

PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 22 September 2016 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Mrs. Hunter (Chairman)

Cllr. Thornton (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Dr. Canet, Clark, Gaywood, McGregor, Mrs. Morris, Parson, Piper and Thornton

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Halford, Horwood and Scholey

Cllrs. Hogarth were also present.

19. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20 July 2016 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

20. Declarations of Interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

21. Actions from Previous Meetings

There were none.

22. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder advised that the consultation on the Swanley master plan vision had commenced that day. A lot of work was happening on the Local Plan etc which was evidenced in the reports on the agenda.

23. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

There were none.

24. Budget 2017/18: Service Dashboards and Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAS)

The Chief Finance Officer presented the report which set out updates to the 2017/18 budget within the existing framework of the 10-year budget and savings plan. The report also presented proposals that had been identified which needed to be considered, together with further suggestions made by the Advisory Committees, before finalising the budget for 2017/18.

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The major message of the report was that the Council was able to remain financially self-sufficient.

The budget agreed by Council in February included £100,000 of new savings or additional income per annum and the Advisory Committees were being asked to make suggestions to Cabinet that would achieve the £100,000 required for next year. Two Member Budget Training sessions had recently taken place with the intention of increasing, or refreshing, Members knowledge of the budget process and to enhance the discussions that would take place at this round of Advisory Committees.

The Chief Finance Officer reminded Members that over £6m had already been agreed to be saved between 2011/12 and 2017/18 made up of over 130 items and over £10m had been saved since 2005/06.

Members reviewed and discussed Appendix D which contained the growth and savings proposals put forward by the Portfolio Holder and Chief Officers, and the Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs) in Appendix E.

With regards to electronic only delivery of planning notifications to Town & Parish Councils (SCIA 2), Members were generally in favour of the proposal but expressed concern in relation to broadband issues and I.T equipment, and therefore thought it prudent to approach the town and parish clerks. Members expressed a desire to eventually move to 'standardised plans'.

Action 1: Officers consult with Town and Parish Councils on proposed electronic only delivery of planning notifications prior to Cabinet consideration, and present the results of the consultation to Cabinet. Wording of the consultation to be agreed with the Portfolio Holder.

Members also considered and gave their individual ideas for growth and savings items. The Chief Finance Officer summarised the suggestions put forward and Members considered whether there was anything they wanted taken forward as potential growth or savings suggestions. From the summaries Members discussed: more robust / better Planning Enforcement as a growth item; and as savings, increasing the amount of Building Control discretionary work undertaken and lobbying central government to allow fee increases.

The Chief Planning Officer advised that, with regards to enforcement, any growth suggestions had to be offset with savings. He suggested that this could be looked at within existing budgets and Members agreed to add it to the work plan.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that

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- a) the growth proposal identified in Appendix D applicable to the Advisory Committee (SCIA 1) be agreed;
- b) the savings proposals identified in Appendix D applicable to the Advisory Committee (SCIAs 2, 3, 4 & 5) be agreed subject to;
 - i) (SCIA 2 - distribution of planning applications to Town & Parish Councils) the consideration of the results of the Town & Parish Council consultation, there be a transitional period to allow Town and Parish Councils to adjust, for only plans to be sent in hard copy from 1 April 2017, and for complete electronic notification from 1 April 2018 (or sooner if individual local Councils prefer).
 - i) (SCIA 3 - Development Management Service review) the duty planner service not ceasing until satisfactory tools for self service are in place.
- c) there were no further suggestions for growth and savings from the Advisory Committee at this time.

25. Local Plan Update

The Planning Policy Team Leader provided an update on the project plan for the work needed to achieve an adopted Local Plan, including an update on the evidence base and the transition from the evidence gathering phase to the 'issues and options' consultation phase.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that the preparation and adoption of a Local Plan would directly impact on end users. The impacts would be analysed via an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) to be prepared alongside each key stage of plan making.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

26. Economic Needs Study

The Senior Planning Officer presented the report. The Economic Needs Study (ENS) was jointly commissioned by Sevenoaks District Council (SDC) and Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to form part of the evidence base of the emerging Local Plan. The ENS was a technical study which reviewed the current status of the District's economy and identified future employment opportunities. The study recommended an objectively assessment need (OAN) for commercial land up to 2035 of 11.6ha for Sevenoaks District this was not the Council's commercial land target. The ENS also included analysis of the existing employment sites/land and made recommendations as to how the Council could support continued economic growth within the District up to 2035 through the Local Plan policies as well as through joint working with the Economic Development Team.

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Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that the decisions recommended through the paper directly impacted on end users. The impacts would be analysed via an Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) to be prepared alongside each key stage of plan making.

Resolved: That the Economic Needs Study attached at Appendix A to the report, as part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan, be noted.

27. Retail Study

Members considered a report which highlighted the findings of the Retail Study, and the full study. The emerging Local Plan required a new evidence base that would support the formation of new local planning policy. The Council first commissioned a Retail Study in 2007, and published an update in 2009. The Council had commissioned a new Retail Study for 2016, to understand the current position of town/neighbourhood centres, and how town/neighbourhood centres would evolve over the course of the new Plan period (up to 2035).

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That the Retail Study be noted as part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan.

VOTE OF THANKS

Members showed their appreciation for all the Planning Policy Team's work.

28. Work Plan

The work plan was noted. It was discussed that the additional meeting could be used as an overflow meeting rather than having work scheduled. Possible additional items considered were revisiting red performance indicators on appeals, and the process for determining conservation areas.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 9.28 PM

CHAIRMAN