

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE SERVICES POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 11 OCTOBER 2023

Attendees:

Committee Members:	Councillor Bartlett (Chairman) and Councillors Cannon, Conyard, Cooke, Mrs Gooch, Harper, Hinder, S Thompson and Webb
Cabinet Members:	Councillor Perry, Cabinet Member for Corporate Services

44. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies.

45. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

46. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

47. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

48. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

49. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

50. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

51. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 12 JULY 2023

The Principal Democratic Services Officer outlined the changes that had been made to Minute 27 – Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan Update and Cost for Achieving Net Zero 2030, to strengthen the sentiments expressed by the Committee. The resolution wording did not require amendment.

The Committee supported the changes made.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held of the 12 July 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

Note: Councillor Cannon arrived at 6:37 p.m. during the item's consideration, and stated that he did not have any disclosures of interest or lobbying to declare.

52. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 11 SEPTEMBER 2023

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

53. FORWARD PLAN RELATING TO THE COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services stated that:

- The report concerning the – 'Consideration of a proposal to extend and improvement works to Medway street carpark', would instead be presented to the Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee, as the matter overlapped into the portfolio for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development. Any implications from the proposals would be reviewed by the Committee in reviewing the capital programme; and
- An update on the biodiversity and climate change action plan would be presented to the Committee at its next meeting. The Committee's previous recommendation concerning the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the officers posts for Biodiversity and Climate Change was highlighted.

In response to questions, the Cabinet Member stated that whilst all Cabinet Members were responsible for Biodiversity and Climate Change, the Leader of the Council had overall responsibility for the Biodiversity and Climate Change Strategy.

The Committee strongly reiterated its concerns that a number of objectives in the Biodiversity and Climate Change Action Plan 2030 would not be achieved by 2030, and that a focused update should be provided on the plan's progress, priority order, and the matters within the Council's direct control.

RESOLVED: That

1. The Forward Plan relating to the Committee's Terms of Reference be noted; and
2. A request be submitted to the next meeting containing a headline schedule of targets to be within the direct control of the Council in priority order and capable of being achieved by 2030.

54. COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME 2024/25

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services introduced the item and stated that the Council Tax Reduction Scheme was reviewed annually and that the only change recommended for 2024/25 was an increase in welfare bands which was in-line with the Department of Work and Pensions assessment of inflation. It was stated that Local Authorities had been responsible for council tax reduction

schemes since 2013, and that the Council had conducted a review of its scheme in 2020 to coincide with the Government policy change to Universal Credit. The cost of living crisis was referenced, with it stated that as the scheme was funded by the borough's taxpayers, a balance had to be struck.

In response to concerns that the full scheme had not been published with the report, the Cabinet Member stated that scheme's banding and total costs were outlined in the report. Further clarification would be given outside of the meeting on the full scheme's readiness for the next full Council meeting, and whether any further information needed to be provided to the Committee.

The Committee expressed support for the proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2024/25.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the CABINET:

1. To note the progress of the income banded scheme;
2. To consider recommending to Council that the scheme continues with the principles of the existing scheme and the percentage awards (maximum award of 80%) continue for 2024/25; and
3. To consider recommending to Council that the grid amounts be amended in-line with the DWP annual percentage increase of welfare benefits for 2024/25.

55. DURATION OF MEETING

6:30 p.m. to 7:01 p.m.