

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK ADVISORY GROUP

Minutes of the meeting of the Local Development Framework Advisory Group held on
12 March 2012 commencing at 5.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Mrs. Davison (Chairman)

Cllrs. Mrs. Cook, Davison, Fittock and Walshe

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Bosley, Mrs. Dawson,
Mr. Czarnowski and Cllr. Parry

Mr. Alan Dyer (Planning Services Manager), Mrs. Hannah Gooden
(Acting Planning Policy Team Leader), Mr. David Lagzdins (Democratic
Services Officer).

23. Welcome

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

24. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Local Development
Framework Advisory Group held on 12 March 2012 be approved and signed
by the Chairman as a correct record.

25. Declarations of Interest

Cllr. Mrs. Cook declared a personal and prejudicial interest in minute item 27 as it
related to the Land to the rear of Garden Cottages, Leigh as the access route would
affect her home address.

Cllr. Fittock declared a personal interest in minute item 27 as it related to the Swanley
Town Centre Regeneration area, as a trustee of Swanley Town Centre Recreation
Ground.

26. Matters Arising including actions from last meeting

The completed action was noted.

27. Allocations and Development Management Development Plan Document

The Planning Services Manager reminded the Group that the draft Allocations and
Development Management Development Plan Document (ADM DPD) was an initial
proposal in advance of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) being
finalised. The Chairman had recently been informed by a senior civil servant from the
Department for Communities and Local Government that the NPPF was due to be
finalised at the end of March 2012.

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The acting Planning Policy Team Leader gave a presentation on the DPD. Although during consultation the Site Allocations, Development Management Policies and Open Space Allocations were treated individually they were now merged into a single document to improve clarity and efficiency.

Site Allocations

Since the 2010 version of the document was sent for consultation there had been some revisions. 5 areas had since received planning permission or been built out. A further 3 sites were no longer to be included, though together these accounted for only 20 units. On several sites the number of units had altered and the most significant of these was United House, Godsel Road. At United House the number of units had increased from 116 to 250 as there had been a boundary change. The site was to be purely residential and the owner had shown how noise problems could be overcome.

The total number of allocated units was 3,604 which was still in line with the Core Strategy.

Land use different from the first consultation was proposed at 9 sites including the West Kingsdown Industrial Estate, which was now considered to be functioning well as an employment site. One new site had been identified at Bovis Manor House, New Ash Green as Bovis planned to relocate and it was considered that the site could be suitable for allocation for residential development. A further, supplementary consultation was proposed to run for 6 weeks between April and May 2012.

A Member asked whether it was possible to provide more 3 and 4 bedroom houses in the Land Rear of Garden Cottages, Leigh to suit the needs of local families. The Officer clarified that in the development guidance "detached" should replace "attached".

The Member added that she was surprised at the proposed change in use for the Glaxo Smith Kline, Powder Mills, Leigh site. She thought a greater opportunity should be given for businesses to fill the site and believed enterprise units would be popular. There was already too much pressure on schools and at Hildenborough station from the number of residents in the area. Residential development would treble the size of the hamlet. Officers stated that the site formed part of the consultation but independent research had shown it was not as viable for business as other sites due to its location, poor access and lack of prominence. Any residential allocation would be within the footprint of the existing site. Officers would consider the representations made to them. On the advice of the Kent Highways Service it was proposed, subject to consultation, that the road to the west of the site be a dry access route when flooding occurred and could be a separate access for the commercial part of the site.

Officers were asked whether the Station Approach, Edenbridge site was appropriate for mixed use allocation, especially as significant regrading of the land might be needed. Network Rail no longer required the land and it was common to look at such previously-developed land. There would be no net loss of employment space from this allocation as the part of the site proposed for residential allocation was empty.

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Another Member was concerned at the 50% increase in proposed allocation at the Bus Garage and Kingdom Hall, London Road, Swanley as there were already traffic concerns at the centre of town. He was also concerned that in the past development on the Broom Hill, Swanley site had been limited by the mixed ownership of the land at its entrance. Officers believed the Broom Hill site was now deliverable as all the owners had been contacted and were keen for the site to be developed.

In response to a question, the Planning Services Manager clarified that the Land East of High Street, Sevenoaks had been identified as a possible site for mixed use in the long term, particularly towards the end of the Core Strategy period in 2026. He added that a decision on this land may be affected by the decision on the Land to the West of Bligh's Meadow, Sevenoaks. The Member was concerned about the impact development of this site would have on parking.

Development Management Policies

The acting Planning Policy Team Leader confirmed that the draft policy now retained a limitation of extensions and replacement dwellings in the Green Belt based on floorspace rather than volume. This was because it was found to be time-consuming and impractical to calculate volume accurately. The limit would be placed at a 50% increase as the proposed 30% was considered as too restrictive by those who responded to the consultation.

Officers were asked whether the increase would cover all floorspace or only habitable floorspace. It covered all floorspace, though policies now covered roofs and basements. Officers were concerned that inserting "habitable" into the policy could create a loophole. They agreed to consider the matter further

Action: The Planning Services Manager to consider the impact of limiting the restrictions found in Policies H4 and H5 to 50% of "habitable" floorspace.

There were exceptional circumstances for the Council to propose an adjustment in the Green Belt boundary at Warren Court Farm, Halstead. It was previously identified for employment allocation but this had been reconsidered given its level of built development, its location close to the village, that it was rated a low quality commercial site and that it was the only allocated employment site in the Green Belt. It was proposed for reallocation for residential development.

The draft NPPF had proposed that replacement dwellings would be acceptable in the Green Belt so long as they were no larger than before, regardless of their use. The Planning Services Manager had been concerned by this proposal and hoped it would be amended in the final version.

A Member suggested that draft Policy LC6 (Out of Centre Retail) could be amended to ensure it protected both villages and neighbourhoods. Officers agreed to consider this further.

Action: The Planning Policy Manager to consider protecting both villages and neighbourhoods in Policy LC6.

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Open Spaces Allocations

38 responses had been received to the consultation on Open Spaces Allocations, mostly requesting protection for sites. Although sites would need to be greater than 0.2ha in size to be protected, parish councils could protect smaller sites through local plans. Local communities could also add village greens to the list in order to provide them with a greater level of protection.

On 29 February 2012 Sevenoaks District Council held a forum to gauge local councils' interest in Neighbourhood Plans. Sevenoaks District Council was under an obligation to cooperate with the town and parish councils but the town and parish councils would need to take a lead to create Neighbourhood Plans. A planning forum was established between the town and parish councils so they could share ideas between each other. The final legislative regulations for Neighbourhood Plans were expected soon and so Officers believed guidance would also soon be written.

The finalised NPPF was expected in April 2012. By July 2012 Officers expected to have made any necessary, resulting amendments so the DPD could be submitted to Members. Pre-submission publication was expected in September or October 2012 and it would then be submitted for independent examination. Officers would have a better understanding of whether the DPD would likely be found unsound after the publication of the finalised NPPF.

The Chairman was pleased with the continuing progress of the plan.

Resolved: That progress on the Allocations and Development Management DPD be noted and supported and the supplementary consultation on the new/amended site allocations be agreed.

The Planning Services Manager informed Members that the Local Development Framework and the Community Infrastructure Levy would be the next matters considered by the Group. By June it was also felt Officers would know what changes would be necessary to conform with the final NPPF.

Action: The Democratic Services Officer to organise the next meeting of the Group for June 2012.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 6.32 PM

CHAIRMAN