

Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group

Notes of a Meeting of the Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group held on the **30th June 2016**.

Present:

Cllr. Clarkson (Chairman);
Cllr. Bennett (Vice-Chairman);

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

Apologies:

Cllr. Chilton.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Mrs Bell, Bradford, Burgess, Mrs Dyer, Hicks, Krause, Link, Ovenden, Pickering, Sims, Mrs Webb.

Simon Cole – Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development; Richard Alderton – Director of Development; Ian Grundy – Principal Policy Planner; Catherine Hughes – Planning Consultant; Tony Fullwood – Planning Consultant; Carly Pettit – Policy Planner; Matthew Nouch – Policy Planner; Oliver Peel – Joint Development Control Manager; Jeremy Baker – Principal Solicitor (Strategic Development); Rosie Reid - Member Services & Ombudsman Complaints Officer.

1 Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 Cllr Mrs Blanford made a Voluntary Announcement that she was a member of the Weald of Kent Protection Society and the Campaign to Protect Rural England.
- 1.2 Cllr Bennett made a Voluntary Announcement that he was a member of the Weald of Kent Protection Society and the Tenterden and District Residents' Association.
- 1.3 Cllr Clarkson made a Voluntary Announcement that he was a Director of A Better Choice for Property Ltd and a member of the Weald of Kent Protection Society.
- 1.4 Cllr Clokie made a Voluntary Announcement that he was a member of the Weald of Kent Protection Society and the Tenterden and District Residents' Association.
- 1.5 Cllr Galpin made a Voluntary Announcement that he lived in a listed building.
- 1.6 Cllr Michael made a Voluntary Announcement that he was a member of the Weald of Kent Protection Society.
- 1.7 Councillor Shorter made a Voluntary Announcement that he was a Director of Kent Play Clubs and A Better Choice for Building Consultancy Ltd. His family also owned a Grade II listed building.

- 1.8 Cllr Wedgbury made a Voluntary Announcement that he was a member of Kingsnorth Parish Council.

2 Notes of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group Meetings held on 11th May 2016 and 31st May 2016

- 2.1 The Task Group Members agreed that the Notes of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group Meetings held on 11th May 2016 and 31st May 2016 were an accurate record.

3 Five year housing land supply – the position post-Tilden Gill appeal decision

- 3.1 The Chairman introduced this item and explained that the issue had very significant implications for Ashford, and required careful consideration. He expressed disappointment at the Inspector's pronouncements in the appeal decision and said it would be necessary to find ways to balance this new pressure with what residents considered fair.
- 3.2 The Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development drew Members' attention to Appendix 1, and explained how the figures had been arrived at. He said that the Council could not currently demonstrate a 5-year housing land supply, and that the Council's current planning policies restricting residential development on unallocated sites in the countryside were now deemed to be out of date and could no longer provide a clear cut 'in principle' position. This did not automatically mean that every scheme had to be accepted, as the Council should consider sites and proposals on a case by case basis to decide whether to recommend granting planning permission. The presumption in favour of sustainable development set out in the NPPF was a major material planning consideration in cases where a 5-year land supply could not be demonstrated.
- 3.3 The Director of Development explained that under-delivery by the market, as a result of major project slippage, compounded development pressure in the Borough.
- 3.4 Members noted that the Council was in a difficult position with regard to land supply, especially where developers were not building properties on allocated land or land with planning permission, which was outside of the Council's control. This added significantly to the deficit and exacerbated the situation. The Chair said he was intending to lobby the Government on this issue through the LGA.
- 3.5 Members asked whether the Inspector's view that the Council did not have a deliverable 5-year housing land supply could have been foreseen. The Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development responded that Officers had taken the view that the Council had a 5-year supply based on sites allocated, sites under discussion or awaiting planning permission, and those coming forward. However, the Inspector took the view that the Council's attitude and

housing projections were over-optimistic and therefore the available supply did not meet the 5-year housing requirement.

- 3.6 In response to a question about how best to proceed, the Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development suggested that the majority of housing growth should still be located in and around Ashford where provision of services and infrastructure was superior, with continued limited rural development as and where appropriate. He suggested that the Local Plan should be allowed to bed into place, and the Council should aim to catch up with the shortfall in housing delivery over a longer period than within the 5 years suggested by government guidance.

