

Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group

Notes of a Meeting of the Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group held on the **10th February 2016**.

Present:

Councillor Clarkson (Chairman);
Councillor Bennett (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Mrs Blanford, Britcher, Clokie, Galpin, Heyes, Michael, Shorter, Wedgbury.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Mrs Bell, Burgess, Hicks, Sims, Smith.

Simon Cole – Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development; Daniel Carter – Principal Policy Planner; Danielle Dunn - Policy Planner; Catherine Hughes – Planning Consultant; Ashton West – Graduate Intern; Jennifer Shaw - Housing Strategy Manager; Dave Jeffrey - Housing Enabling Officer; Jeremy Baker – Principal Solicitor (Strategic Development); Rosie Reid – Member Services & Scrutiny Support Officer.

1 Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 Councillor Clarkson made a Voluntary Announcement that he was a Director of A Better Choice for Property Ltd.
- 1.2 Councillor Shorter made a Voluntary Announcement that he was a Director of Kent Play Clubs and A Better Choice for Building Consultancy Ltd.
- 1.3 Councillor Galpin made a Voluntary Announcement that he was a resident of the Town Centre, which would be discussed during items on the agenda.

2. Notes of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group Meeting held on 13th January 2016

- 2.1 The Task Group Members agreed that the Notes of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group Meeting held on 13th January 2016 were an accurate record.

3 Local Plan to 2030 – Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation – Draft Site Allocations and Windfall Site Policy

- 3.1 The Policy Planner introduced this item. She reminded the Task Group that 27 further pitches were needed in Ashford Borough between 2016 and 2030, and a shortlist of potential sites for allocation had been provided for discussion by the Task Group. She explained that the sites would be put out to consultation with the public in due course, and so the list agreed for consultation at today's meeting would not necessarily be the final list of sites

in a Submission version of the Local Plan. Additional suitable sites could also come forward through the public consultation process.

- 3.2 The Task Group discussed the eight potential sites on an individual basis, and considered that three of them should be taken forward to consultation as draft site allocations.
- 3.3 The Policy Planner reminded the Task Group that a maximum of 5 pitches per site had been agreed at the Task Group meeting on 13th January. One Member noted that this was not mentioned in Appendix 2, but the Policy Planner explained that it was covered by Appendix 1 and was therefore applicable to Appendix 2 as well.
- 3.4 A Member said that with regard to sewage disposal, the Environment Agency did not recommend cesspits due to their potential for contamination. The Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development (HoPP&ED) said this could be covered in the supporting text to the proposed policy.

Resolved:

The Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group:

- i) **Agreed that 3 sites were suitable for allocation in the draft Local Plan and the number of pitches that should be provided on each of these sites;**
- ii) **Agreed that the detailed site policies would be circulated and agreed by email;**
- iii) **Endorsed the wording of the draft policy 'Safeguarding existing Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites' and agreed the amended Windfall Policy.**

4. Local Plan to 2030 – Draft Affordable Housing and Local Needs Housing policies

- 4.1 The HoPP&ED introduced this item and said that the Affordable Housing policy was a cornerstone policy within the Local Plan. There were various key issues which needed to be considered in developing a new policy:
 - The current model of delivery and desirable changes;
 - Evidence of the need for affordable housing;
 - Proportion of future affordable housing requirement;
 - The need to deliver all forms of current affordable housing;
 - Viability of any requirement placed on the development industry.
- 4.2 The HoPP&ED explained that the policy would seek three different affordable housing percentages across three different geographical areas of the Borough. In the Town Centre, where it was difficult to provide affordable housing for viability reasons, the draft policy suggested that developers would not have to contribute to affordable housing, except through any future

mandatory government requirement such as the provision of starter homes. In the rest of the Ashford urban area, a minimum of 30% affordable housing was suggested, as this was consistent with the core strategy target, and could apply to schemes of 11 dwellings or more. In rural areas the Council would seek the provision of subsidised affordable housing at a minimum of 40%, again on schemes of 11 dwellings or more. In the cases of urban and rural developments, starter homes would be provided in a percentage consistent with government guidelines.

