

Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group

Notes of a Meeting of the Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group held on the **19th December 2018**.

Present:

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

Cllrs. Mrs Bell, Burgess, Galpin, Heyes, White.

Apologies:

Cllrs. Michael, Miss Martin.

Development Partnership Manager.

Also Present:

Cllrs. Blanford, Hicks.

Head of Planning Policy; Principal Policy Planner (IG); Principal Policy Planner (DC); Policy Planner; Housing Operations Manager; Principal Solicitor (Strategic Development); Member Services and Ombudsman Complaints Officer.

1 Gypsy and Traveller DPD - Update

1.1 The Policy Planner introduced this item and summarised the key points within the report.

1.2 The Chairman opened up the item for discussion and the following comments/points were raised:

- The Policy Planner advised that the draft Local Plan Inspectors' report for fact checking had been received and it indicated their agreement that Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation could be dealt with through an individual DPD. Members agreed that this was encouraging news.
- A Member asked if there was a clear definition for the term 'household'. The Policy Planner responded that a household indicated a single pitch. Once grown-up children moved into separate accommodation, albeit on the same site, this would be counted as a second household, which would require a second pitch. These guidelines also applied to grandparents living in separate accommodation on the same site. The Policy Planner added that the definition could not be applied with absolute certainty, but this was the best current measure for calculating households.
- In response to a question about the absence of information regarding the July 2018 pitch count, the Policy Planner said she would follow up on this and respond to Members.

- A Member asked whether a buffer was required, in the same way as for bricks and mortar housing requirements. The Policy Planner added that this was not the case as it was only necessary to meet the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) target. Members agreed that it was desirable to be as accurate as possible in terms of pitch provision whilst still meeting the requirements.
- The Head of Planning Policy explained the recommendation for cross-departmental working. He said it was important to understand the current role of the whole Council in operating sites and what control was needed to continue operation in future.
- Members agreed that further time was required to digest the report fully, and that it would be considered again at a future meeting.

Resolved

That the Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group notes the updated information contained within the report and endorses the following actions as part of the preparation of a Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation DPD:

- i) That officers set up a cross departmental working group to improve knowledge of and response to issues surrounding Gypsy and Traveller sites;**
- ii) That officers implement a revised monitoring system.**

2 MHCLG consultation – Supporting the high street and increasing the delivery of new homes

2.1 The Head of Planning Policy introduced this item and highlighted the main points in the report. He said some of the proposals could have significant impact on the Council's ability to shape and plan potential developments in future.

2.2 Members discussed the proposals as follows:

a) Allowing greater change of use to support high streets to adapt and diversify

- Members considered that although this proposal may not pose a problem for town centre high streets, it could create significant problems in villages and local or district centres, such as Repton Park. A Member suggested that it was very important to clarify that this proposal related to town centre high streets only, and not to villages and smaller urban centres. Members agreed that the Council's response should emphasize its concern over this point.
- In response to a question, the Head of Planning Policy explained that where planning permission was required, the Council's planning policies would apply. However, where permitted development was allowed subject only to prior approval, the Local Plan did not hold weight.

b) Temporary changes of use

- Members agreed with the suggested response.

c) Amendments to the Use Classes Order

- Members discussed their concerns about this proposal and the potential reduction in the Council's ability to impose planning controls on large parts of the town centre. It was also noted that the proposal could lead to parking problems in villages. The Head of Planning Policy said that whilst it was possible to argue the potential merits of this proposal more clearly in a town centre high street, it was harder to see any benefits in other areas. Members agreed that this view should be reflected in the Council's response.

d) Extending buildings upwards to create additional homes

- Members were strongly against this proposal and agreed that the Council's response should indicate this view.

e) Installation of public call boxes and associated advertisement consent

- Members agreed with the proposed response.

f) Electric vehicle charging points

- Members discussed concerns regarding the capacity of power cables where charging points were installed under existing PD rights and whether electric vehicle charging points were fit for purpose. It was agreed that these concerns should be included in the Council's response.

g) Making permanent two time-limited PD rights

- Members agreed the proposed responses to parts i) and ii).

h) Supporting housing delivery by allowing for the demolition of commercial buildings and redevelopment as residential

- Members expressed concern over this proposal, and considered that it would substantially reduce the Council's ability to control the quality of development in the Borough. Members agreed with the proposed response.

Other elements in the consultation document

Members agreed that none of these issues should raise any concerns for the Council and no specific response was required.

Resolved

That, subject to the additional comments raised by the Task Group in discussing the proposals, the Local Plan and Planning Policy Task Group endorses the proposed responses to the consultation set out in the report and requests the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Development to respond to MHCLG on behalf of the Council.

3 Local Plan to 2030 – oral update on the Inspectors’ Report

- 3.1 The Head of Planning Policy advised that Officers had now received the Inspectors’ report for fact checking, prior to publication of their final report. Officers would respond by the end of the week, and expected to receive the final version of the report during the first week of January 2019. The Head of Planning Policy confirmed that the Inspectors would find the Local Plan sound, subject to the main modifications introduced during Autumn 2018, with some very minor changes. The final report would be a useful basis to demonstrate to residents that the Council were taking a pragmatic approach to planning. The report would come to this Task Group in January, before being submitted to Full Council in February for adoption.
- 3.2 The Head of Planning Policy said he was proud of what had been achieved. The Chairman said that, on behalf of the Administration, he was very grateful to Officers for their achievement, and he offered his congratulations. He considered that there had been a good result from the Public Examination, and recognised the large volume of work this had involved for Officers. The Head of Planning Policy thanked the Chairman, and said his remarks were appreciated. He would circulate the Inspectors’ Report to Members when available.

4 Dates of Next Meetings

- 4.1 23rd January 2019 2pm Council Chamber

Post Meeting Note - the meeting scheduled for 8th February will be moved further back to late February/early March. Details to be advised.

Councillor Clarkson
Chairman – Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group

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