

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PLANNING, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 8 MARCH 2016

Present: Councillor Mrs Grigg (Chairman), and
Councillors Mrs Blackmore, English, Garland, Mrs
Gooch, D Mortimer, Paine, Mrs Stockell and Mrs
Wilson

Also Present: Councillors Boughton and Harper

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors:

- Burton
- Springett
- de Wiggondene

2. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

The following substitute Members were noted:

- Councillor Mrs Stockell for Councillor de Wiggondene
- Councillor Blackmore for Councillor Burton – from 6:35pm
- Councillor Garland for Councillor Mrs Springett – from 6:37pm

3. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Boughton was in attendance to speak on items 14 and 15 and Councillor Harper was in attendance to speak on items 14 and 18.

4. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman stated that, in her opinion, the update report of the Head of Planning for item 12 – North Loose Neighbourhood Plan, should be taken as an urgent item as it contained further information relating to the agenda item.

5. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

It was noted that Councillor Mrs Stockell declared she was a member of the Highways Committee of Kent County Council.

There were no further disclosures by Members or Officers.

6. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

It was noted that the following Members had been lobbied on the items detailed:

Councillor Mortimer – item 18 Scope and costs required to implement 20MPH speed limits within the Borough of Maidstone.

Councillor Mrs Grigg – items 13 Draft Low Emissions Strategy, item 14 Response to consultation on 'A new approach to rail passenger services in London and the South East' and Kent County Council's draft consultation on the new South Eastern Franchise and item 18 Scope and costs required to implement 20MPH speed limits within the Borough of Maidstone.

Councillor English – item 15 Response to consultation by Highways England on proposed Lower Thames Crossing and item 18 Scope and costs required to implement 20MPH speed limits within the Borough of Maidstone.

7. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 FEBRUARY 2016

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2016 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman subject to a correction to minute 224 – Teston and Aylesford Tow Path Scheme be changed to Barming and Aylesford Tow Path Scheme.

8. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS (IF ANY)

There were no petitions.

9. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

10. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED:

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

11. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME FOR NOTING

The Committee noted that the following items on the Committee's work programme had been moved to a meeting in the new municipal year 2016/17:

- Report to consider the resources needed to provide the planning service;
- CIL Draft Charging Schedule; and,
- Brunswick Road car park.

12. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - NORTH LOOSE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

The Committee considered the Urgent Update Report of the Head of Planning and Development giving details of the result of the referendum for the North Loose Neighbourhood Development Plan (NLNDP) held on 3 March 2016.

The Committee noted the results as follows:

- Total number of votes cast were 1,410
- Of those 1,322 votes were 'Yes'; and,
- 77 were 'No'.

The Committee also noted the significance of the NLNDP being the first one in the Borough to reach this stage of the process and congratulated North Loose Neighbourhood Forum on their hard work.

RESOLVED:

The Committee noted the 'Yes' result of the North Loose Neighbourhood Development Plan referendum of 3 March 2016.

That the Committee recommends to Council that the North Loose Neighbourhood Development Plan be made and becomes part of the Development Plan for Maidstone.

Voting: For – 9 Against – 0 Abstentions – 0

13. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES - DRAFT LOW EMISSION STRATEGY CONSULTATION RESPONSE

The Senior Scientific Officer and the Mid-Kent Environmental Protection Team Leader introduced the report and gave an overview of the current position of the strategy.

The Committee considered the report and noted the decision of the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee at their meeting of 16 February 2016.

Members raised concern over the low response rate to the public consultation for the strategy. Concern was also raised regarding the lack of consultation with parish councils, Borough Councillors and other interested groups.

The Committee heard that a workshop was planned for after the elections in May 2016. The workshop would be open to all Members of the council to look at what Members wanted to implement through the strategy and to develop the Action Plan. The Committee agreed the workshop should be held before the elections.

The Head of Planning and Development stated that air quality was an important aspect of the planning process. It was intended that a Supplementary Planning Document would be developed where detailed mitigation measures would be stated to improve air quality in the borough.

RESOLVED:

That the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee be recommended to fix a date for the Low Emission Workshop, as early as possible before the elections in May 2016, inviting all Borough Councillors to attend, to establish the parameters of the Low Emissions Action Plan.

Voting: For – 8 Against – 1 Abstentions – 0

14. **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION ON 'A NEW APPROACH TO RAIL PASSENGER SERVICES IN LONDON AND THE SOUTH EAST' AND KENT COUNTY COUNCIL'S DRAFT CONSULTATION ON THE NEW SOUTH EASTERN FRANCHISE**

The Committee considered the revised Maidstone Borough Council responses to the consultation on 'A new approach to rail passenger services in London and the South East' and Kent County Council's Draft Consultation on the New South Eastern Franchise. The responses had been revised from the original report to the Committee on 9 February 2016 to clearly state the Council's priorities for rail transport for the Borough.

Councillors Harper and Boughton addressed the Committee.

The Committee generally agreed the responses were clearer.

During the discussion the Committee asked for the following additions and amendments to be included in the response to the consultation:

- Question 2 – add – that frequent services from Marden, Staplehurst and Headcorn to Canon Street and Kings Cross be continued and the maintenance of the journey time to less than one hour.
- In the interests of everyone - stations along the Medway Valley Line be staffed daily from 8am to 5pm.
- Question 6 – the forth bullet point be move up to become part of the third bullet point to clarify the point made in the third bullet point.

