

LOCAL PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2013 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Mrs. Hunter (Chairman) (Chairman)

Cllr. Searles (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs. Bosley, Clark, Gaywood and Mrs. Morris

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Mrs. Purves, Mrs. Sargeant and Williamson

Cllrs. Brookbank and Ramsay were also present.

19. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 24 September 2013, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

20. Declarations of interest

No additional declarations of interest were made.

21. Actions from Previous Meeting

It was noted that a report had been placed on the agenda at item 11 in response to the action from the previous meeting .

22. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder for Local Planning and Environment advised that he was still holding regular meetings with the Chief Officers for Environmental & Operations Services; and Planning. Among many issues dealt with included that the CIL charging schedule had been found sound; the Allocations and Development Management Plan had had some minor modifications which had been signed off as a Portfolio Holder decision, such as updating the statistics to 2013 and document cross referencing with KCC. Water companies were now requesting a policy to do with adequate drainage and run off. He had also taken a decision on Christmas refuse collection timings; Dunbrik was operational now after the fire; a decision by the Secretary of State on the Sainsbury's application at Edenbridge was still awaited. He commented on the excellent planning tour arranged for Members and hoped there would be another one soon that more members of the Development Control Committee would attend.

The Chairman asked for the Committee's thanks to be conveyed to the team of officers who had worked on the CIL.

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In response to a question the Chief Planning Officer advised that the meeting in January would be asked to consider a report on the CIL Charging Schedule and separately in March the governance arrangements.

23. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee (if any)

There were none.

24. Climate Local Sevenoaks

The Housing Policy Manager advised Members on the background of Climate Local, which was a Local Government Association (LGA) initiative to drive, inspire and support local authority action on a changing climate. The initiative supported 'mitigation' measures (address the root causes by reducing greenhouse gas emissions) and 'adaptation' measures (lower the risks posed by the consequences of climatic changes). Climate Local superseded the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change, which had been previously adopted by the District Council. In response to this, Kent County Council (KCC) and its public sector partners, which included all Kent district/borough councils, Kent Police, Kent Fire and Rescue, and Kent and Medway NHS Trust, had jointly developed Climate Local Kent which was subsequently supported by the Kent Forum.

The report presented Members with two options:

- (i) Option A: Adopt District targets in line with *Climate Local Kent* (local targets and comparisons included at Appendix A to the report).

County targets had been scaled-down to district/borough level by assuming an equal proportion for each respective authority. Consideration was then given to the local population, housing stock types/numbers and condition, major infrastructure and business, planning restrictions and deprivation.

A reduction was subsequently applied to some targets to reflect limited scope for savings in the Sevenoaks District. This provided a more realistic set of commitments and targets to work towards at District level, whilst still demonstrating a local commitment to wider Kent outcomes; or

- (ii) Option B: Members work with Officers to develop a bespoke action plan with associated targets.

With Climate Local covering the whole remit of operations and services, input would be required from departments across the District Council (and other advisory boards, if a move away from generally agreed strategy).

It was proposed within the report to report back on key progress two-years from plan approval; however the Housing Policy Manger advised that this had now been agreed to be an annual report. The latest Community Plan also included a target to achieve at least 80% of targets and commitments contained within the proposed *Climate Local Sevenoaks* document. Quarterly reports against the Community Plan would allow Members to monitor related strategy more frequently.

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It was noted that as Council had now been moved, the report would be considered at the meeting on 17 December 2013 not 18 February 2014.

A Member was worried that the 'green deal' target may be unrealistic; the Housing Policy Manager replied that he was comfortable with that target and confident that it could be achieved.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet to recommend to Council, that *Climate Local Sevenoaks* Option A, be approved and adopted as District Council policy.

25. Pest Control Review Outcome

The Chief Officer Environmental & Operational Services, presented the report which advised that following the decision of the Social Affairs Select Committee on 26 March 2013 and confirmed by Cabinet to continue the pest control service, as existing, until 2014, maximising income by charges and additional commercial sector work, whilst remaining competitive, but accepting that the service would produce a net deficit on the trading accounts of an average of £12,000 per annum; and that a further review of the service be carried out in October 2013 to consider exposing the service to competitive tender. This report provided that further review as requested and reported that that the tender result would identify the most financially advantageous price of delivering the pest control service, and would compare the price submitted by the in-house service with prices offered by the private sector. This would inform Members of the cost of continuing to provide a pest control service.

