

PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 13 October 2015 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Mrs. Hunter (Chairman)

Cllr. Thornton (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Dr. Canet, Clark, Halford, Horwood, McGregor, Mrs. Morris, Parson, Piper, Scholey and Thornton

An apology for absence was received from Cllr. Gaywood

Cllr. Searles was also present.

11. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 7 July 2015 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

12. Declarations of Interest

No additional declarations of interest were made.

13. Actions from Previous Meetings

The actions were noted. Members were reminded of the review of existing housing strategy/policy workshop taking place on on 1 December 2015 and encouraged to attend.

14. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder for Planning advised Members that:

- With reference to the Local Plan, also being considered later on the agenda, the call for sites had gone out but with only 7% as non-greenbelt finding suitable sites would be difficult. Members needed to understand how generous a target the district had, with the current target at 165 houses a year. The next lowest was Tunbridge Wells with 300, Maidstone 980 Dartford Borough Council 865 so have lowest requirement for housing in Kent. There needed to be more proactiveness in finding brownfield sites and persuading parishes to find more exception sites;
- He had met with West Kent Housing the previous week, with regards to their role within local plan. There were 720 families on the register up from 550 last year. He was trying to persuade them to be more aggressive in releasing some land;

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- there had been some recent success with s. 215 notices, and requested that Members keep a look out in their areas for potential places that could benefit;
- the new government definition of 'Gypsy and Travellers' requiring a 'nomadic lifestyle' in order to retain a place in the greenbelt, would mean it would be interesting when temporary consents came up for renewal as the meaning of this had yet to be tested. The Chief Planning Officer was to take a robust view and be tested by appeal.
- he was attending a meeting concerning Gatwick ~~at~~ with Kent County Council the following week;
- he had been invited to attend a meeting on A21 duelling pushing on to Matfield;
- planning applications were being turned around promptly. Majors were at 89% against the target of 90%, and minors were at 85% against the target of 80%. The Council had the busiest planning department in Kent with over 2000 applications per annum. Canterbury were the next highest with 1700. The Council also had the lowest granting rate at only 81%, against Ashford with 93% , yet 81% of appeals were being won.
- Recruitment was still being undertaken for a second conservation officer.

ACTION 1: Statistics on appeals to be circulated showing the sizes of the applications on the appeals lost.

*amendments in red made at meeting on 2/2/16

15. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

The response from the Economic & Community Development Advisory Committee was noted. The Chairman advised that she would contact members and set a date.

16. Budget 2016/17: Review of Service Dashboards and service Change Impact assessments (SCIAs)

The Chief Finance Officer advised that the report before the Committee was the second stage of the budget process and would be presented to all Advisory Committees. The first stage had been the 'Financial Prospects and Budget Strategy' report which had been reported to Cabinet on 17 September 2015. The purpose of this report was to ensure that all Members of the Advisory Committees had a role to play in the governance of the Council and the budget decision making process and to make suggestions to Cabinet on growth and savings ideas for the services within their terms of reference.

The main message was that this should be a significant step towards the Council becoming financially self-sufficient. The 10-year budget at Appendix F to the report, included no Revenue Support Grant (RSG) from 2016/17 and no New Homes Bonus (NHB) from 2019/20. In practice it was likely that some funding would still be received from these sources in the near future but the amounts were unknown. The Financial Prospects report had recommended that any amounts that were received were placed

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into the Financial Plan Reserve which could be used to support the 10-year budget by funding invest to save initiatives and support for the Property Investment Strategy (PIS). Using the funding for these purposes would result in additional year on year income that was not impacted by Government decisions.

Members had agreed the last 10-year budget in February and the changes that had been made since then included:

- Rolling the 10-year budget on for one year and updating base figures.
- Removing reliance on RSG
- Reducing the Council Tax increase assumption to 2% for all years
- Reducing fees and charges inflation to 2.5% for all years
- Reducing pay award inflation to 1% for 4 years
- Including income from PIS for the first time of £500k from 16/17, £700k from 18/19, £800k from 23/24
- Savings of £500k in 16/17 and then £100k pa for all future years

The current list of growth and savings proposals was £52,000 short of the £500,000 target (if all of the proposals were accepted), and Members were therefore being asked for further suggestions for growth and savings ideas. He further reminded Members that £5.3m had been saved from 2011/12 to 2016/17 (113 items) and there had been over £10m of savings since 2005/06.