4. Draft Heritage Strategy

- 4.1 The Planning Consultant (CH) introduced this item, and gave a presentation which covered progress and next steps. She explained that the Draft Strategy would be put out to public consultation, including an invitation to Parish Councils to contribute.
- 4.2 A Member asked what the Strategy was intended to accomplish. The Planning Consultant responded that communities could now put forward their own local nominations of merit. As this would be a subjective exercise, it was important to establish agreed criteria and consistency and that was the purpose of the SPD.
- 4.3 Members advised that caution should be exercised with regard to listing, as it could prove confining, but the Planning Consultant explained that local listing was not subject to the same criteria as national listing.
- 4.4 The Planning Consultant advised that she proposed a workshop to facilitate consultation. She explained that the Draft Strategy did not mention every listing individually, but was centred around themes, rather than the geography of the Borough. The aim of the workshop was to identify which were the most important themes. Members considered that more workshops were required throughout the Borough, but the Planning Consultant reiterated that the aim of the workshop was to pick up themes in terms of significance and that the local listing exercise would be undertaken separately. The Council would create an SPD advising how to nominate an item for local listing, but that was not envisaged to take place for 2 – 3 years.
- 4.5 In response to a question, the Planning Consultant explained that the heritage landscape, including historic trees and landscape assets, was not covered by this Heritage Strategy.

Resolved:

That the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group endorses the current draft and agrees the next steps as set out in the report.

5. Conservation Area appraisals – Ashford Town Centre, Kingsnorth and Woodchurch

- 5.1 The Planning Consultant (TF) introduced this item and gave a presentation on Conservation Area appraisals and management plans for the three areas.
- 5.2 In response to a question, he explained that Conservation Area appraisals and management plans did not prevent development, and it could even be desirable to have new development in the centre of a Conservation Area. He confirmed that a Conservation Area designation was not a constraint per se to granting planning permission.
- 5.3 A member asked about the objective of these appraisals. The Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development advised that the NPPF required the Council to provide an up to date evidence base for its heritage assets and for this reason the Council was undertaking Conservation Area appraisals. He explained that the Planning Consultant had been asked to consider the 3 Conservation Areas and recommend what should be preserved and enhanced, bearing in mind potential boundary changes.
- 5.4 The Planning Consultant advised that the recommendations were only a sample of possible improvements, which didn't have to be made immediately. The Council would not be responsible for every action as other stakeholders would also need to be involved.
- 5.5 One Member considered that Ashford was an ancient town with historical aspects, and the Conservation Area Management Plan would help to bring back reflections of past history to enhance the town.

Resolved:

That the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group:

- **Agrees the content of the Ashford Town Centre, Kingsnorth and Woodchurch Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans,**
- **Recommends that the Cabinet agrees their adoption.**

6 Date of Next Meeting

- 6.1 3rd August 2pm Council Chamber

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

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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 **3rd August 2016**.

Present:

Cllr. Clarkson (Chairman);
Cllr. Bennett (Vice-Chairman);

Cllrs. Mrs Blanford, Clokie, Shorter, Smith.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Chilton, Galpin, Michael.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Mrs Bell, Bradford, Burgess, Hicks, A. Howard, Link, Pickering.

Simon Cole – Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development; Richard Alderton – Director of Development; Ian Grundy – Principal Policy Planner; Ashley Taylor – Principal Policy Planner; Len Mayatt – Cultural Projects Manager; Ben Moyle – Facility Development Manager; Matthew Nouch – Policy Planner; Juliet Gill – Senior Solicitor (Strategic Development); David Jeffrey – Housing Enabling Officer; Rosie Reid - Member Services & Ombudsman Complaints Officer.

1 Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 Cllr 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. He was also a tenant farmer of the Borough.

