

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20 SEPTEMBER 2023

Attendees:

Cabinet Members:	Councillors Burton (Chairman), Garten, Parfitt-Reid, Perry, Russell
Visiting Members:	Councillors English and S Thompson

26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Cooper.

27. URGENT ITEMS

The Chairman stated that there was an urgent update to Item 11 – Matters Referred to the Cabinet for Reconsideration – Reference from Overview and Scrutiny Committee – CIL Strategic Assessment & Spend Decision, Following Call-In and Item 21 – Maidstone Local Plan Review: Proposed Main Modifications and Minor Changes to allow for full consideration of the items.

28. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

Councillor English and S Thompson were present for Item 17 – Response to the Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Recommended actions arising from the review into the Water Management Cycle.

Councillor English was also present for:

- Item 8 – Presentation of Petition – River Len – “We call upon Maidstone Borough Council to initiate, launch, lead and to provide the Secretariat for a River Len Stakeholder Task Force.”
- Item 11 – Matters Referred to the Cabinet for Reconsideration – Reference from Overview and Scrutiny Committee – CIL Strategic Assessment & Spend Decision, following Call-In.
- Item 21 – Maidstone Local Plan Review: Proposed Main Modifications and Minor Changes.

29. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS OR OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Member or Officers.

30. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

Councillors Burton and Parfitt-Reid stated that they had been lobbied on Item 11 – Matters Referred to the Cabinet for Reconsideration – Reference from Overview

and Scrutiny Committee – CIL Strategic Assessment & Spend Decision, following Call-In.

31. EXEMPT ITEMS

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

32. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 JULY 2023

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 26 July 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed, subject to

- The removal of a repeated word “them” on paragraph 3 in Item 12 – Report of the Water Management Cycle Working Group (Overview and Scrutiny) – Water Management Cycle.
- The inclusion of the word “no” in the resolution of Item 14 - Matters referred to the Executive by another Committee - Reference from Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee - Notice of motion Town Centre Strategy, to read: “That no action be taken on the motion.”

33. PRESENTATION OF PETITION - RIVER LEN - "WE CALL UPON MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL TO INITIATE, LAUNCH, LEAD AND TO PROVIDE THE SECRETARIAT FOR A RIVER LEN STAKEHOLDER TASK FORCE"

Councillor English presented the petition in the following terms:

"We call upon Maidstone Borough Council to initiate, launch, lead and to provide the Secretariat for a River Len Stakeholder Task Force"

In presenting the petition Councillor English stated that:

- The condition and rights of rivers had been discussed at the Full Council meeting on 19 July 2023 and that there was public concern about the condition of the River Len and that action should be taken.
- A Stakeholder Task Force model had been implemented by other authorities in combating river conditions.
- The Council’s Overview and Scrutiny working group on the Water Management Cycle had recommended a stakeholder task force.

The Leader of the Council stated that the Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee had debated this issue and that a report had been requested to Cabinet. The item would be addressed when the Cabinet had received the report requested by the Housing, Health and Environment Policy Advisory Committee.

34. QUESTIONS FROM LOCAL RESIDENTS TO THE LEADER OR INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER

There were none.

35. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE LEADER OR INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER

There were none.

36. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CABINET FOR RECONSIDERATION - REFERENCE FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – CIL STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT & SPEND DECISION, FOLLOWING CALL-IN.

RESOLVED: That

1. Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding that has been collected is allocated (as minima) to the following strategic projects for the period to 31 March 2025:
 - M20 Junction 7 Upgrade - £1,836,729 in Strategic CIL monies, subject to appropriate due diligence by the Director of Finance, Resources & Business Improvement in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services
 - Heather House Community Centre Redevelopment - £956,420
 - St Faith's Community Centre Redevelopment - £300,000; and
2. A report evaluating the CIL process, including the proposed prospectus for the next round of funding, be added to the Forward Plan for a Cabinet meeting by January 2024.