Members reviewed Appendix D which contained the growth and savings proposals put forward by the Portfolio Holders and Chief Officers, and the Service Change Impact Assessments (SCIAs) in Appendix E. Members also considered and gave individual answers to the following five questions:

- a) What services should the Council invest more in?
- b) What services should the Council disinvest from?
- c) What services work well?
- d) What services don't work well?
- e) What issues would you like Cabinet to take into account?

The Chief Finance Officer summarised the views put forward and Members considered whether there was anything they wanted taken forward as potential growth or savings suggestions. From the summaries Members discussed the possibility of charging for householder pre-application advice but there was no definitive decision taken on whether this should be suggested but general consensus was that the ability to charge should at least be investigated. It was also noted that at some point in the future it may also be worth investigating the possibility of setting up a land registry company.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

Resolved: That

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- a) the savings proposal identified in Appendix D to the report applicable to the Advisory Committee (SCIA 19 – Planning Efficiency Review) be recommended to Cabinet;
- b) no further immediate suggestions for growth and savings be recommended to Cabinet;
- c) it be recommended to Cabinet to
 - i) investigate the possibility of charging for householder pre application advice; and
 - ii) bear in mind, consideration of the future possibility of setting up a rival land registry company.

17. Street Naming & Property Numbering Policy

The Chief Officer Environmental and Operational Services presented a report which advised that under the Towns Improvement Clauses Act 1847 and the Public Health Amendment Act 1925, the Council controlled the naming of streets and numbering of buildings in the Sevenoaks District. This was to ensure that any new street names and building names and numbers were allocated logically with a view to ensuring that emergency service vehicles were able to speedily locate addresses; aid the effective delivery of mail and enable property identification for the general public. The service had operated for a number of years within the requirements of the legislation and an internal policy. The report recommended that the Council formally adopt a policy.

In his presentation the Chief Officer Environmental and Operational Services, suggested some amendments which Members discussed. He suggested that paragraph 6.3 of the draft policy be amended by the deletion of any street name examples and the word 'aesthetically'. Paragraphs 5.4, 6.0, 6.3, 6.6 and 8.3 were debated. Members were keen to have the local parishes and district councillors involved as much as possible and other minor amendments discussed reflected this, along with more flexibility with the replacement of some words.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

The Chairman moved the recommendations along with the amendments discussed and it was

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet to adopt the Street Naming and Property Numbering Policy subject to the following:

- a) para. 5.4 being amended to read ' Within 7 working days following receipt of the developer's proposal the appropriate Parish/Town Council and local ward member(s) will be consulted. The period allowed for consultation shall be 28 working days from the date of the covering letter to the

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Parish/Town Councils and local ward member(s). The consultation period may be extended, if requested, to enable local council meetings to take place.’;

- b) para. 6.0 having the word ‘must’ replaced by ‘should’;
- c) para. 6.3 being amended to read ‘Street names should not be difficult to pronounce or awkward to spell. Names that may be considered unsuitable and names capable of misinterpretation should be avoided.’;
- d) para. 6.6 being amended to read ‘Street names may include the following words, but to comply with national standards *should* not end with them:...’; and
- e) para. 8.3, the last line being amended to read ‘In addition the Council will consult the Royal Mail and local Parish/Town Councils and ward member(s).’

18. Local Plan Work Programme

The Strategic Planning Manager presented a report which asked Members to consider the work programme for the preparation of the Local Plan. Further to the report he updated Members that the PAS facilitated presentation which was to be open to all members of the Council had a provisional date of Wednesday 2 December 2015. It was requested that once the details were finalised Members were given as much advance warning as possible.