4.3 The Chairman opened up the item for discussion and the following points were raised:

- A Member asked whether the Council would have the ability to challenge matters of viability. The HoPP&ED advised that the Council would seek advice from a viability consultant. This was covered in the policy paragraph which referred to 'independently verified viability evidence'.
- In response to a question about possible deferred contributions, the HoPP&ED explained that the Council currently applied a deferred contributions policy if it appeared that a developer could not deliver affordable housing or other S106 requirements. This policy was considered sound, on the basis that where sales values increased above an agreed threshold, contributions would then be received by the Council in due course.
- Members discussed whether developers in the Town Centre should pay contributions to affordable or starter homes outside the Town Centre. The HoPP&ED advised that it was unlikely that development in the Town Centre would be able to deliver affordable housing on-site or make payments towards off-site provision. It was important not to frustrate Town Centre development coming forward, and the policy towards Town Centre contributions had been drafted with this in mind. The HoPP&ED said it would be possible to tweak the policy to allow the Council to take some payment, which could be determined on a case by case basis. He advised that the policy might have to be re-worded anyway as it was written before government guidelines had been released.
- A Member raised the difficulty of providing executive homes in light of the ½ hectare condition. The HoPP&ED advised that there were two options: either using off-site contributions, or allocating specific sites for executive developments.

4.4 With regard to the Local Needs Housing policy, the HoPP&ED said that this had been a very successful policy over many years, and it seemed right not to alter it too much. At the moment it was unclear whether it would be mandatory to stipulate a local connection with regard to starter homes, but this may become clearer when the Housing & Planning Bill was passed. The HoPP&ED emphasised that this new policy was based on current knowledge and may need to be varied depending on forthcoming government decisions.

Resolved:

Subject to the points raised at the meeting, the Task Group Members agreed the draft policies presented for inclusion in the Local Plan 2030, accepting that they may need to be reviewed prior to the formal submission of the Local Plan, once the regulations that support the Housing and Planning Bill had been set out.

5. Local Plan to 2030 – Draft Parking Standards policy

- 5.1 The Principal Policy Planner introduced this item. He advised that the new policy proposed a move from a maximum to a minimum approach in all locations. However, the difficulty lay in determining exactly what the minimum standard should be. Factors that needed to be taken into account included space restrictions in the Town Centre, and viability concerns. It was proposed to adopt a minimum parking standard of 0.75 spaces per dwelling as an average in the town centre area.
- 5.2 The Chairman opened up this item for discussion and the following points were raised:
- Members were unanimous in wishing to see a minimum parking standard of 1 space per dwelling and did not accept the figure proposed in the draft policy. Members discussed the need to provide sufficient parking to include visitors, children of driving age and any grandparents living in the family home who also had a car. The HoPP&ED pointed out that two important future Town Centre developments were proposing 0.78 and 0.7 spaces per dwelling. This needed to be taken into account when drafting the policy because it was important not to frustrate schemes which were currently coming forward. Members considered that good parking standards were crucial and represented the greater good for most people. They considered that it could be preferable to turn down development opportunities than to create more problems in the future by allowing unsatisfactory standards to be applied. The Principal Policy Planner asked whether Members would accept 0.25 parking spaces per dwelling provided off site, and this was considered an option provided that 1 full parking space per dwelling off-road was provided, not including shared visitor spaces. The Principal Policy Planner would check the inclusion of visitor spaces.
 - Members agreed that any dwellings with 4 bedrooms or more should have 3 parking spaces each and that all 2 bed flats should have 2 parking spaces each.
 - One Member called for a revised definition of the Town Centre for the application of parking standards. It was accepted that different parking standards might apply to the core Town Centre than to the outer Town Centre areas.

