

# Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group

Notes of a Meeting of the Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group held on the **23<sup>rd</sup> January 2019**.

## Present:

Cllr Clokie (Vice-Chairman in the Chair).

Cllrs Burgess, Mrs Dyer, Galpin, Hicks, Michael, Pickering.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 1.2(iii) Cllrs. Hicks and Pickering attended as Substitute Members for Cllrs Heyes and Mrs Bell respectively.

## Apologies:

Cllrs Mrs Bell, Bradford, Dehnel, Heyes.

## Also Present:

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

## 1 Declarations of Interest

- 1.1 Cllr Burgess 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 and the Tenterden and District Residents' Association.
- 1.3 Cllr Michael made a Voluntary Announcement as he was a member of the Weald of Kent Protection Society.

## 2 Minutes of the Previous Meetings

- 2.1 The Notes of the meetings held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018 and 19<sup>th</sup> December 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

## 3 Local Plan to 2030 – Inspectors' Report

- 3.1 The Head of Planning Policy introduced this item, and outlined the Inspectors' headline changes to the Plan, which had been consolidated in their report.
- 3.2 The Chairman opened up the item for discussion and the following questions/points were raised:
  - In response to a question, the Head of Planning Policy confirmed the Inspectors' view that the Council could now demonstrate a 5.3 year housing land supply. This situation would be secure until October 2019, when the

position would be reviewed and Members would be advised accordingly. He said the housing land supply was a rolling position which was reviewed annually. The housing supply target figures for assessment were provided by the Government and could vary according to the methodology used. Ashford Borough Council's figures were based on the old system, but the new methodology would start to kick in in due course and it would be necessary to review the Council's position in the light of the new approach. He confirmed that it was possible to spread any shortfall over a longer period than the usual 5 years.

- A Member asked about the Council's position in relation to potential appeals. The Head of Planning Policy said that the Council would be in a better position now with a newly adopted Local Plan than it had been 12 months ago. However, the ongoing position would depend on housing delivery and build out rates.
- In response to a question, the Head of Planning Policy advised that the new methodology could lead to a reduction in target housing numbers, as the shortfall in delivery since 2011 may no longer be a factor, although it was still likely that the target would remain at a challenging level.
- A Member asked about potential gating factors and the Head of Planning Policy said that he did not expect that the Council would be a gating factor to suitable schemes.
- The Head of Planning Policy advised that the next stage in the process would be for the Council to consider the final amended version of the new Local Plan before agreeing its adoption. Once this had taken place a number of the Council's existing Development Plan Documents would fall away. He said that a draft copy of the final version of the Local Plan would be available for Members before the February Council meeting.
- In response to a question, the Head of Planning Policy explained that all amendments covered in the Table of Main Modifications attached to the Inspectors' Report were subject to consultation during Autumn 2018, except for three very minor additional changes proposed by the Inspectors in response to the consultation. He said the planning department would be responsible for applying these changes and applications would be judged against policy criteria.

## **Resolved**

**That the Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group welcomes the Inspectors' Report on the Examination of the Local Plan to 2030 and recommends that the Council adopts the new Local Plan subject to the Main Modifications appended to the Inspectors' Report.**

## **4 Village envelope exercise – update**

- 4.1 The Vice-Chairman in the Chair introduced this item. He opened up the item for discussion and the following questions/points were raised:

- In response to a question, the Head of Planning Policy explained that the maps contained in the report did not show Local Plan site allocations, but were intended to indicate the current built form of the settlement. Members agreed that they would like to see some indication of site allocations on these maps. The Head of Planning Policy undertook to amend the maps to show the location of any major development applications that had been granted, but not yet fully implemented, and where site allocations in the Local Plan were located. Once these sites were fully built out the village envelope boundary would be amended accordingly.
- A Member asked about the standing of village envelopes with regard to Planning Policy. The Head of Planning Policy said that village envelopes were designed to provide some clarity about the interpretation of 'built-up confines' where this was referred to in Local Plan policies. However, they should not be regarded as the sole indication of whether proposed schemes were acceptable or not, and an application outside a village envelope may be acceptable depending on a number of other relevant factors and vice versa. He said that this was particularly the case with larger settlements.

## Resolved

**The Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group endorses the proposed village envelopes for High Halden, Smarden, Little Chart and Hamstreet set out in Appendix 1 to the report, subject to the plans being amended as agreed above, and recommends that the Cabinet adopts them as informal guidance for development management purposes.**

## 5 Date of Next Meeting

5.1    27<sup>th</sup> February 2019    2pm    Chamber  
       15<sup>th</sup> March 2019       2pm    Chamber

Councillor Clokie  
Vice-Chairman in the Chair – Local Plan & Planning Policy Task Group

---

Queries concerning these minutes? Please contact [membersservices@ashford.gov.uk](mailto:membersservices@ashford.gov.uk)  
Agendas, Reports and Minutes are available on: [www.ashford.moderngov.co.uk](http://www.ashford.moderngov.co.uk)