2 Notes of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group Meeting held on 30th June 2016

- 2.1 The Task Group Members agreed that the Notes of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group Meeting held on 30th June 2016 were an accurate record.
- 2.2 Members questioned whether views expressed at the Task Group meetings would be incorporated into the Local Plan. The Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development explained that the discussions at the meetings would be reflected in the Notes, which would be submitted for Cabinet approval in due course. Officers would ensure that the actions arising from the discussions and Notes would be incorporated into the Draft Local Plan, which would come back to the Task Group for approval. The Chairman said that Members needed to be vigilant to ensure that the demands of Local Government were met, whilst the interests of residents were also safeguarded

as far as possible. He encouraged Members to examine the Draft Local Plan in due course to ensure that their views were reflected.

- 2.3 One Member pointed out that there had been an ad hoc meeting prior to Cabinet for further discussions with Members on the Draft Local Plan, where many points had been raised and views expressed. She was concerned that comments from that meeting should also be incorporated in the Draft Local Plan.
- 2.4 The Chairman commented that there was some development activity on brownfield land at present for housing and apartments which eased the pressure on development in the countryside. Further brownfield sites were available but consideration would need to be given to the knock-on effects of such development on transport and parking.

3 Indoor and Outdoor Sports facilities to support the Local Plan

3.1 The Cultural Projects Manager gave a presentation on the evidence gathered for Indoor and Outdoor Sports facilities that had helped inform the emerging Local Plan 2030, and the recommended spatial strategy including:

- the 'Hub Approach' serving a wider catchment, community use and exploiting co-location;
- the 'Local Provision' meeting neighbourhood everyday needs; and
- the partnership approach for rural provision.

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

- The Chairman noted that Victoria Park had not been mentioned in the presentation. He recognized that there were not many major sporting facilities there, but he considered that it was an important recreational facility, especially in view of the forthcoming residential development in that area.
- In response to a question about consultation and information gathering, the Cultural Projects Manager said that he would be using the Sport England survey of the Borough, which provided a benchmark for developing plans. The Chairman pointed out that every four years the Council undertook a survey of residents, and this could include questions on sporting activity and views. It might also be useful to take a joined up approach with the Health Services who were promoting a strategic Plan for the next 20 years.
- Members were very supportive of the hub approach, but one Member said he was concerned that informal areas of recreation should also be protected as they were important.

- One Member suggested that facilities at local schools which were coming on stream over the next 5 – 10 years should be made available to the public out of school hours. He considered that the Council should ensure that agreements with school governing bodies were put in place during the planning phase. A Member noted that it was becoming more difficult to access school facilities because of the current emphasis on safeguarding children. However, Sport England provided templates for agreements with schools and it may be helpful to draw on their experience. A Member suggested lobbying KCC to persuade schools to become community schools. He suggested that such schools should be considered at Chilmington.
- One Member said that the Health and Wellbeing Board had two objectives at present. With regard to smoking, they proposed no smoking across recreational sites such as play areas and pitches, and regarding obesity, they proposed to encourage activities such as tending allotments to promote a more healthy lifestyle in general.
- In response to a question, the Facility Development Manager confirmed that Section 106 contributions were for outdoor use only, and did not apply to indoor facilities. The Chairman indicated that whilst this was understood it did not however preclude S106 funding being used for indoor facilities.
- The Chairman suggested that the Local Plan should state that where there was a local hub near a development, it may be best for the S106 contributions to be used towards that hub rather than individual facilities.

Resolved:

That the report was received and noted.

4 Infrastructure requirements to support the Local Plan

4.1 The Principal Policy Planner gave a presentation which updated Members on the work being carried out in relation to infrastructure provision, which was necessary to support the Local Plan and Community Infrastructure Levy. The presentation covered:

- Infrastructure Delivery Plan – outputs of discussions with service providers and key infrastructure requirements;
- Funding gap analysis
- Illustrative Reg 123 list
- Next steps

As part of the presentation, the Principal Policy Planner also discussed the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule.

