

PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2018 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Mrs. Hunter (Chairman)

Cllr. Thornton (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. C. Barnes, Dr. Canet, Edwards-Winsor, Horwood, McGregor,
Mrs. Morris and Parson

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Clark, Gaywood and
Piper

Cllrs. Barnes, Dyball, Esler, Grint, Maskell and Searles were also
present.

28. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Advisory Committee held
on 23 November 2017 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct
record.

29. Declarations of Interest

No additional declarations of interest were made.

30. Actions from Previous Meetings

The actions were noted.

31. Update from Portfolio Holder

In the absence of the Portfolio Holder for Planning, the Chairman suggested a
report could be circulated when available.

*Action 1: Portfolio Holder's report to be circulated after the meeting once
available.*

32. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

There were none.

33. Local Plan Update

The Planning Policy Team Leader, and Senior Planning Officer, presented the
report which provided an update on progress with the draft Local Plan. The Issues

and Options nine-week consultation had ended in October 2017 and over 15,000 responses had been received to the main survey consultation (30% of households) and over 200 responses covering both technical and site specific issues. These had been reviewed to inform the draft of the new Local Plan and the 400 sites that had been submitted under the 'call for sites' were being assessed through the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) process. A number of evidence based studies and work-streams were coming to a conclusion, including Heritage, Biodiversity and Gypsy and Traveller provision, and an update was provided on these areas. It was highlighted that the sites listed at paragraph 3 to the report were under consideration and assessment and their inclusion in the draft Local Plan had not yet been determined.

In response to a request to clarify what exceptional circumstances meant, it was acknowledged that this query occurred at each meeting. The Chief Planning Officer stated that the phrase was from the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), that the Green Belt should only be redrawn in 'exceptional circumstances' but that the NPPF went no further to explain what that meant. Without a definition, planners were considering at a local level what these might be and were looking at the experience of others, and looking at circumstances presented by others at examinations. It was clear there would need to be other tangible benefits (in addition to housing) and the social and community infrastructure would need to be examined to understand if it would meet an evidenced need. It would be up to Members to ultimately decide what qualified as exceptional circumstances in the draft Local Plan.

The Chairman added that that was why all the data was being collected and examined and urged Members to feedback any comments to the Planning Policy Team. The final decisions on sites would be decided at Cabinet after being reported to the Planning Advisory Committee. Local Councillors would be informed of sites in their areas before the Advisory Committee stage (meetings in mid-April)

She also advised that the Sustainability Assessment process was being followed so that at examination stage the Council could demonstrate that it had considered sites and give validated reasons as to why were or were not included in the Local Plan. Site owners were able to approach the Inspector directly to argue for their site's inclusion, and an evidenced based process would help the Council's position.

In response to a question concerning the number of empty homes Officers agreed to find this out and circulate the information.

Action 2: Figures on the number of empty homes within the District to be supplied.

It was confirmed that site histories are being considered and that all sites are assessed with the same matrices, as part of the Sustainability Assessment process.

In response to questions given to the Chairman before the meeting by a District Councillor, the Chief Planning Officer drew Members' attention to Appendix A of the report 'Sustainability Appraisal Assessment Criteria'. He advised that Officers looked at the sustainability of the settlement against the services and facilities

Planning Advisory Committee - 14 March 2018

available there and that growth would be likely to follow the settlement hierarchy, in terms of growth being focussed in the most sustainable settlements. But developers were able to promote sites, in any location, with what they thought were exceptional circumstances.

The Chairman reiterated that the Council needed strong evidence to include or reject sites and it needed to be robust to stand up to examination. Members would need to examine the Officers' assessments that came forward to the Planning Advisory Committee in June with the final decision being taken by the Cabinet.

Resolved: That progress on the draft Local Plan be noted.

Once again the Committee expressed their thanks to Officers for their work.

34. Local Plan Update - Heritage

The Conservation Officer presented the report which updated Members on the progress on the heritage evidence base of the draft Local Plan. Members took the opportunity to ask questions of clarification. Development of a sound evidence base for the historic environment would inform the draft Local Plan, which would be prepared for a further round of public consultation in the summer.

Resolved: That progress on the heritage evidence base of the draft Local Plan, be noted.

35. Work Plan

The work plan was noted, with Local Development Scheme (LDS) Update added to the meeting in June. It was also agreed to hold the member training at 7.00pm with the meeting starting at 7.30pm at the next meeting on 25 April 2018.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.08 PM

CHAIRMAN