance included unmet Development Control Applications income targets and the subsidy cost of the Park and Ride service. It was stated that the Council as a whole was projected to end the financial year within budget.

The Committee expressed concern at the update.

Mr Jeff Kitson, Parking Services Manager, explained to the Committee that Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) hadn't changed significantly in number, and that the anomalous data in the report was due to the introduction of a new reporting tool that required adjustment. Mr Kitson confirmed that this was to be resolved ahead of Quarter 3.

The Committee recognised that while income associated with Development Control Applications was below the budgeted figure, this was expected to increase in the coming years when the Local Plan Review was fully underway. Although the financial figures did not read positively, it was welcomed that the Local Plan had given additional control to planning matters.

RESOLVED: That

1. The revenue position at the end of the second quarter 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 the second quarter be noted.

109. PARK AND RIDE – PAY TO PARK TRIAL

Mr Kitson explained to the Committee that the trends demonstrated in the Park and Ride – Pay to Park Trial report used data from June 2018 to September 2018. Mr Kitson stated that an income of £65,000 had been recorded for the first four months, which represented an overall deficit of £49,000 for the service. While the small data sample did not enable accurate forecasting, if the trends continued, a deficit of £134,000 was anticipated by the end of the financial year. It was noted that car sharing was not prevalent at peak times, however, 155 cars were removed from highways each day at peak hours through the Park and Ride Service.

Mr William Cornall, Director of Regeneration and Place, informed the Committee that engagement with KCC regarding the Park and Ride service had been ongoing through various routes. These included the Quality Bus Partnership, liaison between Transport Innovation Teams and direct

contact with the Director of Transport. While KCC supported the scheme, the only available option for financial support was through the Concessionary Travel Scheme.

Councillors Newton, McKay and Daley spoke on this item as Visiting Members.

The Committee commented that:

- Modal shift was more apparent at off-peak times, while a key objective was to achieve this during peak times.
- If the Highway Authority, KCC, considered the service too important to be lost, it should take responsibility for the operation or funding of the Park and Ride service.

RESOLVED: That the performance of the Park and Ride – Pay to Park trial be noted.

110. PARK AND RIDE ALTERNATIVES

Mrs Tay Arnold, Planning Projects and Delivery Manager, introduced the report. Mrs Arnold stated that there were a number of options to be considered for the future of the Park and Ride service. If an affordable alternative was not made available, there would be a significant impact on a variety of users, such as those on minimum wage contracts. Mrs Arnold explained that a survey had taken place, and this showed that many users would use alternative forms of transport to reach the town centre if the service was ceased. This would impact upon air quality.

Councillors Daley and McKay addressed the Committee as Visiting Members.

Mr Cornall explained to the Committee that alternative options had been explored, however, no alternatives had been identified that would offer an improved level of uptake or subsidy per user.

The Committee commented that:

- The current Park and Ride contract had been extended twice. This was designed to allow time to explore available options for the continuation of the service in a viable form.
- All options needed to be considered, so that the possibility of a competitive and efficient service was fully explored.
- Alternative sustainable transport options needed to be viewed as a package. If these were viewed individually, the alternatives would not have enough impact to replace the Park and Ride service.
- It was crucial to investigate what the market could provide before defining how the service was to be operated.

- Careful consideration needed to be given to how the car parks could be put to sensible economic use.
- The prevalence of car parking in the town centre undermined an objective of the Park and Ride service; reducing the number of cars in the town centre.
- That any action undertaken with delegated authority should be carried out in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee.

RESOLVED: That

1. The pay to park service is closed on 31 May 2019.
2. The sites at Willington Street and London Road are retained for a use to honour the commitments made in the Local Plan and Integrated Transport Strategy.
3. A continuation of service from both sites is facilitated in conjunction with commercial operators, with regard to a competitive solution for the best utilisation of the car park.
4. Further investigation of additional multi-modal services is continued.
5. The Director of Regeneration and Place uses his delegated authority in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the SPST Committee to implement the recommendations of the Committee.

