

KENT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

Minutes of the Meeting of the Maidstone Area Committee of the Kent Association of Local Councils held via Zoom Conference at 7pm on Monday, 26 July 2021.

Present: Councillors: Geraldine Brown (Chairman) Yalding, Peter Coulling (Vice Chairman) Teston, Helen Anderson (Secretary), Richard Ash Bearsted, Leon Date Boughton Monchelsea, Ivor Davies Boxley, Tina Clark Broomfield & Kingswood, Chris Webb Chart Sutton, Jack Highwood Collier Street, John Clayton Detling, John Wilson East Farleigh, Frederick Stanley Harrietsham, Nigel Pyman Headcorn, Carole Wright Langley, Bob China Leeds, Velma Bennett Loose, Kate Tippen Marden, Kinga Stallwood Otham, Eve Poulter Sutton Valence, Chris Douglass Teston, Tony Hemsted Tovil, Matt Lingwood Ulcombe and Dee Ann Stead Yalding. Peter Titchener (Audit, Governance & Standards Committee Rep).

Guests: MBC: David Burton, Jonathan Purle, John Perry

1. **Apologies for absence.** Councillors: Paddy Riordan Staplehurst and Martin Moy West Farleigh.
2. **Chairman's Welcome.** Cllr Brown introduced Cllr David Burton, the new Leader of Maidstone Borough Council and Cllr Jonathan Purle, Deputy Leader of Maidstone Borough Council to the meeting.
3. **Minutes.** The minutes of the 24 May 2021 meeting were taken as read, confirmed as a correct record. These will be signed at the next available meeting held in person.
4. **Matters arising from previous minutes.** No items were raised.
5. **Executive Committee** - The draft minutes of the Executive Committee held on 17 July 2021 will be circulated to members upon receipt.
6. **Standing Orders for Maidstone KALC.** These have been distributed to members of the committee prior to the meeting. It was agreed that they remain current and fit for purpose.
7. **Police.** Cllr Brown welcomed Inspector Steve Kent of the Maidstone Community Safety Unit who addressed the following items:-

7.1 Redeployment of PCSO's Following an internal review of the role/performance of PCSO's, it was felt that in order to achieve a better service to the community, a re-jig of PCSO deployments was required across the Borough. A 6-8 week transition period is now being undertaken with the existing and new PCSO's to ensure that knowledge transfer is being imparted where possible.

7.2 Ward Cluster Meetings with CSU Each parish has been placed in a cluster and is given the opportunity to attend two cluster meetings per year to discuss their three main areas of concern, an action plan is then drawn up to address these where possible and will be reviewed at the next 6 monthly meeting. It was noted that following lobbying from KALC Maidstone, one representative from each Parish Council will now be able to attend all future meetings having previously been excluded.

8. Maidstone Borough Council Matters

8.1 Parish Charter – It was noted that this had not been reviewed for a period of time and a few tweaks are now required. Cllr Brown and Cllr Coulling agreed to draft an update which would be circulated to members for comment.

8.2 Parish Services Scheme – It was agreed at the last Parish Liaison meeting, that the scheme would seek to follow in line with the percentage increase in Council Tax.

8.3 Rural Affordable Housing Survey – A brief history on rural affordable housing schemes was given to members in order to contextualise the survey now being carried out by Maidstone Borough Council. Parishes are reminded that the deadline to submit a response is the 15 August.

8.4 Model Code of Conduct – It was noted that no further news has been received following a consultation for revisions to be made. Cllr Coulling and Cllr Titchener are to raise this at the next meeting of the MBC Audit, Governance and Standards Committee.

8.5 Local Plan Review

8.5.1 Regulation 19 Consultation – Cllr Burton gave a short update. It is noted that a public consultation will be launched in the Autumn of 2021 leading to examination in October 2022 with adoption in January 2023.

8.5.2 Report from the Coordinating Team - Cllr Coulling gave a short report and praised the ongoing help and engagement by MBC with neighbouring Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council who are in the process of compiling their own local plan. It was also noted that a further letter is to be sent shortly by the coordinating team to the leader of MBC to highlight a few areas of concern. Cllr Burton said that he would look forward to receiving this and duly invited Cllr Coulling to a face-to-face meeting to discuss the issues raised further.

8.6 Boundary Review – This issue is still ongoing.

8.7 Committee or Cabinet – Cllr Burton noted that a decision is to be taken by the Full Council to revert to being Cabinet led rather than by a committee system from May 2022.

8.8 Any Other MBC Matters – It was noted that the enforcement department retains a very high case load and inevitably there is a delay in progressing issues that have been raised. Councils are reminded that this should be kept in mind before contacting the department.

- 9. Biodiversity and Climate Change** – As this issue is such a crucial topic in today's world, Parish Councils are now being encouraged to include this as a regular item on their agendas. This is to help raise awareness when considering items and therefore enabling Councils to make proactive decisions.
- 10. Covid-19 Update** - Rates continue to be monitored across the Borough. Good practices such as the use of face masks, handwashing, good ventilation and social distancing should still be encouraged when meeting in indoor spaces. Pop up vaccination clinics are available in the Borough for members of the public to visit without appointment.
- 11. Report of the River Medway (Flood Relief) Act 1976 Public Inquiry** – A decision remains pending.
- 12. Date of Next Meetings** – Monday, 27 September 2021 at the Town Hall, Maidstone (subject to any Government restrictions). Monday 29 November will be via Zoom and 31 January 2022 with MBC in attendance will also be held via Zoom.

If there are any items that you wish to be included on an agenda, then please email maidstonekalc@gmail.com.

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13. Any Other Business – No issues were raised.

Meeting Closed at 8.50pm

Helen Anderson
Secretary KALC Maidstone Area Committee