4.2 During the presentation, the following points were raised:

- One Member remarked that the Ashford spurs rail project should be considered high, not medium, priority and that the Park Farm rail hub should be removed as no new halt was likely to be created. The Chairman responded that the spurs project was definitely high priority and would be getting funding through LEP. He had no further news regarding the development of the halt at Park Farm but suggested that it remained in the Plan as it could be an integral part of the development of the Borough in the future. The Director of Development confirmed that the likelihood of the halt being developed was now very low.
- One Member pointed out that demands for infrastructure expenditure would not necessarily come in the order originally envisaged, and it was necessary to be flexible or have interim measures in place where possible.
- Another Member said she would like to see cycling given more priority as Ashford was a particularly suitable town for cycling around. More cycling would help with congestion and encourage better health. It was also commented that cycling provision could be improved in rural areas. The Chairman agreed that the Council should be putting efforts into cycle parking areas and leading the field.
- A Member pointed out that there was some duplication in the Infrastructure Development Plan and he asked Officers to ensure that the Plan was joined up with no duplication. He referred in particular to items 6.13 and 20.20 which covered the same issue.
- It was suggested that the funds for the extension planned for Chilmington Green Secondary School should be used instead for provision of schooling at Cheeseman's Green. Otherwise, it was likely that large numbers of school children would have to be transported by bus from Finberry to Chilmington Green School. The Director of Development acknowledged that this was the case, but said it was a matter of economies of scale and the reality was that Chilmington School had to be filled before work could begin on another secondary school.
- The Chairman pointed out that this Plan would be followed by other plans. It should be mentioned that whilst Ashford was still a growing Borough, it was necessary to bear in mind forthcoming developments and future needs. The Director of Development said this was an iterative document and would be constantly changing to keep up with current demands.
- With regard to the funding gap analysis, the Principal Policy Planner drew Members' attention to the fact that CIL would not cover the costs of infrastructure requirements and there was a funding gap of £159.2m.
- One Member suggested that the CIL percentage should be set higher. The Principal Policy Planner responded that the Council was already asking for higher S106 contributions than most other councils, and it was not possible to do that and have a high CIL rate at the same time.

Resolved:

That the report was received and noted.

5 Five year housing land supply – background and context

5.1 The Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development gave a presentation on the work being undertaken to establish what options may be open to the Council to manage the identified lack of a five year housing land supply. The presentation explained the challenges and possible areas of work as follows:

- Appeal decisions/high court judgements;
- Boosting short term land supply;
- Benchmarking/lobbying;
- Reviewing the SHMA housing requirement
- Policy Review

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

- The Chairman suggested that identifying suitable brownfield sites for residential use would relieve pressure on rural areas. The Director of Development concurred and said the Planning team would be pleased to consider any suggested sites.
- In response to a question, the Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development said if the Council sought to spread out recovery of the housing shortfall over the whole Plan period, this would lead to a lower annual target, and relieve some of the pressure.
- One Member expressed his dismay at the option of increasing housing density. He said the Council's aim was to promote quality building in the Borough, and any increase in density would be a retrograde step.
- A Member suggested that several appeals may be coming up shortly and it would be essential to use appropriate resources to make the best possible case. If additional resources were needed, the budget should be identified in advance.
- A Member questioned whether the buffer figure of 20% could be reduced. The Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development responded that there was no precision in the guidance on buffers, but as the Council had not met the Core Strategy housing targets over recent years, it would be obliged to continue to apply a 20% buffer for the time being.

Resolved:

That the report was received and noted.

6 Otterpool Park

- 6.1 The Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development delivered a presentation which had been prepared by Shepway District Council for their Parish Councils. Although the proposed development would not be within the Borough of Ashford, it would be very close to the boundary and would have repercussions for Ashford Borough residents nearby.
- 6.2 Members questioned whether this development would in any way help meet Ashford's housing needs. The Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development said that would not be the case in the first ten years but it was not possible to predict whether it would be beneficial to Ashford in the future. It might be an important factor at some stage, given its proximity to the Borough's boundary.
- 6.3 Members were keen to ensure that further consultation exercises by Shepway District should include the nearby parishes within Ashford Borough too.

Resolved:

That the report was received and noted.

7 Dates of Next Meetings

7.1	1 st September	2pm	Council Chamber
	22 nd September	10am	Council Chamber
	27 th October	2pm	Council Chamber
	25 th November	10am	Council Chamber
	22 nd December	2pm	Council Chamber

Councillor Clarkson (Chairman)
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