

## **MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE COMMITTEE**

#### **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 13 APRIL 2021**

**Present:** Councillors D Burton (Chairman), Clark, English, Garten, Mrs Grigg, McKay, Munford, Parfitt-Reid and Spooner

**Also Present:** Councillor Perry

343. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

344. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

345. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

346. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor Perry was present as a Visiting Member for Item 15 – Local Plan Review Budget.

347. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Councillor Garten disclosed that he was the Council's representative on the Kent Downs AONB Joint Advisory Committee, in relation to Item 18 – Kent Downs AONB Management Plan Adoption.

348. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

Councillors D Burton, Clark, English, Garten, Mrs Grigg, McKay, Parfitt-Reid and Spooner had been lobbied on the following items:

- Item 15 – Local Plan Review Budget
- Item 19 – Local Plan Review Update

Councillor Munford had been lobbied on Item 17 – Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plans Work Programme Update and Item 19 – Local Plan Review Update.

349. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

350. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 9 MARCH 2021

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed at a later date.

351. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

352. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There was one question from a Member of the Public.

Question from Ms Sue Harwood to the Chairman of the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee

*'Please would you confirm that members of this committee will give their full attention to the 1700 responses received in respect of the Lidsing Garden Development in the local plan, particularly as a large majority of residents living or working in Lidsing and the surrounding areas were completely unaware of this proposal until members of the public shared this information on social media and through leaflet distribution so had very little notice to respond?'*

The Chairman responded to the question.

The full response was recorded on the webcast and made available to view on the Maidstone Borough Council website.

To access the webcast recording, please use the link below:  
[Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee Meeting - 13/04/21 - YouTube](#)

353. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

354. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

355. REPORTS OF OUTSIDE BODIES

There were no reports of Outside Bodies.

356. OTHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN (REGULATION 17A)

The Planning Policy officer introduced the report and stated that following two rounds of public consultation, the Otham Neighbourhood Plan had been submitted to the Examiner for independent examination. The Examiner's report was received on the 4 March 2021, with the proposed amendments outlined within the report.

Particular attention was drawn to Policy PM6, whereby Policy AC1 as originally drafted had sought to ensure that further developments within the area, not already identified within the Council's adopted Local Plan, did not result in the coalescence of Otham village with urban areas of Maidstone. The Council had raised concerns as the policy was not in general conformity to the strategies policies within the adopted Local Plan. The Examiner had recognised that potential risks of development to the surrounding countryside and it was proposed that the policy be renamed to 'Protecting the Countryside'.

It was confirmed that the Neighbourhood Plan Referendum would take place after the May 2021 elections, but that a date had not been chosen.

The Committee wished to acknowledge the effort involved in creating the Otham Neighbourhood Plan.

**RESOLVED:** That

1. The modifications to the Otham neighbourhood Development Plan as set out in the examiner's report, be agreed; and
2. The Otham Neighbourhood Plan proceeds to local referendum.

#### 357. LOCAL PLAN REVIEW BUDGET

The Director of Finance and Business Improvement introduced the report and referenced the Committee's request to the Policy and Resources Committee, for additional funding to be allocated to the Local Plan Review (LPR) budget. In response, the Policy and Resources Committee had requested that officers re-examine the budget allocated for the LPR, with the outcomes of the review presented to that Committee in March 2021.

The work undertaken by the Finance and Planning Teams was highlighted, with the projected expenditure up until 2023 outlined in Appendix A to the report. The expenditure had been split into Core Funding, New Requirements and Discretionary categories.

The projections included a £30,000 contingency fund for both 2021/22 and 2022/23, with the proposed work relating to the Town Centre Plan to be funded separately through Section 106 contributions. The additional £200,000 required for 2021/22 would be funded through the Corporate Contingency Fund, which would be supported by additional income that the Council was expecting. The £135,000 required for 2022/23 would be considered as part of the annual review of the Council's budget proposals, with it likely that another £100,000 would be brought forward from future year's expenditure to supplement the funding.

Several Members of the Committee expressed concerns over the LPR budget's viability and the feasibility of the actions proposed, which were felt to be overly optimistic, particularly in reference to Development Plan

Documents (DPD). However, as mitigating actions had been proposed, it was felt that the budget should continue to be monitored.

The Chairman requested that his dissent with the LPR budget review having been presented to the Policy and Resources Committee, before the Strategic Planning and Infrastructure Committee, be noted.

**RESOLVED:** That

1. The programme for the Local Plan Review and related projects, be noted;
2. Arrangements for funding the work in line with the Council's agreed budget and policy framework, be noted;
3. The process for monitoring actual expenditure and reporting this back to the Policy and Resources Committee and this Committee, be noted; and
4. Due to the Committee's concerns the Policy and Resources Committee be requested to have the Local Plan Review Budget as a standing item on their agenda to have full surveillance on the matter.