Resolved: That the progress made on the work programme for preparation of the Local Plan, be noted.

19. Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

The Senior Planning Officer (Policy) presented a report which outlined the findings of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA). A first stage in the process of preparing a new Local Plan was to establish the up to date housing needs of the District. The consultant GL Hearn was procured jointly by Sevenoaks District and Tunbridge Wells Borough Councils to undertake the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), which was a key piece of evidence from which the Local Plan strategy will be developed. Based on the Government’s latest population and household projections the SHMA identified the objectively assessed housing need across the District. This was an unconstrained figure and not the District’s housing target. It also identified the need for different sizes and types of homes.

Members were reminded that there was to be a Member workshop to review the existing housing strategy/policy on Tuesday 1 December 2015 at 7.45pm.

Public Sector Equality Duty

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

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Resolved: That, subject to further clarity on when references to Swanley included a wider area, it be recommended to Cabinet that the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) be endorsed as a robust evidence base from which the Local Plan strategy would be developed.

20. Sevenoaks District Infrastructure Plan

Members considered a report which sought their support for the Sevenoaks District Infrastructure Plan as a “live” document. Following the adoption of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule in February 2014, the Council was currently updating the Infrastructure Plan which would be used as evidence for the new Local Plan and provide up to date information for elaborating the Council’s Regulation 123 List (adopted November 2014) which set out the infrastructure that could be funded through CIL receipts. A number of amendments were noted.

It was suggested that there should be a Member training session on completing the CIL forms, and the Chief Planning Officer suggested that a refresher course for CIL Board Members may also be required.

Resolved: That it be noted that the the Sevenoaks District Infrastructure Plan had Members’ support as a “live” document.

21. Sevenoaks Settlement Hierarchy 2015 - Update

The Sevenoaks Settlement Hierarchy was first prepared in 2007/2008 and was last updated in 2009, it illustrated the level of services and facilities available to support development in the District. As the Core Strategy and ADMP have now both been adopted the Settlement Hierarchy will be updated to act as a monitoring tool to measure the change in the level of services and facilities in the District’s settlements. The results are reported in the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR).

The Council was currently preparing a new Local Plan supported by a revised evidence base, which by necessity included a review of the District housing need figures. A new settlement Hierarchy, independent of the one included in the Authority Monitoring Report would be produced to support the new Local Plan.

Resolved: That

- a) the Settlement Hierarchy 2015 update for the Authority Monitoring Report (AMR) in Appendix A to the report, be noted; and
- b) the following be agreed for the preparation of a new Settlement Hierarchy to support the emerging Local Plan
 - the inclusion of Westerham in the “Rural Town Centre” category with Edenbridge (including Marlpytt Hill);
 - keeping Otford and New Ash Green designated as “Local Service Centres”;

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- the consolidation of “Service Villages (A) and Service Villages (B)” into one group;
- the consolidation of “Small Villages” and “Hamlets” into one category.

22. Otford Village Design Statement

Members considered the report which proposed that the Village Design Statement (VDS) for Otford which had been prepared by local groups, be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). It was noted that as required by the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 (as amended) Consultation Statements had been prepared for each document.

The Planning Policy Team Leader also [tabled](#) an alternative wording for a paragraph 3.5 of the Village Design Statement (VDS) which had been received from Otford Parish Council which Members considered.

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 approval be given for the adoption of the Otford Village Design Statement as a Supplementary Planning Document, subject to paragraph 3.5 being amended to read

‘3.5 The future of the Archbishop’s Palace Tower and Palace Field
The remains of the Archbishops Palace’ (c. 1518) are an iconic Otford landmark and amongst the oldest in the Sevenoaks region. They form an important part of Otford’s identity. There has been a recent proposal that ownership and responsibility for the whole site be transferred from Sevenoaks District Council, to the Otford community. This proposal has been received with a great deal of local support.’

23. Work Plan

The workplan was noted subject to an overview on Building Control and an update on landcharges being added to the meeting in April.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 9.58 PM

CHAIRMAN