Decision Made

1. That the suggested responses to the prospectus document 'A New Approach to Rail Passenger Services in London and the South East', as set out in the report of 8 March 2016, be agreed subject to the inclusion of the points raised by the Committee and noted in the Minutes, and the report be forwarded to Transport for London prior to 18 March 2016.

Voting: For – 9 Against – 0 Abstentions – 0

2. That the suggested responses to the consultation by Kent County Council on the new Southeastern Franchise be agreed, subject to the inclusion of the points raised by the Committee and noted in the Minutes, and the document be forwarded to the Principal Transport Planner – Rail at Kent County Council.

Voting: For – 9 Against – 0 Abstentions – 0

15. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - RESPONSE TO CONSULTATION BY HIGHWAYS ENGLAND ON PROPOSED LOWER THAMES CROSSING

The Committee considered the proposed response set out in section 4 of the report to be forwarded to Highways England as the Council's formal response to the Lower Thames Crossing Consultation.

The Committee heard the proposed new Lower Thames Crossing would have no direct impact on the borough of Maidstone but could result in economic benefits.

Highways England had stated the environmental issues created by the new crossing could be mitigated.

Kent County Council supported the Western Southern Link as it was considered would create less impact. The proposed response from Maidstone Borough Council supported the Eastern Southern Link.

Councillor Boughton addressed the Committee.

The Committee agreed they were not against the Western Southern Link and requested that this be reflected in the Council's consultation response.

RESOLVED:

That the proposed response, set out in section 4 of the report dated 8 March 2016, be agreed subject to the amendment of the response to Question 5 (paragraph 4.8 of the report) to read 'tends to agree' in relation to the Western Southern Link. The responses then be forwarded to Highways England as the Council's formal response to the Lower Thames Crossing Consultation by the deadline of 24 March 2016.

Voting: For – 9 Against – 0 Abstentions – 0

16. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

The Committee considered the Council's response to the National Planning Policy Framework consultation which had been submitted by the deadline

of 22 February 2016 and which Councillor Burton had be involved in formulating.

RESOLVED:

That the response to the consultation on proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, set out in Appendix 1 of the report dated 8 March 2016, and submitted to the Department of Communities and Local Government be noted.

17. **REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF MAIDSTONE BOROUGH TRANSPORT USER GROUP**

The Committee considered the re-establishment of the Maidstone Transport Users Group. The Committee were reminded the recommendation for the group came from a Scrutiny Review of Transport in Maidstone during 2014/15. The recommendation came as a result of a suggestion from service providers during the review.

During discussions the following concerns were raised:

- Clear Terms of Reference would be needed for the Group.
- The group should not discuss specific service issues and should focus on strategic public transport issues.
- The suggested membership of the group was potentially weighted in favour of parish councils.
- Bus service operators should be included as members.
- Clear lines of communication for the group should be established.
- Duplication of work carried out by other groups should be avoided.
- The group should be a Transport Operators Group as opposed to a transport users group. Service users could be represented by parish councils via the membership of the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC).

RESOLVED:

1. That a Maidstone Transport Operators Group be established.
2. That at the first meeting of the Maidstone Transport Operators Group the Terms of Reference be established to include the appointment of a Maidstone Borough Councillor as Chairman of the Group.
3. That in the initial year of the Maidstone Transport Operators Group quarterly meetings be held with a review of the Group's effectiveness carried out at the end of the first year and reported back to the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee.

4. That invitations to establish the membership of the Maidstone Transport Operators Group be extended to the following:

- Maidstone Borough Council Officers
- Kent County Council Officers
- Arriva
- NuVenture
- Rail Services Providers for the Borough
- Highways England
- 1 representative from the Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC)

5. That quarterly reports to the Strategic Planning, Sustainability and Transportation Committee from the Maidstone Transport Operators Group be provided.

18. REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT - SCOPE AND COSTS REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT 20 MPH SPEED LIMITS WITHIN THE BOROUGH OF MAIDSTONE

The Committee considered the report and whether to request officers undertake or commission further work on the 20 mile per hour scheme, and to consider the Maidstone Urban Area, the five Rural Service Centres and five Larger Villages as suitable scheme areas.

The Committee heard that support from Kent County Council would be required if it was decided to pursue the introduction of 20 MPH speed limits in the Borough.

Initial indications were that signage alone would cost in the region of £1m and an initial study carried out by a consultant would cost in the region of £20k.

Councillor Harper addressed the Committee.

The Committee raised concerns regarding the potential cost and the importance of Officer resources concentrating on the adoption of the Maidstone Borough Local Plan.

The Committee were informed by the Head of Planning and Development that there was a need for Officers to concentrate on the formulation of the Integrated Transport Strategy (ITS). The ITS was supporting evidence for the Local Plan. Pilot studies could be signposted in the ITS with specific locations named.

RESOLVED:

That in the Local Plan period pilot studies be undertaken of certain sections of highway in Maidstone where there is acknowledged pedestrian and vehicular conflict and where there is resident support in order to deliver 20 mph speed limit areas.

Voting: For – 9 Against – 0 Abstentions – 0

19. DURATION OF THE MEETING

6:30pm to 8:59pm.