

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

PLANNING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT POLICY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON MONDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2023

Attendees:

Committee Members:	Councillors Blackmore (Chairman), Cleator, Conyard, Mrs Grigg, Jones, Kimmance, McKenna, Spooner and Trzebinski
Cabinet Members:	Councillor Cooper, Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development
Visiting Members:	Councillor English

47. APOLOGIES OF ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

48. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no Substitute Members.

49. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman stated that there was an urgent update to Item 10 – Maidstone Local Plan Review: Proposed Main Modifications and Minor Changes which was accepted because it contained information relevant to the item's consideration.

50. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor English was present as a Visiting Member for Item 10 – Maidstone Local Plan Review: Proposed Main Modifications and Minor Changes.

51. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

Councillor Jones disclosed that they were a former member of the Against Lidsing Garden Development working group for Item 10 – Maidstone Local Plan Review: Proposed Main Modifications and Minor Changes, having resigned following their election to the Council.

52. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

53. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

54. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 6 SEPTEMBER 2023

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to the inclusion of the following text in the second to last paragraph of Minute 42, to read:

“It was noted that the response had been submitted on 9 August 2023, as opposed to the original 25 July 2023 deadline following an agreed extension with KCC.”

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

It was noted that the Forward Plan would be amended to reflect that the Town Centre Strategy would be presented to the Committee in October 2023.

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

56. MAIDSTONE LOCAL PLAN REVIEW: PROPOSED MAIN MODIFICATIONS AND MINOR CHANGES

The Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development introduced the report, and stated that the main modifications attached at appendices 1 and 2 to the report were the Planning Inspector’s (the Inspector’s) recommendations to enhance the soundness of the Local Plan Review (the Plan). The Cabinet Member supported the plan’s progression, which post adoption would support suitable development within the borough.

It was proposed that two public consultations take place at the same time; the first concerned the Inspector’s main modifications and the second would be on the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment Addendums, attached at appendices 4 and 5 to the report.

The Strategic Planning Manager provided further technical information relating to the proposal, and stated that:

- Following the two stages of examination hearings, the Inspector’s main modifications were changes to the plan that were considered necessary for the plan’s soundness, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework and was a standard part of the examination process, which the Council was still in;
- The main modifications did not change the overall direction of the plan, but there had been changes and updates to the plan’s supporting Habitat Regulations and Sustainability Appraisal documentation, resulting from the main modifications; these were provided through addendums attached as appendices 4 and 5 to the report. These documents would be consulted on through the second public consultation, and the representations made would be passed to the external consultants for consideration.
- The two public consultations would take place between Friday 29 October 2023, to Monday 13 November 2023, with the representations made being passed to the Inspector for consideration.

The primary themes and a summary of the main modifications, as contained in the report, were outlined. The consultation process would comply with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement, with supporting information to the consultation summarised.

In response to comments from the Visiting Member, the Cabinet Member gave assurances that future policies, such as the Design and Sustainability Development Plan Document and the Town Centre Strategy, would be used to strengthen the Council's existing policies and Local Plan Review. The Strategic Planning Manager outlined the requirement for Supplementary Planning Documents to be produced for key development locations within the plan, such as Lidsing and Heathlands Garden Communities.

During the discussion, the importance of infrastructure delivery to support housing development across the plan was strongly reiterated, to prevent situations where the non-delivery of infrastructure lead to heavily congested areas; such as on Willington Street, the Sutton Road and potentially the proposed Lidsing Garden Community.

In response to a question, the Strategic Planning Manager confirmed that the Inspector's main modifications could not be changed at this point, but that the consultation would provide an opportunity for comments to be made. The hierarchy in relation to affordable housing provision was outlined.

The Committee expressed support for consulting on the Inspector's main modifications, as this would provide an opportunity for individuals and neighbouring authorities to comment on the proposals, which would then be considered at a later date. Support was expressed for the plan's progression, in order to retain control over the development within the borough and prevent development by appeal.

RESOLVED to RECOMMEND to CABINET:

1. That the schedule of proposed Main Modifications to the Maidstone Local Plan Review, in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 of the report, be approved for public consultation, and;
2. That the Sustainability Appraisal and Habitat Regulations Assessment Addendums of the Main Modifications to the Maidstone Local Plan Review, in Appendix 4 and Appendix 5 of the report, be approved for public consultation.

57. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.20 p.m.