

Development & Conservation Advisory Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 July 2024 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Williams (Chairman)

Cllr. Edwards-Winser (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Barker, Barnett, Camp, P. Darrington, Edwards-Winser, Purves, Reay, Shea, Thornton, and White

Cllrs. Perry Cole and Gustard were also in attendance.

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Kitchener

1. Appointment of Chairman

Resolved: That Cllr. Williams be appointed as Chairman of the Development and Conservation Advisory Committee for 2024/25.

(Cllr. Williams in the Chair)

2. Appointment of Vice Chairman

Resolved: That Cllr. Edwards-Winser be appointed as Vice Chairman of the Development and Conservation Advisory Committee for 2024/25.

3. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2024 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

4. Declarations of interest

There were none.

5. Actions from previous meeting

The Action was noted.

6. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder presented an update on the services within her portfolio. The Development Management team had maintained their high performance, with 86% of major applications and 97% of other applications determined within the prescribed period. 70% of appeals were dismissed, and successful appeals were constantly reviewed to continue to improve performance.

Development & Conservation Advisory Committee - 11 July 2024

The Enforcement Team no longer had any agency staff, and were now fully staffed. Two additional external contractors had been hired for Building Control, as recruitment was suffering across the entire sector. Both positions were out to advertisement.

The Swanley Town Neighbourhood Plan had passed its referendum on 4 July, and would be presented to Council for approval on 25 July. The Council were looking into restarting the Developer Business Breakfasts, to provide an informal forum for professional dialogue and networking in the district. The Council were further arranging for a tour of Council development sites for Members.

The Portfolio Holder provided a further update on national planning following the general election on 4 July. The anticipated guidance was for brownfield development to be prioritised, followed by the release of Green Belt sites, and development upon poor-performing "Grey Belt". She emphasised that this was thoroughly aligned with the Council's own approach throughout the Local Plan process.

In response to questions, she explained that the understanding at the time was that housing targets had been reinforced, with the current targets potentially becoming minimums. Work was ongoing on liaising with Dartford Borough Council regarding their ability to provide houses under the duty to cooperate for inclusion in the Local Plan. All sites identified within the plan continued to be assessed through the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA) process.

7. Referral from Cabinet or the Audit Committee (if any)

There were none.

8. Fawkham Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 Consultation - Council's Representaiton

The Senior Planning (Policy) Officer presented the report, which set out the Council's Response to the Fawkham Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 Consultation. Fawkham Parish Council were the third Parish Council in the district to develop a neighbourhood plan to this stage. The Plan covered the use of land in the parish from 2023 to 2040. The consultation ran from 6 June 2024 to 19 July 2024.

The officer explained that multiple teams, including Development Management, Property, and Housing fed into the Council's response. The teams had examined the alterations to the plan since the Regulation 14 consultation, to ensure that the Council's comments from that stage had been adequately considered.

In response to questions, the officer explained that although the Plan did not make direct reference to housing density in the parish, it was a requirement that the Neighbourhood Plan conform with the Council's Local Plan, which did set out clear guidelines.

Development & Conservation Advisory Committee - 11 July 2024

Resolved: That the consultation and responses be noted and that it be recommended to Cabinet that:

- (a) Approves the proposed representation to the Fawkham Neighbourhood Plan Regulation 16 consultation, subject to further amendments
- (b) Delegates authority to the Development and Conservation Portfolio Holder to sign off the final representation, including any amendments raised through DCAC and Cabinet.

9. Local Development Scheme Update

The Planning Policy Team Leader presented the report which set out proposed revisions to the Local Development Scheme (LDS) timetable. The current LDS called for the Regulation 19 publication/consultation by Spring 2024, which was no longer possible. It was recommended to move the publication/consultation to Winter 2024, to allow time for third-party reports to be completed for the evidence base, which would inform decision making and ensure the Plan was sufficiently robust. The timetable changes would also allow for further conversations with partners such as Dartford Borough Council under the duty to co-operate, and for the Plan to respond to any changes made to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) by the new government.

The Officer detailed the ongoing evidence base work. It was anticipated that the transport mitigation assessment and junction modelling would be completed by Autumn 2024. Assessments relating to flooding, infrastructure, viability, and leisure were also ongoing. The Council had recently commissioned an additional Landscape and Visual Impact Assessment (LVIA) for land in National Landscapes/Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Members asked questions of clarification of the officer. The officer explained that the Regulation 19 publication would likely be from January to February 2025, and would not run over the holiday period. Submission in June 2025 would provide a comfortable window following the publication/consultation for any further considerations. The ongoing work for the transport evidence base included active travel considerations, and public transport as well as cars. The LVIA was a detailed investigation into the comparative impact of development for sites within Option 1 and Option 2 of the Plan. This would provide a more focused evaluation than the completed landscape character assessment, which was a district-wide study. The consultation would follow the Statement of Community Involvement and would have targeted drop-in sessions in key areas once the site selection had been finalised.

The Infrastructure Team were in regular communication with transport providers for the Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP), which fed into the Local Plan development. A new version of the IDP would be published alongside the consultation, with costed details. Provision of the required infrastructure would be ensured through the planning process. This would include triggers in development proposal phases for key infrastructure, provided via developer contributions, and

Development & Conservation Advisory Committee - 11 July 2024

grants. The council could facilitate infrastructure provision but were not lead providers. Members noted that there was a risk in revising the LDS and planning for submission so close to the final deadline, but further considered that submitting the plan with an insufficient evidence base would carry a much more significant risk.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet to approve the proposed revisions to the Local Development Scheme.

10. Work plan

The Work Plan was noted, with the following additions:

24 September 2024

- Local Plan including National Planning Policy Update
- Planning Enforcement Update
- CIL Governance & Social Value review
- Budget

5 December 2024

- Local Plan Regulation 19 decision
- Fawkham Neighbourhood Plan Publication

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7.51 pm

CHAIRMAN