

**MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

**MINUTES (PART II) OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY  
16 DECEMBER 2015**

115. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE
116. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS
117. URGENT ITEMS
118. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS
119. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS
120. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING
121. EXEMPT ITEMS
122. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2015
123. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)
124. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (IF ANY)
125. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE AND RESOURCES - COUNCIL TAX - TAX BASE 2016-17
126. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE AND RESOURCES - PROJECTED COLLECTION FUND ADJUSTMENT ACCOUNT 2015/16
127. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE AND RESOURCES - MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2016-17 ONWARDS

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128. ORAL REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCE AND RESOURCES -  
PROVISIONAL FINANCIAL SETTLEMENT (IF NECESSARY)
  
129. URGENT REFERENCE FROM COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT  
COMMITTEE 8 DECEMBER 2015: MAIDSTONE'S APPROACH TO THE  
SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS
  
130. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - TOWN CENTRE  
STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2015-2020
  
131. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING
  
132. Report of the Director of Planning and Development - Business Plan for  
land and property following its acquisition

Members considered the exempt report of the Director of Planning and Development which detailed the progress made to date in regard to the acquisition of the Royal Mail Sorting Office.

- 1) A Member-led joint Strategic Board had been established to oversee the project and delegated decision making arrangements in respect of those decisions set out in the Collaboration Agreement between the two authorities.
- 2) A Development Manager would be appointed to lead a professional team to master plan and bring the site to market.
- 3) Discussions with Network Rail are ongoing to bring the Network Rail land and Royal Mail site into single ownership.
- 4) Following a phase 1 Geo-Environmental Desk Study of the site, the results showed that there were several contaminate sources that should be considered. As a consequence of this, it had been agreed that negotiations would need to take place with Royal Mail to reduce the Council's environmental liability. It was noted that the Councils would not progress the purchase unless acceptable terms could be agreed with Royal Mail about potential environmental liability and abnormal ground conditions.
- 5) If agreement is reached and the purchase of the site is completed on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015, the Councils would become liable for the maintenance, security and insurance of the existing office and warehouse buildings, together with empty business rates.
- 6) Through the South East Local Enterprise Board an award has been made to the West Kent Local Sustainable Transport Fund to support initiatives in both Maidstone and West Kent. A £1m grant has been allocated to support improvements to Maidstone East Station. The

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LGF funding, if approved, would unlock £1m of National Station  
Improvement Funds.

- 7) A 3 year temporary planning application would be submitted for the creation of a car park and associated traffic regulation orders. A prior notification application would be made for the demolition of the buildings in January 2016.
- 8) The commission for the works would be tendered and a contractor appointed to demolish the buildings and create a car park. The new car park would be operational by September 2016.

**RESOLVED:**

That:

- 1) The draft Business Plan at Appendix 1 to the exempt report of the Interim Director of Planning and Development be approved;
- 2) Delegated authority be given to the Interim Director of Planning and Development or Chief Executive to finalise the Business Plan in consultation with the Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee;
- 3) The short term holding strategy and capital expenditure is approved as set out in paragraph 2.10 of the exempt report of the Interim Director of Planning and Development;
- 4) Delegated authority be given to the Interim Director of Planning and Development or Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee to agree, and enter into, a Management Agreement/or lease with our partner for its use of the car park; and
- 5) Approval is given for decisions relating to the project which must be taken by each Council to be made in co-located meetings of this Committee and the relevant KCC committee advising the Cabinet Member, subject to KCC's agreement.

Voting: For: 15 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

133. Report of the Director of Planning and Development - Development of the Mall

Members considered the exempt report of the Director of Planning and Development and noted the progress made to date with Capital and Regional Properties towards a comprehensive refurbishment and development of the Mall as part of the Council's 5 year Town Centre Development Plan.

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A joint project team has been established; the objectives of which would be for the refurbishment and development of the Mall, to include the modernisation of the existing retail space, improved layout to create better opportunities for business growth, providing additional floor space to enable the centre to expand, refurbishment of the bus station and improvement to the Mall car parks and entrances.

Subject to the acquisition of two additional properties, this would enable Capital and Regional to expand the retail centre, creating additional floor space to accommodate a major retailer and giving the capacity for new leisure businesses.

Members were made aware that there was an opportunity for the Council to purchase the freehold interest in Granada House. A business case for this acquisition would be produced if Members agreed to pursue this.

**RESOLVED:**

That:

- 1) The Committee notes progress made with Capital and Regional Properties towards the comprehensive refurbishment and development of the Mall as part of the Council's 5 year Town Centre Development Plan;
- 2) Subject to a detailed business case and an appropriate commercial agreement, Committee endorsed the principle of the Council investing in the major development scheme for the Mall, to achieve improved and additional commercial retail and leisure space, the full refurbishment of Maidstone bus station and improvement of public space, car parking areas, entrances and walkways;
- 3) The Committee agree that officers progress the specific business case for the acquisition of Granada House as part of this proposed investment;
- 4) The Committee agrees that officers work closely with Kent County Council officers, bus operators and Capital and Regional to develop the specification for the refurbishment of the bus station to create a modern, efficient facility which will benefit business and shoppers and report back on options for its delivery; and
- 5) The Committee requests that officers report back with further proposals and the business case to support capital investment to deliver the major scheme.

Voting: For: 15 Against: 0 Abstentions: 0

134. DURATION OF MEETING

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