

## **Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group**

Notes of a Meeting of the Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group held on the **11<sup>th</sup> August 2017**.

### **Present:**

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

Cllrs. Mrs Blanford, Bradford, Galpin, Heyes, Hicks, Shorter.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2 (iii) Councillor Hicks attended as Substitute Member for Councillor Mrs Dyer.

### **Apology:**

Cllr. Mrs Dyer.

### **Also Present:**

Cllrs. Mrs Bell, Burgess, Dehnel.

Simon Cole – Head of Planning Policy; Richard Alderton – Director of Place and Space, Ian Grundy – Principal Policy Planner; Helen Garnett – Policy Planner, David Jeffrey – Housing Enabling Officer; Andrew Gambrill – Graduate Planner (Policy), William McKane – Graduate Planner (Policy), Kelly Tonkin – Graduate Planner (Policy), Jeremy Baker – Principal Solicitor (Strategic Development); Kirsty Morland – Member Services Officer.

## **1 Declarations of Interest**

- 1.1 Cllr. Clarkson made a Voluntary Announcement as he was a Director of A Better Choice for Property Ltd and a Member of the Weald of Kent Protection Society.
- 1.2 Cllr. Shorter made a Voluntary Announcement as he was a Director of A Better Choice for Building Consultancy Ltd and Kent Play Clubs.
- 1.3 Cllr. Clokie made a Voluntary Announcement as he was a Member of the Weald of Kent Protection Society, Tenterden and District Residents Association and Campaign to Protect Rural England.

## **2 Notes of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group Meetings held on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017 and 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017**

- 2.1 The Task Group Members agreed that the Notes of the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group Meetings held on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2017 and 25<sup>th</sup> May 2017 were an accurate record.

### **3 Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Development Plan Document**

- 3.1 The Policy Planner introduced this item. At the meeting of the Task Group held in April 2017, the Task Group had agreed for Officers to prepare a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Development Plan Document (DPD). In order to progress the DPD there was a need to update the Council's evidence base to ensure that the number of pitches allocated was robust and would stand up at examination. To update the evidence base an Accommodation Assessment would be prepared alongside an Issues and Options Report. It was envisaged that the latter would be presented to the November meeting of the Task Group prior to public consultation. A primary remit of the Issues and Options Report would be to locate suitable sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches in the Borough.
- 3.2 The Chairman opened up the item for discussion and the following points/comments were made:
- Members were in agreement that the Parish Councils and Urban Community Forums needed to be involved with highlighting potential sites within the Borough. It was imperative that the need for sites was impressed upon the Parish Councils and Urban Community Forums, especially as a lack of sites could result in more sites being granted permission by an Inspector on appeal.
  - A Member requested that a map be prepared to highlight the location of existing pitches within the Borough, with a break down of those with permanent permission and those with temporary permission. In respect of the latter it was also suggested that it be noted how long the temporary permission had been granted for.
  - It was acknowledged that some villages already had a significant proportion of pitches and therefore the question of distribution of further sites needed to be considered.
  - A Member drew attention to the issues that occurred when Travellers arrived in the Borough, in particular issues surrounding clearing of sites. It was suggested that a dedicated 'transit' site be found. This could then be made available to such groups arriving in the Borough. Members were keen to explore this idea.
  - The Director for Place and Space advised that concentrations of adhoc pitches had the ability to create pressure on services, including schools and doctors. There had been a move towards Councils providing their own sites on the edges of Urban areas. This was something that he felt should be considered. A properly designed and managed site could be of benefit to both the Council and those using the site.

**Resolved:**

**That the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group agrees that:**

- i. An 'Issues and Options' report is prepared for consultation as the initial stage of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Development Plan Document,**
- ii. An updated Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment is commissioned by officers as soon as possible, subject to the Council's tendering rules,**
- iii. A meeting is arranged with Parish Councils and Urban Community Forums to discuss the emerging 'Issues and Options' and to draw out any suggestions for pitch allocations.**

## **4 Otterpool Park Garden Town**

- 4.1 The Head of Planning Policy introduced the item and drew attention to the 'Area of Search' map contained within the agenda papers. He displayed a further plan on which the blue line indicated the Borough boundary with the red showing the development area of Otterpool Park. The proximity to the Borough boundary and the size of the proposed development meant that there would be an impact on the Borough and its residents. At the end of the month Senior Officers and Members would be meeting with their counterparts at Shepway Council to establish a liaison relationship. He then drew attention to the 'early discussion draft' plan that had been produced by the Landowner Consortium's masterplanners. The proposed development was significantly larger than that planned at Chilmington Green.
- 4.2 The Chairman opened up the item for discussion and the following points/comments were made:
  - It was questioned what space standards would be applied to the proposed development. Adoption of the standards used in Ashford should be encouraged. These standards had seen Chilmington Green reduce from over 7,000 dwellings originally proposed, to 5,750.
  - Members were concerned about the highways implications of the scheme, in particular the effect that such an increase in traffic would have on the rural roads, particularly at peak hours. In addition, some Members were also concerned about the impact on the rail network and questioned the capacity of HS1.
  - The Head of Planning Policy drew attention to a number of areas that would need to be considered, including; phasing of the development including infrastructure and services, transport network capacity, drainage and flooding especially in relation to the Aldington Reservoir, landscape and ecological impacts etc. A lot of work would need to be undertaken in respect of masterplanning.
  - As an aside, the Chairman felt that the issue of sewerage needed to be addressed in the Borough and felt that the Overview & Scrutiny Committee should look at this.

- 4.3 The Head of Planning Policy advised that the Council would be a statutory consultee when an application in relation to this proposed development was submitted. It was envisaged that this would take place in March 2018.

**Resolved:**

**That Otterpool Garden Town be a standing item on the agenda.**

## **5 London Plan review**

- 5.1 The Head of Planning Policy introduced the item. In 2016, the Mayor of London started the process to review the London Plan with the following timetable:

- November 2017 – draft Plan released for consultation
- Summer 2018 – Examination in Public
- Autumn 2019 – Proposed adoption of the London Plan

There were two potential issues for Ashford; how the London Plan would make provision for housing and any outward migration, and if the London Plan was published in November 2017 the impact that this may have on the submission of the Local Plan for Examination. It would be wise to consider 'what if' scenarios.

- 5.2 Members acknowledged that there was a potential for commercial businesses to relocate to the Borough, which would bring benefits for the wider Borough.

**Resolved:**

**That the London Plan be a standing item on the agenda.**

## **6 Date of Next Meetings**

- 6.1 The dates of the next meetings of the Task Group are as follows:

- 13th September 2017 – Council Chamber – 9.30am
- 5<sup>th</sup> October 2017 – Council Chamber – 10am
- 17<sup>th</sup> October 2017 – Council Chamber – 10am
- 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2017 – Council Chamber – 10am

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

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Queries concerning these minutes? Please contact Kirsty Morland:  
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