

Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group

Notes of a Meeting of the Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group held on the **31st August 2018**.

Present:

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

Cllrs. Mrs Bell, Burgess, Mrs Dyer, Hicks, Heyes, Michael, Suddards.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2 (iii) Cllr. Hicks attended as Substitute Member for Cllr. Galpin.

Apologies:

Cllr. Galpin.

Also Present:

Cllr. Dehnel.

Head of Planning Policy; Principal Urban Designer; Head of Planning and Development; Principal Policy Planner (DC); Development Partnership Manager; Principal Solicitor (Strategic Development); Member Services and Ombudsman Complaints Officer.

1 Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 Cllr. Clarkson made a Voluntary Announcement as he was a Member of the Weald of Kent Protection Society.
- 1.2 Cllr. Clokie made a Voluntary Announcement as he was a Member of the Weald of Kent Protection Society.

2 Notes of the Meeting held on 30th July 2018

- 2.1 The Notes of the Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group Meeting held on 30th July 2018 were approved and confirmed as a correct record.

3 Draft WYE3 Masterplan – Former Imperial Campus College

- 3.1 The Head of Planning Policy introduced this item and gave the overview and background to the draft WYE3 Masterplan.
- 3.2 The Principal Urban Designer presented the specific proposals for each of the main areas within the WYE3 site. The following comments/questions were raised:

- Members were unanimous in wishing that the area known as 'Strawberry Field' or The Pasture should be retained in its natural setting and should not be used for development. They requested that this be included within the report.
- In response to a Member's question, it was confirmed that the MUGA and playing fields were part of the Wye School complex.
- Members considered that there should be some housing provided for downsizing purposes. The Principal Urban Designer responded that this level of detail had not yet been explored at this stage.
- A Member asked whether there was still demand for horticultural use of buildings in this area. The Principal Urban Designer confirmed that there was some demand, but that new commercial development was also likely to be used for professional purposes, such as solicitors offices.
- One Member said that the Parish Council did not feel there had been sufficient consultation on the Masterplan and that no meetings with them had taken place recently. The Head of Planning Policy explained to Members that the consultation process began in earnest in late 2016. Since then Officers had been at pains to involve the Parish Council at all stages. The Principal Urban Planner said that latterly he had been concentrating on amalgamating the various consultation responses and it had not been possible to meet regularly with the Parish Council while this work was being undertaken. The Chairman said this had been a complex process and there was bound to be some opposition. However, moving forward, he was meeting with the Ward Member shortly and would seek to ensure that the Parish Council was fully briefed on progress so far.
- Members considered that the proposals presented a good combination of uses for the whole site.

3.3 The Head of Planning Policy explained that there was some limited conflict between the Masterplan and the Wye Neighbourhood Plan. As an example, the Neighbourhood Plan gave an indicative figure of approximately 50 residential units for the WYE3 site, but the Masterplan would potentially result in a greater amount of housing than the Neighbourhood Plan envisaged. The Chairman said that it must be made clear to parishes that the Council could not be governed by figures provided in Neighbourhood Plans with no flexibility. By law, the Council had to consider all planning applications on merit and this could result in greater development than envisaged in Neighbourhood or Local Plans. The Head of Planning Policy said the Masterplan had been prepared by the developers in collaboration with the Council and the Parish Council. The developers had worked towards brokering a Masterplan which noted the aims and aspirations of the Neighbourhood Plan, as well as the development needs and opportunities of the site. A Member asked whether the Neighbourhood Plan needed to be updated to match the Masterplan. The Head of Planning Policy said he did not believe this was necessary as there was not a significant enough difference between the Masterplan and the spirit of what the Neighbourhood Plan was seeking to achieve.

- 3.4 In response to a question on the percentage increase in population in villages, the Head of Planning Policy said it was difficult to state categorically how the Borough's housing allocation should be divided up. It was important to take account of the individual context and circumstances of each village. Wye had good facilities, in a sustainable location, but there were sensitive environmental factors to be considered.
- 3.5 Members agreed that a further bullet point should be added to the Recommendation to cover exploring the potential for a grey water system to be used.

Resolved

That

The Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group endorses the draft masterplan for the WYE3 site and recommends that the Cabinet adopt it as informal guidance for development management purposes subject to the following amendments

- A. A clear statement that the 'Strawberry Field' should be retained free of built development.
- B. Change wording to appropriate Planning & Design Principles section to include further general principles sections on drainage/SUDs as infiltration should be viable as part of overall approach to surface water management across the site. These will include:
- i. How surface water may be integrated within the landscape design.
 - ii. Utilise SUDs measures to minimise impact of surface water runoff from development/redevelopment.
 - iii. Utilise SUDs measures to maximise the use of infiltration within the development site
 - iv. Confirmation that surface water will not leave the site
 - v. Ensure that quality of water run-off from the site does not degrade the quality of local watercourses or groundwater supplies" and
 - vi. Foul and surface water drainage : add "ensure that quality of water run-off from the site does not degrade the quality of local watercourses or groundwater supplies"
 - vii. Include reference to "green roofs" and reference to exploring the potential for a grey water system to be used.
- C. Renewable Energy section: add "*siting and design of buildings take account of opportunities for passive solar gain and shading*" and "*to design with regard to protecting inward views from the North Downs and other viewpoints from reflective glare*".
- D. Minor amendments
- i. Update timescale references which are out of date
 - ii. Check all covenanted land boundaries are correct throughout document.
 - iii. Check references to 'Donkey Field' , BCP site, Brownfield land (page 41) and commercial land on page 61 are all correct

- iv. Plus any other minor amendments deemed necessary.

4 Ashford Local Plan – Proposed Modifications – Response from the Inspectors

- 4.1 The Head of Planning Policy introduced this item. He said that since the last meeting a response had been received from the Inspectors regarding the draft schedule of Proposed Modifications to the Local Plan 2030. The Council had sought clarification on several points and he was still awaiting a response from the Inspectors. He said that despite efforts by the Council to increase the number of pitches at Westwell, the Inspectors had reiterated their requirement to see no more than one additional pitch on the site.
- 4.2 The Chairman said that he and Officers would be meeting with a representative from the Gypsy Community soon to try and secure agreement on more sites in appropriate areas. A Member asked about the process for counting Gypsy and Traveller pitches in Ashford. The Chairman said that this item should come to the Task Group in the new few months.
- 4.3 The Head of Planning Policy advised that in the draft Schedule of Modifications considered at the previous Task Group meeting, Boughton Lees had been included under policy HOU5. Feedback from the Inspectors was that Boughton Lees did not fit the criteria for this policy, so it was now proposed to remove that settlement from policy HOU5 but to retain it under policy HOU3a.

5 Any Other Business

- 5.1 Members agreed that a future meeting of the Task Group should discuss the desirability of bus gates on new developments.
- 5.2 The Chairman advised that KCC had now agreed 'drive in drive off' for maintenance of roundabouts in Ashford, and the main roundabouts would be altered to facilitate this. There was an opportunity to rename the roundabouts in accordance with Ashford's heritage.
- 5.3 The Chairman advised that he intended to establish a small sub-committee to assist Officers to identify the confines of every village in the Borough. He said that the confines would be decided in conjunction with the Parish Councils and that he would be notifying Parish Councils after the next meeting of the Task Group.

Councillor Clarkson
Chairman – Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group

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