

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

COMMUNITIES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 12 DECEMBER 2017

Present: Councillors Barned (Chairman), M Burton, Garten, Joy, D Mortimer, Perry, Mrs Ring and Mrs Robertson

73. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

It was noted that apologies had been received from Councillors Webb and Webster.

74. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Perry was substituting for Councillor Webster.

75. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

76. NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

77. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members and Officers.

78. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

79. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That the items on Part II of the agenda should be taken in private, as proposed, due to the likely disclosure of exempt information.

80. MINUTES (PART I) OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 NOVEMBER 2017

RESOLVED: That the Minutes (Part I) of the meeting held on 14 November 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed.

81. PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

82. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

83. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Committee Work Programme.

Councillor D Mortimer asked for an item to be put on the Committee Work Programme which related to changing places. It was requested that this be incorporated into the community toilets update report which would be coming back in March 2018.

The Chairman advised that there would be a Crime and Disorder Committee meeting on 13 February 2018 and the March meeting would be postponed until July. It was further proposed that the Police Crime Commissioner would be invited along to the meeting in September.

The Committee also noted that a report would come back in March on Heather House providing an update.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) The changes to the Committee Work Programme be noted;
- 2) That the Chairman and Vice-Chairman meet to discuss how to take forward the changing places issue;
- 3) A site visit be arranged for Committee Members to visit Heather House before the report comes back in March.

84. NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR ENGLAND 2017

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Environment and Public Realm which related to a Litter Strategy for England 2017.

It was noted that in April 2017 the Government launched a new Litter Strategy for England with an ambition to be "the first generation to leave the natural environment of England in a better state than it found it".

The report detailed the further information that had been received from the Government which set out three key areas of focus which were:

- Clear and consistent anti-litter message
- Improve enforcement against offenders
- Cleaning up the Country

The Officer detailed the ways in which the Council was already working to these initiatives.

The Committee noted that the Strategy highlighted an area where the Council had had difficulty tackling before which was litter being thrown

from vehicles, where enforcement had been difficult unless a clear description could be given of the offender. Legislation had been proposed which would enable local authorities to take enforcement action against the registered keeper of vehicles from which litter was proven to originate. The guidance is expected to come forward in January/February 2018.

In October 2017 the Government announced new steps to be introduced for littering following completion of the public consultation.

The announcement included that from April 2018 the maximum on the spot fine local authorities could issue for dropping litter would nearly double from £80 to £150. The minimum fine would increase from £50 to £65, whilst the default fine would increase from £75 to £100.

It was also noted that for the first time, local authorities outside of London would also be able to apply these penalties for littering to vehicle owners if it could be proved litter was thrown from the car, even if it was discarded by someone else.

The Head of Environment and Public Realm also drew Members' attention to the available options as set out in the report which were to:-

Option 1 – note the actions proposed by Government in the Litter Strategy for England but take no specific action to change the approach to engagement or enforcement in Maidstone and to leave the FPN at £80.

Option 2 – to increase the value of the FPN to the maximum of £150 for littering, including from vehicles.

Option 3 – to increase the value of the FPN to £120 for littering, including from vehicles as a proportionate penalty and offer a reduced charge of £90 for early payment (within 14 days) of the FPN.

In response to questions from Members, the Head of Environment and Public Realm advised:-

- That the contract with Kingdom had been terminated and the Waste Crime Team were now carrying out the work. A recruitment process would be carried out in January 2018 to appoint two Enforcement Officers and this would be for an initial trial period of 18 months and that they would be employed directly by the Council and would receive no incentives or bonuses for the amount of fines issued.
- That the new Enforcement Officers would not just be working in the town centre, they would carry out enforcement action across the Borough.
- An anti-littering sculpture would be put up to encourage people not to litter. This was a new initiative instead of putting up signs which people get used to and ignore.

- That Officers were continuing to work with local takeaways to minimise the amount of litter on the streets and great successes have already been had with companies such as McDonalds who sweep up their own area outside the restaurant to keep it litter free.
- It would not be a good idea for incentives to be given to those providing footage from their dashcams of litter being thrown from cars
- That Officers would investigate reports of the refuse vehicles leaving behind rubbish as they should return to pick it up.

RESOLVED:

1. That the national actions for the Litter Strategy for England 2017 be noted and that the continuation of local actions as set in Appendix A to the report be supported.
2. That the current Fixed Penalty Notice be increased from £80 to £120.
3. That the offer of a reduced charge of £90 for the early payment (within 14 days) of a Fixed Penalty Notice for Littering be agreed.

Voting: For: unanimous

85. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

RESOLVED: That the press and the public be excluded from the meeting due to the possible disclosure of exempt information.

86. MINUTES (PART II) OF THE MEETING HELD ON 14 NOVEMBER 2017

RESOLVED: That the Minutes (Part II) of the meeting held on 14 November 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed.

87. TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY REVIEW

The Committee considered the exempt report of the Head of Housing and Community Services which related to a review of the Temporary Accommodation Strategy.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee continues to support the recommendations and objectives set out in the Temporary Accommodation Strategy originally submitted to the Committee in December 2016.
2. That the Committee adopts Option B as set out in paragraphs 3.3 – 3.6 (inclusive) to further assist the Housing Service in changing the type and making a reduction in the amount of temporary

accommodation it uses.

Voting: For: unanimous

88. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.