

Staplehurst Parish Council - Report

Committee, Group or Sub Group

Maidstone Borough Council – Cabinet Meeting

Meeting Date & Venue

13th June 2012 – 6.30 pm at Town Hall

Report Author - **John Kelly**

Cllr Joan Buller and I attended this Cabinet Meeting with specific reference to Agenda Item 9 on Neighbourhood Planning.

Interestingly the agenda item was brought to the fore and presented by Rob Jarman, MBC who made the following comments:-

- Communities did not have to go down the neighbourhood plan route. A neighbourhood Plan was only part of Localism.
- A quality Village Design Statement would be more than appropriate.
- Highlighted the fact that Coxheath and Harrietsham had designated areas.
- MBC stated 12/13 communities were likely to come forward re Neighbourhood Plans
- The expectation was that the detail would be good and he was not surprised that Parish Councils had expressed interest.
- Expressed concern over non-parished areas.
- Neighbourhood Plans were normally galvanised around a particular issue/project.
- £40,000 budget was a minimal figure and questions would arise as to how it would be disposed.
- Concern expressed over resources.
- CPRE may offer some support and advice.
- Indicated a need to hold a Seminar for Non-parished areas re Neighbourhood Plans

In relation to resources, Cllr Garland stated that the Core Strategy had to come first and that '*we must not become free experts*'. This clearly implied (in my opinion) that resources would be focused on the Core Strategy first rather than the NP process and resulting referendums.

Under a later item the Parkwood Neighbourhood Action Plan was highlighted as a model to follow and local residents were willing to share their experiences. A particular emphasis had been placed on children.

Under another item on Spatial Planning, Cllr Paine stated that some members felt they had little influence over the Core Strategy.

All the council planning staff attending the meeting left fairly quickly and there was no opportunity for either Cllr Buller or myself to engage with them.

NB. We are still waiting detained responses from MBC regarding the Neighbourhood Plan application process.