

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

HOUSING, HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 10 OCTOBER 2023

Attendees:

Committee Members:	Councillor Knatchbull (Chairman) and Councillors Jeffery, Joy, Mortimer, Riordan and Springett
Cabinet Members:	Councillor Garten, Cabinet Member for Environmental Services

51. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hastie and Khadka.

52. **NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

There were no Substitute Members.

53. **URGENT ITEMS**

There were no urgent items.

54. **NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS**

There were no Visiting Members.

55. **DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS**

There were no disclosures by Members or Officers.

56. **DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING**

Councillor Jeffery disclosed he had been lobbied on Item 10 - Reference from Council – Notice of Motion – Replacement Refuse Bins.

57. **EXEMPT ITEMS**

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public, unless any Member of the Committee wishes to discuss Item 13 Exempt Appendices to Item 12 – Property Acquisition for 1,000 Affordable Homes, in which case the Committee would enter into closed session due to the possible disclosure of exempt information, for the reason specified having applied the public interest test.

58. **MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 SEPTEMBER 2023**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 7 September 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed.

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

The Director of Regeneration and Place stated that the Housing Revenue Account item on the Committee's Forward Plan would be removed as it would be considered by the Corporate Services Policy Advisory Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Forward Plan relating to the Committee's Terms of Reference be noted.

60. REFERENCE FROM COUNCIL - NOTICE OF MOTION - REPLACEMENT REFUSE BINS

As mover of the original motion at Council, Councillor Jeffery introduced the Item and stated that while the policy on replacement refuse bins had been changed since the motion was proposed at Council, an Officer report on the policy and its impact should be brought to the Committee.

The Committee agreed that an Officer report on replacement refuse bins should come to the HHE PAC and it was noted that as decision maker the Cabinet would need to agree to put the report on the forward plan for consideration. Several Members of the Committee questioned when would be the best opportunity to present a report with enough data on the policy. In response the Head of Environmental Services and Public Realm stated that a January report could be achieved, and the Committee agreed to recommend a report in that time frame.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the CABINET:

That a report on the Replacement Refuse Bins Policy be added to the forward plan for January 2024.

61. AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN

The Cabinet Member for Environmental Services introduced the item and stated that the Council was required to deliver the Air Quality Action Management Plan after a public consultation. The consultation received 471 responses and priorities 1 and 2 in the Action Plan, improvements to the bus fleet and traffic flow, were highlighted as the most effective actions the Council could take against air pollution. It was stated that the Plan included an action to explore expanding the 'No Stopping' zone which had been introduced in Upper Stone Street.

The Environmental Protection Team Leader stated that the Air Quality Management Area was declared in 2022 which focused on Upper Stone Street and that an Air Quality Action Plan had to be enacted within 18 months of the declaration according to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). The Action Plan had been finalised by a steering group comprised of officers from the Council and external partners, which would continue to meet quarterly to monitor the progress of the Action Plan.

The Committee expressed support for the Air Quality Action Management Plan but Several Members of the Committee expressed concern over enforcement of the 'No Stopping' zone in Upper Stone Street. During the discussion it was raised that there were not enough trees planted in Upper Stone Street to mitigate against air pollution and that there were health concerns associated with air pollution.

In response the Committee were informed that Civil Parking Officers enforced the 'No Stopping' zone in Upper Stone Street, and that Officers corresponded with the Kent County Council (KCC) Control Room over traffic enforcement concerns. The Committee were also informed that a measure in the Air Quality Action Plan included an information campaign to residents of the new Air Quality Management Area and that while trees had been planted in Upper Stone Street, planting further trees in the area may not allow pollution to disperse. The Cabinet Member for Environmental Services stated that they could work with the landowners in Upper Stone Street to explore the possibility of planting hedges instead of trees.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the CABINET:

That the Air Quality Action Plan be adopted.

62. PROPERTY ACQUISITION FOR 1000 AFFORDABLE HOMES PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Member for Environmental Services introduced the item and stated that the Council was proposing to purchase a development of 13 homes in South Ward as part of its 1,000 Affordable Homes Programme. The homes were a mixture of 2 and 3 bedroom houses with an on-street parking space allocated to each property, and that they were available with affordable and market rent.

The Committee agreed the property acquisition would be acceptable and that the development in the area would be welcomed.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to the CABINET:

That the Cabinet:

1. Approve the financial returns for the proposed acquisition as shown in Exempt Appendix 3 of this report, which supports the Housing Development and Regeneration Investment Plan and overall Development Strategy, are approved;
2. Give delegated authority to the Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement to:
 - a) Negotiate terms for the purchase of the proposed acquisition for the sum as shown in the Exempt Appendix 3 of this report;
 - b) Procure and enter into all such deeds, agreements, contracts and documents which may be required to facilitate the purchase of the site, and the subsequent redevelopment works required to deliver the scheme referred to in this report. Including (but not limited to) any related appointments such as suitably qualified consultants and a Contractor if required;
 - c) Subject to satisfactory conclusion of all due diligence to negotiate and finalise and complete all legal formalities, deeds and agreements which may be required to facilitate the purchase;
 - d) Negotiate and agree any lease between The Council and Maidstone Property Holdings; and

3. Authorise the Head of Mid Kent Legal Services to appoint the Solicitors required to negotiate and complete the necessary contract documentation, deeds and agreements associated with the purchase and construction works on the terms as agreed by the Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement.

63. EXEMPT APPENDICES TO ITEM 12 - PROPERTY ACQUISITION FOR 1000 AFFORDABLE HOMES PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: That the item be considered alongside Item 12 – Property Acquisition for 1000 Affordable Homes Programme.

64. DURATION OF MEETING

6:30 p.m. to 7:15 p.m.