Voting: For – 7 Against – 0 Abstentions – 2

111. PROTECTION OF THE GREENSAND RIDGE

Mrs Deanne Cunningham, Team Leader (Heritage, Landscape and Design), stated that following a report to the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee on 10 July 2018, the designation of the Greensand Ridge as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) had been explored. Mrs Cunningham outlined that the Greensand Ridge was part of wider landscape character areas, however, AONB designation would ensure for the highest possible protection when considering planning policy. Mrs Cunningham stated that the creation of an AONB was a lengthy and resource intensive process, and that there was a risk that the application would be unsuccessful if it was too limited and there was no support from neighbouring authorities. The review of national parks and AONBs, however, provided an opportunity to make a representation regarding the Greensand Ridge.

The Committee noted that:

- There was an opportunity for an additional tier of protection to be implemented following the national review.
- In promoting the Greensand Ridge as an AONB, consideration needed to be given as to whether this would devalue Landscapes of Local Value (LLV) in the borough.
- Raising the status of LLVs would ensure that they were not devalued, while also providing additional protection to these areas.
- It was prudent to seek the highest level of protection possible for the Greensand Ridge, as this would allow for protection to be reduced at a later date if required.

RESOLVED: That

1. The Protection of the Greensand Ridge report be noted.
2. A representation is made to the Review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) to seek to secure AONB protection for the Greensand Ridge and an additional tier of protection for the borough's Landscapes of Local Value areas.
3. Officers liaise with neighbouring authorities and other stakeholders to assess the collective interest in making a joint application on a larger basis.

Voting: Unanimous

112. LOCAL ENFORCEMENT PLAN

Mr James Bailey, Development Manager, referred to the resolution of the Committee on 9 October 2018, and indicated that the suggested KPIs ensured that key elements of the service were monitored, in order to drive the service forward.

Members requested that raw data concerning the number of outstanding cases be reported to the Committee alongside the KPI report, to provide context to the performance figures.

Mr Bailey stated that outstanding enforcement caseload was made up of a number of cases including Enforcement Notices, Injunctions, Appeals, Prosecutions and new cases. Careful consideration would need to be given as to how this was reported, however, it was possible to include this for information alongside the KPI figures.

RESOLVED: That

1. The new Local Enforcement Plan is approved for publication.

2. The Key Performance Indicator for Priority 1 cases is agreed as "100% of Priority 1 cases are visited within 1 working day of the report being received."
3. The Key Performance Indicator for Priority 2 cases is agreed as "90% of Priority 2 cases are visited within 10 working days of the report being received."
4. Data regarding outstanding cases be shared with the Committee alongside the KPI report.

Voting: Unanimous

113. TONBRIDGE & MALLING LOCAL PLAN REG.19 CONSULTATION

Mrs Sarah Lee, Principal Planning Officer (Strategic Planning), informed the Committee that Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council had prepared a Regulation 19 Local Plan for consultation. Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council aimed to submit the Local Plan prior to 24 January 2019 to ensure that it was examined against the 2012 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The proposed response from Maidstone Borough Council was particularly focussed on sustainable transport and urged Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council to investigate, and specify in the plan, specific transport measures. The representations would be submitted so that they could be considered by the Local Plan Inspector. It was anticipated that Officers at Tonbridge and Malling would enter into a Statement of Common Ground with Maidstone Borough Council prior to the examination.

The Committee commented that it recognised Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council's ambition to submit the document ahead of the deadline, however, some elements of the Regulation 19 Consultation were not clear, particularly in terms of transport and air quality.

RESOLVED: That the responses sets out in Appendix 1, as amended by the urgent update, be agreed as this Council's response to the Tonbridge & Malling Local Plan Regulation 19 Consultation.

Voting: Unanimous

114. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 10.11 p.m.