A Member commented that it was a service the public expected from the Council though he understood that it was discretionary, if it could be provided at a cost that did not adversely impact on the Council's budget then he was keen to see it continue and agreed with the recommendations. Another Member was not happy that the Council was competing against the private sector and did not see what could be gained from going out to tender and that the services was making a loss, was discretionary and so should just be ceased a further Member supported this..

The Chief Officer Environmental & Operational Services replied that it was a public service and should not be judged on cost recovery basis, there was discretion to charge and maximise income. The services also currently offered a reduction in fees for those on means tested benefits. Going out to tender would help assess the situation and provide Members with all the relevant information they would need to make an informed decision. The results of the tender process, if agreed, would be brought back to Committee in July 2013. At the moment any loss was absorbed by the direct services trading account and did not affect the general fund. In response to a question concerning the officers' morale, he replied that they were aware of the threat of the service ceasing and highest praise to them they had continued to be flexible, and had reduced costs by working long hours without overtime and by taking the time off in lieu in the slower winter months along with their annual leave. He believed that if the service was compulsorily competitively tendered they would go for redundancy rather than a TUPE arrangement. However he believed that they would be confident of being the successful tender.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty and that a decision to cease delivery of the service or contracting out to a private company may have a detrimental affect on residents receiving means tested benefits as discounts currently offered may not be available. Steps that could be taken to mitigate this would be a requirement within the tender process to require the 'contractor' to provide a discount on pest control treatments to families on means tested benefits and provision for this subsidy within future council budgets as a growth item.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that the pest control service be exposed to competitive tender, for a three year contract and that the results of the tender be reported back to the Planning and Environment Advisory Committee for consideration.

26. 2014/15 Budget and Review of Service Plans

The Head of Finance advised that the purpose of the report was for the Committee to advise Cabinet on growth and savings ideas for the services within its terms of reference. Appendix C to the report contained a list of growth and savings ideas proposed by the Portfolio Holder and these together with any additional suggestions made by the Committee would be considered by Cabinet on 5 December 2013.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance & Resources addressed the Committee and asked whether glass kerb side recycling had been considered. He was advised that it had been looked at but was too cost prohibitive.

Resolved: That the the views on the growth and savings proposals identified by the Portfolio Holder, attached as Appendix C to the report, be agreed.

27. Weald Conservation Area Management Plan

Members considered a report which sought Members' support for a new Conservation Area at Sevenoaks Weald and the adoption of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan as a Supplementary Planning Document. The Chairman thanked the report authors for a very readable document.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that:

- a) a new Conservation Area be designated for Sevenoaks Weald; and
- b) the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan be adopted as Supplementary Planning Guidance.

28. Approval of Neighbourhood Plan Areas for Otford and Sevenoaks

Members considered a report which advised that Otford Parish and Sevenoaks Town Council had submitted proposed Neighbourhood Areas for consideration. The Otford area reflected the future boundary of Otford Parish, following boundary changes recommended by the 2012 Community Governance Review, which would take place in 2015. The proposed areas were appropriate in planning terms for the long term planning of the area and it was recommended that the proposed Neighbourhood Plan

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Areas should be designated and the Portfolio Holder's approval sought for the designation of Neighbourhood Plan Areas for Otford Parish and Sevenoaks Town, and that in accordance with the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (7) the following be published as soon as possible after designation:

- the name of the neighbourhood area,
- a map which identifies the area, and
- the name of the relevant body who applied for the designation

Resolved: That the the Portfolio Holder be advised to approve the designation of Neighbourhood Plan Areas for Otford Parish and Sevenoaks Town for the areas as set out in Appendices B and C to the report.

29. Potential New Conservation Areas

Members considered a report that arose from an action point from the last meeting. The report invited Members comments on the suggested approach to prioritisation of Conservation Area requests as set out in the report. The approach gave priority to those areas that were more likely to be under pressure for new development that could be harmful to their character. It set out the list of potential areas that had been put forward in recent years and suggested a possible approach to prioritisation. Members' discussed the report and were happy with the approach used.

Resolved: That the approach to prioritisation of Conservation Area requests set out in the report be noted.

30. Work Plan

The Committee considered a tabled [amended work plan](#), which was agreed subject to the last line being deleted as it referred to a report that was considered that night.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.44 PM

CHAIRMAN