

DEVELOPMENT & CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2021 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Reay (Chairman)

Cllr. Thornton (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Clayton, P. Darrington, Hunter, McGregor, Pett, and Roy

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Barnett, Penny Cole and Fothergill

22. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Development & Conservation Advisory Committee held on 19 October 2021, subject to the typographical error of 'our' being changed to read 'out' on page 8 paragraph 2, line 2, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

23. Declarations of interest

No additional declarations of interest were made.

24. Actions from previous meeting

There were none.

25. Referral from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

There were none.

26. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder gave an update on the services within her portfolio. She advised that unfortunately due to technical difficulties in the Chamber she was unable to present at take questions at the last Scrutiny Committee and was now due to attend in March to champion the services within the Portfolio.

Development Management performance remained very strong despite continuing high caseloads and staff changes. Determinations were 18% up on last year, which in real terms was an additional 262 applications being determined. This was almost the work of two full time case officers in a year. All but one of six job vacancies had been filled.

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Member training continued to be rolled out, and the feedback remained hugely positive. The most recent session was on changes to the NPPF and the introduction of design codes.

A number of Town and Parishes who were at various stages of developing neighbourhood plans were being supported, and there were 13 at the 'designated area' stage. Sevenoaks Town was at the most advanced stage as public consultation on it had been carried out last year. Once the final draft had been submitted to SDC a public consultation must be organised, an examination and a referendum must be carried out.

Article 4 directions on locally listed buildings had been confirmed, and as a result the demolition would require planning permission. Following the success of the Local List a programme to work with local groups and Town and Parish Councils were being worked on to expand district wide in 2022. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funding was around £900,000 and there were currently no plans for a CIL Spending Board to take place at this current time.

The Council had submitted comments on Gatwick Airport's proposal for bringing the Northern runway into routine use.

27. Enforcement Update

The Enforcement Team Manager presented the report which updated Members on the current work and future ideas for the Planning Enforcement team and how the future ideas could be implemented to aid both the team and customer. Members were advised that 500 cases had been registered and 529 had been closed within the past 9 months. It was highlighted to Members that the online reporting form was more streamlined and simpler for the customer to use whilst also allowing them to be more precise on the location of the potential breach, which in-turn helped officers to begin their investigation.

The Portfolio Holder thanked the team for the fantastic improvements made to the service by the team and for their hard work and support.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

28. Local Plan Update

The Strategic Planning Manager presented the report which provided an update on the Local Plan since the last meeting in October 2021. Further discussions had taken place between officers and representatives from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC), and some key points had been taken away from those discussions. The Town Centre Strategy was progressing well and there had been a stakeholders workshop on 21 October 2021. The character study had received 500 responses. These would be looked at and a final report would be produced, which would be used on a number of different levels.

Members were updated on the Call for Sites, and both stage 1 and 2 were running alongside each other until 20 January 2022 when both stages would close. Members

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were advised that training on the Emerging Trends following the survey results would be undertaken. With the first topic covering post pandemic living and working trends.

The Senior Planning Officer (Policy) gave a presentation which summarised the key outcomes of the Targeted Review of Local Housing Needs (TRLHN) prior to the final report being published.

Members discussed the presentation and asked questions of clarification. In response to questions Members were advised that although some other Local Authorities were minded to go with Government's first homes policy of a 30% discount. This would not be viable in all of the Sevenoaks District and so a 50% discount was more viable. Members were also advised that if a developer could demonstrate that it was not viable, then the Council could take a financial payment but the responsibility would fall onto the Council to provide first homes elsewhere in the District. Further questions focused on the different types of housing available and affordable rent and market rent.

Once the final report was published, Members would be sent the link to view it. Members thanked the Senior Planning Officer (Policy) for the in-depth presentation.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

29. Work plan

The Work Plan was noted with the following additions to the March 2022 meeting:

- Building control Update
- Levelling up white paper

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.00 PM

CHAIRMAN