

Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group

Notes of a Meeting of the Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group held on the **27th May 2020**.

Present:

Cllr. Bartlett (Chairman)

Cllrs. Mrs Bell, Blanford, Clokie, Ledger, Michael, Spain.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Shorter, Walder.

Also In attendance:

Cllrs. Burgess, T Heyes.

Team Leader – Spatial Planning (DC), Team Leader – Spatial Planning (IG), Deputy Team Leader – Spatial Planning, Interim Head of Planning & Development, Graduate Planner, Policy Planner, Development Partnership Manager, Principal Solicitor (Strategic Development), Member Services and Ombudsman Liaison Officer.

1 Notes of the last meetings

- 1.1 The Notes of the meetings of 15th January and 11th February 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

2 Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Local Plan Update

- 2.1 The Team Leader – Spatial Planning introduced this item and highlighted the key points within the report. He drew Members' attention to the recommendations at the end of the report and explained that all proposals for policies would come back before the Task Group before they were finalised.
- 2.2 The Chairman opened up the item for discussion and the following points/comments were raised:
 - A Member noted that some of the consultation responses indicated public concern regarding windfall sites and the likelihood of development in unallocated areas. The Team Leader – Spatial Planning responded that this was a realistic concern and that a balance should be sought in the Plan to provide certainty to the market in terms of allocations, as well as setting

out need and target numbers. It would be necessary for the windfall policy in the Plan to cover all eventualities over the next 10 year period. Too much reliance on windfall sites would present a risk, but there would need to be some provision for windfall sites.

- A Member congratulated Officers on the work undertaken on a complex subject. He asked for clarification on a couple of points. The Deputy Team Leader responded that on page 21, the penultimate paragraph should refer to Option 2, rather than Option B. She also confirmed that a word 'turnover' was missing from page 29, after 'reduced' - first sentence of the second paragraph.
- In response to a Member's question, the Team Leader – Spatial Planning explained that it was necessary to make a choice whether to have a Local Plan which incorporated Gypsy and Traveller accommodation needs, or whether to have a separate plan for those needs outside of the Local Plan. He explained that in Officers' opinion it was preferable to keep the two plans separate. The Planning Inspector supported this approach as long as the Council produced a timely plan to deal with Gypsy and Traveller accommodation and that it could be evidenced that this plan was being progressed. The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Plan would adopt a similar approach to the Local Plan with allocations to meet the majority of need, and buffers and windfall sites to meet any need over and above the allocations.
- A Member questioned whether windfall sites should be incorporated as a percentage of need or treated as bonus sites. The Deputy Team Leader replied that the percentage option could be tricky in view of unforeseen changes on private pitches. If the allocated sites did not come forward, there was a risk of having insufficient sites. She recommended that work was done to tighten up the HOU16 policy, rather than adopt the percentage approach. Members expressed their agreement with this suggestion, and requested that the recommendations be amended to include tightening up HOU16.
- A Member asked about approaches taken by neighbouring authorities regarding separate plans. She also said she did not wish to see an oversupply of pitches. The Team Leader – Spatial Planning replied that neighbouring authorities appeared to be adopting the approach of including Gypsy and Traveller needs policies within their Local Plans. He also explained that the buffer approach was precautionary, and, although it might lead to a slight oversupply, it would enable to Council to resist hostile applications.
- A Member noted that the graphs within the report showed percentage, but not actual numbers. The Team Leader – Spatial Planning responded that he would add those numbers to the graphs and circulate to the Task Group for information.

- In response to a number of questions, the Deputy Team Leader explained that Officers were currently working with Housing and Corporate Property staff to identify potential sites for a large public site, and they considered that 10 – 15 pitches was an appropriate size. Regarding a county transit site, a Kent-wide Officer working group was currently being established to move this forward. She explained that a new caravan on an existing site was counted as a new pitch, but if the new caravan was part of a current household, it was not considered a new pitch. There was a difference between caravan numbers and pitch numbers. The development management application process had been amended to seek more clarity about household additions in order to establish whether new additions were a new pitch or additional caravans to meet household need. Officers were working on new monitoring methods and seeking to ensure that the right questions were asked to help establish more accurate statistics.

Resolved

That the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group notes the feedback from the recent consultation on the Regulation 18 version of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Local Plan and agrees, subject to the above discussion, that:

- 1. The plan should be progressed in a timely way and that the site identification parts of the process should continue (subject to C-19 risk assessments),**
- 2. Assessment of existing G&T policies (HOU16 and HOU17) and drafting of new topic policies (pitch design) will be progressed through the Sustainability Appraisal process,**
- 3. The plan period should use the PPTS figures (not cultural) as the basis for identifying need,**
- 4. A % of Chilmington Turnover (not the full amount) will be counted towards a supply as a 'buffer' only,**
- 5. The plan period should cover until 2030, or a date near to this figure depending on evidence, and not a 15-year post adoption date,**
- 6. The LDS should be updated to reflect the expected new timescales for the production of the Plan,**
- 7. That the proposals for future pitch monitoring should be taken forward (subject to C-19 risk assessments),**
- 8. The comments made at Regulation 18 stage can be released into the public domain.**

3 Draft Fibre to the Premises SPD

- 3.1 The Team Leader – Spatial Planning introduced this item and explained that a report on this topic had been considered at the previous Task Group. The consultation period of the SPD had been affected by COVID-19 issues and for this reason had been extended to 8 weeks. However, only 7 comments had been received. The SPD advised that revisions may be needed in due course as this was a fast-moving area.

3.2 The Chairman opened up the item for discussion and the following points/comments were made:

- A Member asked who owned the trunking in new developments, and whether it could be moved into communal ownership. The Team Leader – Spatial Planning responded that all trunking fibre infrastructure was owned by the operator, which effectively tied home owners to a single provider. At present this was legally sound, but far from ideal, as it was preferable for residents to have a choice of provider. It was hoped that this situation would be resolved as cabling became a standard feature of infrastructure on all new developments.

Resolved

That the Local Plan and Policy Task Group agree:

- i. The responses to the representations received on the draft FTTP SPD,**
- ii. The changes proposed to the draft FTTP SPD as contained within Appendix 2 of this report and subsequently approve the final version of the SPD as amended (Appendix 3),**
- iii. That the SPD, as amended, is recommended to Cabinet for final adoption, to be subsequently agreed by Full Council,**
- iv. That any minor changes or editing to the FTTP SPD can be actioned by the Head of Planning and Development in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, and**
- v. That the comments received on the SPD can now be published.**

4 Village Envelope – Brook

4.1 The Team Leader – Spatial Planning introduced this item, and explained that this was the last village envelope to be agreed by the Task Group. He also confirmed that the Ward Member had indicated support for the proposals.

Resolved

That the Task Group endorse the Brook village envelope map and recommend that Cabinet adopts this envelope as informal guidance for development management purposes.

5 Date of Next Meeting

5.1 26th June at 3pm on Microsoft Teams.

Councillor Bartlett
Chairman – Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group

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