358. **CONSULTATION ON THE SWALE BC PRE-SUBMISSION DRAFT PLAN**

The Senior Planner introduced the report that outlined the details of Swale Borough Council's (SBC) Local Plan Review Regulation 19 consultation, prior to the plan's submission for examination. The Council's draft response to the consultation was attached at Appendix 1 to the report, with the comments focused on the legal compliance and soundness of the plan. The Regulation 19 consultation was accompanied by a range of supporting evidence and documents. A correction to point 2.3 of the report was outlined.

It was noted that the Council were pleased that SBC would be meeting their increased housing need, with the shift in the focus of housing growth from Sittingbourne to Faversham and the Isle of Sheppey. The Teynham settlement as an area of opportunity for growth was highlighted. The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment provided evidence to support pitch provision, but it was not clear whether the higher or lower figure produced from the assessment would be met. SBC's Local Plan included mitigations regarding air quality and transport to reduce impacts on roads within Swale and the surrounding areas. It was noted that the Council considered that SBC had fulfilled its Duty to Cooperate requirements, but that SBC would be requested to provide stronger evidence of the work undertaken to date.

The Committee expressed support for the draft response proposed, with officers requested to consider road traffic mitigation strategies during future Duty to Co-operate meetings.

**RESOLVED:** That

1. The Committee note the current consultation on the Swale Borough Council Local Plan Review; and
2. Maidstone Borough Council's response to the consultation, as attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be agreed;

359. CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLANS WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Principal Conservation Officer introduced the report and stated that Area Appraisal plans had been adopted for Sutton Valence, Maidstone Ashford Road, Maidstone Chillington House and Maidstone Centre. Appendix 1 to the report was highlighted.

Draft documents had been produced for Yalding, Lenham Elmstone Hall and Harrietsham East Street conservation areas. The documents would undergo public consultation and be adopted under delegated powers. The next areas to be reviewed were Lenham Village and Headcorn, with the Committee to be further updated at the end of the year.

The Committee expressed support and thanks for the work undertaken. In response to questions, it was confirmed that the actions taken were in accordance with the two-year work programme previously agreed and based on the funding available which would be reviewed as the work progressed. Consideration was given on whether the non-strategic CIL funding secured through development, could be used by Parish Councils to contribute towards the cost of appraising the areas.

**RESOLVED:** That the contents of the report be noted.

360. KENT DOWNS AONB MANAGEMENT PLAN ADOPTION

The Heritage, Landscape and Design Team Leader introduced the report and stated that any Local Authority (LA) that had an Area of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB) within its jurisdiction was required to produce, adopt and review a management plan. The 2014-2019 Kent Downs AONB management plan had remained in place due to several delays, including the Covid-19 pandemic, in producing the updated plan.

The 2021-2026 management plan took into account the engagement and stakeholder consultation exercises that were conducted, including the feedback given by the Committee at its September 2020 meeting. Following the agreement of the Kent Downs AONB Joint Advisory Committee in January 2021, the draft management plan had been circulated to all twelve LA's to which it applied and had been approved by several.

In response to questions, it was confirmed that the delegated powers to the Head of Planning and Development were intended for minor changes

only. If any LA wished to propose significant changes, these would be presented to the Committee.

**RESOLVED:** That

1. The report be noted;
2. The Kent Downs AONB Management Plan Review 2021-2026, as attached at Appendices 1-15 of the report, be approved for adoption;
3. The Head of Planning and Development be given delegated powers to accept reasonable minor changes made by other Local Authorities prior to formal adoption; and
4. A date to be confirmed by the Kent Downs AONB Unit, once the last of the 12 Local Authorities resolved to adopt the plan, be approved as the formal date for adoption.

361. LOCAL PLAN REVIEW UPDATE

The Strategic Planning Manager introduced the report, reiterating that the 3,200 responses received from the Regulation 18 Preferred Approaches Public Consultation Document and Sustainability Appraisal were still being processed. Further work on the supporting information and wider evidence base was being conducted, to include specialist studies and evidence papers. The various types of specialist studies were outlined.

Discussions with the site promoters for the Garden Communities of Heathlands and Lidsing were ongoing, as the promoters prepared to provide evidence to show that their proposals could be included in the Council's Regulation 19 document. In relation to the two Garden Community sites proposed it was noted that, at this stage, land ownership was not considered to be a barrier to the proposals moving forward.

**RESOLVED:** That the contents of the report be noted.

362. DURATION OF MEETING

Prior to the closure of the meeting, the Chairman expressed his thanks to the Committee for the work undertaken during the current municipal year.

6.30 p.m. to 7.41 p.m.