(See Record of Decision)

37. ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

There were none.

38. MATTERS REFERRED TO THE EXECUTIVE BY ANOTHER COMMITTEE

There were none.

39. ANY MATTER RELATING TO A SERIOUS SERVICE FAILURE OR NUISANCE

There were none.

40. RECEIPT OF WRITTEN REPRESENTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

There were none.

41. CABINET FORWARD PLAN

It was stated that an additional Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development Policy Advisory Committee would likely be required on Monday 23 October 2023 to accommodate the timescale for the Town Centre Strategy consultation and that a report evaluating the CIL process would be added to the Forward Plan for a Cabinet meeting by January 2024.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

42. RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - RECOMMENDED ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE REVIEW INTO THE WATER MANAGEMENT CYCLE

RESOLVED: To be deferred to the Cabinet meeting on Wednesday 25 October 2023 to enable the Cabinet Member for Planning, Infrastructure and Economic Development to be in attendance.

43. 1ST QUARTER FINANCE, PERFORMANCE AND RISK MONITORING REPORT

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Services introduced the report and stated that:

- There was an adverse variance overspend of around £440,000, largely due to temporary accommodation and a reduction in rental income from Maidstone House.
- Projected adverse variance across the financial year was estimated to reduce to £274,000 due to increase in investment income and reduction in the maximum revenue provision.
- Two permanent virements had occurred between the Marden Caravan Site to the Traveller Site Manager and between the Homeless Prevention and Temporary Accommodation Reserve to the Housing Inclusion account.
- Key Performance Indicator targets under Corporate Services portfolio were met, but not all targets in other services were met.
- Reserves remain strong with £90.8 million in specific allocated reserves and £11.6 million in general reserves.

The Cabinet emphasised the risk in temporary accommodation and that the cost of living crisis was continuing but that inflation rates may not increase which would benefit residents. Concerns were also raised regarding the drop in rental income from Maidstone House and a projected overspend at Lockmeadow.

In response to concerns on temporary accommodation, the Director of Regeneration and Place stated that the Council had a portfolio of over 100 homes for temporary accommodation, that another 60 would be added in the next two years, and that he was exploring a leasing scheme for landlords that could be used for temporary accommodation.

In response to questions regarding Maidstone House, the Director of Finance, Resources and Business Improvement stated that plans to let out the vacant floors in Maidstone House had taken longer than anticipated but prospective tenants were ready to move into the second floor of the building. It was also stated that the charge for tenants at Lockmeadow included utilities which was appropriate for small businesses but that as utility costs had increased the Council had spent more on Lockmeadow than expected.

RESOLVED: That the Cabinet note:

1. The Revenue position as at the end of Quarter 1 for 2023/24, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant variances have been identified;
2. That the Capital position at the end of Quarter 1 for 2023/24;

3. The Performance position as at Quarter 1 for 2023/24, including the actions being taken or proposed to improve the position, where significant issues have been identified;
4. The Recovery & Renewal Update, attached at Appendix 3 to the report;
5. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund update, attached at Appendix 4 to the report;
6. The Risk Update, attached at Appendix 5 to the report.

44. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2024 - 2029 AND BUDGET PROPOSALS

RESOLVED:

1. That the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2024/25 to 2028/29 set out in Appendix A of the report be approved.
2. That the budget proposals set out in Appendix B and C of the report be approved.
3. To request for further detail on the growth items.

(See Record of Decision)

45. WASTE CRIME FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

RESOLVED: That

1. Option 4 of the report, namely the two-tiered Fixed Penalty Notice charges with early payment discounts for level 1 littering and fly tipping, be agreed;
2. The Waste Crime Fixed Penalty Notice Policy included in Appendix A of the report be agreed.

(See Record of Decision)

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

RESOLVED: That

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

(See Record of Decision)

47. DURATION OF MEETING

6:30 p.m. to 7:43 p.m.