

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK ADVISORY GROUP

Notes of a meeting of the Local Development Framework Advisory Group held on 6 April 2011 commencing at 5:30 p.m.

Present: Cllr. Mrs. Davison (Chairman)
Cllrs. Bruce, Mrs. Cook and Williamson.
Cllr. Davison was also present.
Cllr. Parry (KAPC Representative)
Mr Frank Czamowski (Chief Executive of West Kent Housing)
Mr. Steve Craddock (Senior Planning Officer), Mr. Alan Dyer (Planning Policy Manager) and Mr. David Lagzdins (Democratic Services Officer).

25. WELCOME (Item No. 1)

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Item No. 2)

Apologies had been received from Cllrs. Bosley and Walshe.

27. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE GROUP – 16 FEBRUARY 2011 (Item No. 3)

A Member asked whether Officers had more information about the costs of Neighbourhood Plans. The Planning Policy Manager said he did not but one new suggestion was that businesses may be allowed to produce Neighbourhood Plans. A Member informed the Group that the Electoral and Land Charges Manager had reported the cost of district-wide referenda as £50,000 each.

Resolved: That the minutes of the Group (23.08.10) be approved as a correct record.

28. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Item No. 4)

None

29. UPDATE TO THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (Report No. 5)

The Planning Policy Manager reminded Members that the Council must still produce the Local Development Scheme and submit it to the Secretary of State for approval. It had not been updated since 2008, though a draft was produced and taken to the LDF Advisory Group in 2010. He thought it was the appropriate time to update the Local Development Scheme because the Core Strategy had been agreed.

The Allocations and Development Management documents had been combined to save expense on examinations and on publication. It was important the Community

Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule was approved before April 2014 when restrictions were to be put on the use of pooled contributions from s.106 agreements.

A Member questioned whether pre-control risk likelihood for the Council having insufficient financial resources to complete the Local Development Framework (LDF) should be so high. The Planning Policy Manager believed the LDF involved considerable expense but the Council had put in many controls such as a specific budget and the efforts at making savings. The Member clarified that the Council would still have the resources, even if it had not been budgeted sufficiently.

Asked whether Parish Councils had shown much interest in Parish Plans and Village Design Statements, the Planning Policy Manager stated that he had given a presentation to them soon after the Core Strategy was presented. Their focus was updating existing documents rather than creating new ones. It did not matter who drew up the Plans and Statements but he recommended that the District Council not approve such documents without a Parish Council's approval. He asked that Parishes involve the District Council in the drafting process so that the chance of conflicting policies was reduced.

Resolved: That the Local Development Framework Advisory Group support the proposed revisions to the Local Development Scheme.

30. ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PLANNING DOCUMENT (Item No. 6)

The Planning Policy Manager clarified that the Item permitted the Council to begin consultation on the Development Management matters raised in the document. The Development Management document aimed to manage and control new development in line with the Core Strategy, replacing the remaining policies of the Saved Local Plan. Consultation for Allocations had already taken place. The Allocations and Development Management elements would be combined into a single Development Plan Document (DPD) once the consultation was over. He expected the DPD to be ready by the end of the year.

The Group went through the document and Members raised questions about particular matters. Members were also handed a Schedule of Amendments made since the Agenda was published.

Policy SC1 – Sustainable Development

A Member questioned whether it was the right place to refer to “contribution to the District's economy”. It was so important it could have its own policy. The Planning Policy Manager believed it an important part of sustainable development but he was open to restructuring the document. He added that this would not compromise the Green Belt Policies which remained.

Members were also concerned that references to Village Design Statements were only in the text and not the policy itself. They thought it should be added to the reference to compatibility with the location, as well as the references already made to it in the Core Strategy. The Planning Policy Manager agreed to consider amending the wording.

Policy ECC1 – Outdoor Lighting

A Member asked what affect this would have on villages' considerations on the use of outdoor street lighting. The Planning Policy Manager clarified that the principle of having it or not should be kept outside the document.

Policy HA2 – Heritage Assets

The Planning Policy Manager denied that this would make it prohibitive to save older buildings with modern techniques so long as a need is demonstrated. He did not want to make the option of demolishing the buildings too easy.

4. The Green Belt

The Chairman brought the Group's attention to the note about Minor Green Belt Boundary Amendments. She felt it important that PPG2 stated Green Belt boundaries should not alter just because land becomes derelict.