- A Member suggested that there should be a separate SPD for lorry parking, but the Chairman said this was a complex topic which needed to be deferred to a future meeting.
- There was some discussion about the potential for using multi-storey car parks to provide designated spaces for residents of nearby Town Centre dwellings.
- Members considered that commercial companies should be encouraged to allow their staff to park free at their offices to prevent staff parking on nearby roads and thus taking up road-side parking. It was also considered that there was currently insufficient off-road parking in industrial estates.
- A Member asked why goods vehicle requirements were not included in the table showing proposals for parking standards for non-residential developments in the Borough. The Principal Policy Planner explained that this information was included in Kent County Council's SPD on non-residential parking standards. Members asked for goods vehicle requirements to be included anyway.
- One Member said he was concerned about the lack of loading and unloading facilities for HGV's involved in car deliveries at the Orbital Park. He considered that turning and unloading facilities should be provided on commercial premises to reduce the risk to the public. It was agreed that this issue should be discussed at a future meeting.
- In response to a number of comments, the HoPP&ED clarified the limitations of the new policy, which could not:
 - Solve existing problems;
 - Deal with driver behaviour;
 - Deal with car ownership
 - Control developments and conversions which did not require planning permission.

Resolved

Members of the Task Group agreed the content of the draft policy, subject to the amendments referred to above.

6 Response to DCLG consultation on proposed changes to national planning policy

- 6.1 The HoPP&ED reminded Task Group Members that they should write to him with any comments on the draft Council response to the DCLG consultation.

7 Dates of Next Meetings

- 7.1 The Principal Solicitor (Strategic Development) reminded Task Group Members that the discussions held at the meeting and the contents of the

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Agenda papers remained confidential, and that the new draft Local Plan would be published for public consultation in due course.

7.2 The dates of the meetings to the end of the current Municipal Year would be: -

All at 2pm

Thursday 25 February 2016

Wednesday 9 March 2016

Wednesday 13 April 2016

Councillor Clarkson (Chairman)
Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group

Queries concerning these minutes? Please contact Rosie Reid:
Telephone: 01233 330565 Email: rosie.reid@ashford.gov.uk
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Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group

Notes of a Meeting of the Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group held on the **25th February 2016**.

Present:

Councillor Bennett (Vice-Chairman in the Chair);

Cllrs. Britcher, Clokie, Galpin, Michael, Shorter, Wedgbury.

Apologies:

Cllr Clarkson; Simon Cole.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Burgess, Hicks.

Ian Grundy – Principal Policy Planner; Ashley Taylor – Principal Policy Planner; Daniel Carter – Principal Policy Planner; Katy Wiseman – Policy Planner; Dave Jeffrey - Housing Enabling Officer; Rosie Reid – Member Services & Scrutiny Support Officer.

1 Declarations of Interest

- 1.2 Councillor Shorter made a Voluntary Announcement as he knew the doctor who previously used the old surgery at Appledore.

2. Notes of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group Meeting held on 10th February 2016

- 2.1 The Task Group Members agreed that the Notes of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group Meeting held on 10th February 2016 were an accurate record.

3 Local Plan Site allocations – Draft Site Policies

- 3.1 The Principal Policy Planner (IG) introduced this item. He said this was the first detailed set of site policies seen by the Task Group and that other sites would be coming to future meetings for discussion. He stressed that these were draft policies, which could be amended prior to publication. As they were going into the draft Local Plan, there would also be further opportunity for amendments after public consultation. He confirmed that the site policies had been circulated to all relevant ward members.
- 3.2 Members discussed the draft site policies put forward in the report. They requested that any draft rural site policies submitted to the Task Group at future meetings should clearly indicate the views of the relevant Parish Council

- 3.3 The Principal Policy Planner said that the Policy Planner (KW) was leaving the Council after 11 years in the Policy Team. During that time she had been involved in working on the various DPDs, including the detailed site policies, and had done specific work on sustainable development. Members thanked her for all her hard work and her contribution towards policy development.

Resolved

The Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group agreed the draft site policies set out in the report for inclusion in the Draft Local Plan.

4 Dates of Next Meetings

- 4.1 The dates of the meetings to the end of the current Municipal Year would be: -
- | | | |
|------------------------|------|-----------------|
| 9 th March | 2pm | Council Chamber |
| 31 st March | 10am | Council Chamber |
| 13 th April | 2pm | Council Chamber |
| 29 th April | 10am | Council Chamber |

Councillor Bennett (Vice-Chairman in the Chair)
Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group

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