

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 21 MARCH 2017

Present: Councillor Mrs Ring (Chairman), and
Councillors Barned, M Burton, Joy, D Mortimer, Perry,
Mrs Robertson and Webb

58. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

59. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

There were no Substitute Members.

60. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

61. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

There were no Visiting Members.

62. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures by Members and Officers.

63. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

All Members of the Committee, with the exception of Councillor Barned, stated that they had been lobbied on Agenda Item 13 – Report of the Head of Regeneration and Economic Development – Phase 3 Public Realm.

64. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

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

65. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 FEBRUARY 2017**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed.

66. **MINUTES OF THE CO-LOCATED MEETING HELD ON 22 FEBRUARY 2017**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the co-located meeting held on 22 February 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed.

67. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

68. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

69. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman advised that Members of the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee had asked for a report to their next meeting on the draft consultation responses to the Housing White Paper consultation that would be relevant to their Committee.

The Chairman suggested that a similar report should be produced for the next Communities, Housing and Environment Committee meeting.

In response to a question from a Member, the Director of Regeneration and Place advised that in regard to the Maidstone Borough Council Lottery, it was still being progressed and had been discussed at a recent Political Group Leaders' Meeting. As a result Political Group Leaders had asked for further investigative work to be carried out and he would be able to report back to the Committee in due course if a report would be coming forward.

RESOLVED: That Officers produce a report to the next Committee meeting on the draft responses to the consultation on the Housing White Paper.

70. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF REGENERATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT - PHASE 3 PUBLIC REALM

The Local Economy Project Officer presented a report on the Phase 3 Public Realm.

The Committee noted that details of Phase 3 of the Public Realm was first presented to Policy and Resources Committee at its meeting in April 2016. The proposal was to upgrade the north end of Week Street (from Fremlin Walk to Maidstone East Station) and Gabriel's Hill/Lower Stone Street. However, following discussions with various Members, Officers and Designers, it had become clear that the whole length of Week Street should be considered for upgrade.

In response to questions from Members, Officers advised that:-

- Sample patches of paving would be laid down for 2/3 months to enable testing for cleaning purposes.
- It made sense to consider carrying out all the work in one go, rather than leaving an area in the middle not completed.

- The £900k required could be funded from the new homes bonus that had been set aside for capital investment projects.

In the ensuing discussion the following points were made:-

- That the image of the town centre was very important as Maidstone competed with Bluewater, Tunbridge Wells and Tenterden.
- That it made sense to complete the whole length of road as there were some parts that looked tired and run down.
- That the provision of additional resources for ongoing maintenance needed to be carefully considered to ensure that the area was properly cleaned;
- That the significant spend could not be justified especially when taxpayers were faced with an increase in their Council tax;
- That the trees identified by the designers for the scheme would be contrary to the Council's policy on trees in urban green space.

RESOLVED: That Policy and Resources Committee be recommended to:

1. Approve the change in scope from the original proposed project, to now include the southern end of Week Street;

Voting: For: 6 Against: 1 Abstentions: 1

2. Approve the outline designs for all of Week Street and Gabriel's Hill/Lower Stone Street with the exception of the suggested palette of tree species which do not comply with document HAP12; Urban Green Space. In addition the 4 Ginkgo Biloba at the bottom of Gabriel's Hill which should be removed and replaced with trees native to South East England as per HAP 12: Urban Green Space;

Voting: For: 7 Against: 1 Abstentions: 0

3. Approve the proposed materials for hard landscaping only for Week Street and Gabriel's Hill/Lower Stone Street;

Voting: For: 7 Against: 1 Abstentions: 0

4. Approve the additional capital budget of £900k to cover the increased costs for the southern section of Week Street;

Voting: For: 5 Against: 1 Abstentions: 2

5. Approve the proposed consultation materials and methodology but further investigation should include more soft landscaping for the purposes of air quality mitigation and to be in keeping with the theme of the County Town of the Garden of England; and

Voting: For: 6 Against: 1 Abstentions: 1

6. Approve the additional resources required for the ongoing cleansing and maintenance of the town centre.

Voting: For: 7 Against: 1 Abstentions: 0

71. DURATION OF MEETING

7.15 p.m. to 8.20 p.m.