Members were told that the limits on rebuilding did not affect Major Developed Sites.

Policy H2 – Limited Extensions or Outbuildings to Existing Dwellings in the Green Belt

The Planning Policy Manager believed the change in limits for extensions, from 50% of floor-space to 30% of volume was slightly more strict. A Member, not on the Group but who sits on the Development Control Committee, believed this was a good idea. For example, applications were often unclear about whether roof-space would be used.

Officers were asked whether a different rule could apply to smaller properties, because they have a smaller impact on the environment. They accepted this could be added to the consultation but parties would have to consider what would be considered "small".

Policy T2 – Vehicle Parking

Members were concerned at the reliance on the Kent County Council (KCC) interim vehicle parking standards. The Planning Policy Manager informed them that any amendment would be unsustainable without Sevenoaks District Council researching its own standards, at a considerable effort.

Members believed the statement that over provision of parking would encourage an unsustainable car dominated culture was inaccurate. The Planning Policy Manager agreed to remove this clause.

Action: The Planning Policy Manager to remove the relevant clause from the document.

They were also concerned that the presence of public transport should not be reflected in lower parking provision. Not all journeys could be covered by public transport. The Planning Policy Manager emphasised that the policy did not set parking at nil where public transport existed. Members expressed support for

qualifying that this was only where developers could demonstrate no adverse impact from on-street parking, or that there may be “some relaxation” in parking provision in such cases.

The Planning Policy Manager accepted Members’ requests to write, with their support, to KCC for reform of parking standards.

Action: The Planning Policy Manager to write to KCC to request amendments to parking standards to prevent problems with on-street parking.

Policy LC1 – Sevenoaks Town Centre

A Member stated that local people felt it important that numbers were added to shops in Sevenoaks. Officers were unaware of any planning requirement which could make this compulsory.

Policy LT1 – Hotels and Tourist Accommodation

A Member asked whether developers could exploit the argument of diversification of the rural economy, in Core Strategy Policy LO8, to build in the Green Belt. He was reminded that LO8 stated that such development must be consistent with Green Belt and other policies.

In response to a question the Senior Planning Officer said large supermarkets did not meet the definition of a local shopping centre. However, it was proposed to ask for additional areas to be considered through the consultation.

Resolved: That:

- a) the Allocations and Development Management DPD Draft Policies for Consultation be agreed and published for consultation;
- b) the Portfolio Holder be authorised to agree minor presentational changes and detailed amendments prior to publication to assist the clarity of the document; and
- c) copies be made available for sale at a price to be agreed by the Portfolio Holder.

31. AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (Item No.7)

The Senior Planning Officer briefed Members with an outline of the document. A schedule of amendments was tabled. It was also clarified that the consultation process would be the same as for the DPD.

It was asked whether there was any protection from variations in land value when making calculations of off-site financial contributions for affordable housing. There was concern that developers exploit low property values to reduce any contributions

to pay. The Planning Policy Manager asked for suggestions but did not want to make the calculations any more complicated.

The Senior Planning Officer drew Members' attention to the Open Space and Swanley Community Fund aims, which he believed were the most significant proposals. Members attention was drawn to a proposed amendment that would allow the Council to develop the Community Fund scheme to other areas where there is an evidence-based need. They were also reminded that the Council faced difficulties requesting contributions for infrastructure not listed unless there was a sound justification for them. Otherwise the Council would be susceptible to be challenged at Planning Appeals. Officers clarified that the list of services considered by the SPD was drawn up after consultation with local service providers and interested parties, through the preparation of the Core Strategy.

Resolved: That:

- a) the drafts for consultation of the Affordable Housing and Developer Contributions SPDs be agreed and published for consultation for 8 weeks in May 2011;
- b) the Portfolio Holder be authorised to agree minor presentational changes and detailed amendments prior to publication to assist the clarity of the documents; and
- c) copies be made available for sale at a price to be agreed by the Portfolio Holder.

32. ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Item No. 8)

None

33. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING – 8 JUNE 2011 (Item No. 9)

The Planning Policy Manager informed the Group that, were Cabinet to approve the documents, he had no reports to take to a meeting on 8 June 2011 because it was the middle of the consultation period. The Group agreed that the next meeting should be in September 2011.

The Chairman thanked the Group for the individual expertise each of them brought over the years. She believed it had been a useful forum for debate and they had worked well together. The Group thanked her for her very effective Chairmanship.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7:40 P.M.

Chairman

