THE DISTRICT COUNCIL OF TANDRIDGE

PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

Minutes and Report to Council of the meeting of the Committee held in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Station Road East, Oxted on the 19th December 2018.

PRESENT: Councillors Jecks (Chair), Duck (Vice Chair), Ainsworth, Black, Botten, Dennis, Dunbar, Farr, Fisher, Hanwood, Jones, Lockwood and Sayer.


IN ATTENDANCE: Virginia Blackman (Senior Director, National Head of Compulsory Purchase, GVA).

204. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 15th November 2018 were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

COMMITTEE DECISION
(Under powers delegated to the Committee)

205. OUR LOCAL PLAN: 2033 - SUBMISSION DOCUMENTS (REGULATION 22)

The Committee considered a proposed Local Plan for submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination in accordance with Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

The proposed Local Plan was accompanied by a raft of supporting documents, together with a covering report which informed Members about:

- the responses to the Regulation 19 consultation that took place between the 30th July and 10th September 2018;
- the schedule of main modifications arising from the above consultation and further work with statutory partners; there were no substantial changes in terms of site allocations or policies – however, the schedule did propose that the requirements for some individual allocated sites to generate specific infrastructure provision should be amended (such provision would still be retained within the infrastructure delivery plan);
- a reduction in the previously objectively assessed need (OAN) for housing in the district from 470 to 398 per annum (during the 20 year plan period) - the actual number of dwellings which the Local Plan intended to provide was 303 per annum;
- progress on obtaining agreement with neighbouring councils on statements of common ground in accordance with the duty to cooperate;
• further work in respect of the South Godstone garden community proposal, e.g.:
  ➢ an assessment by GVA Grimley Limited (property and planning advisers) concluding that the project is viable and that the required infrastructure can be funded from the captured land value of the site;
  ➢ commitments from Engie (a multinational energy infrastructure provider) and Clarion Homes to work jointly and proactively to deliver the community;
  ➢ discussions with Homes England, the Highways Agency and Surrey and West Sussex County Councils regarding the bid for central government infrastructure funding;
  ➢ the intention to seek to increase the initial build out rate of 200 homes per annum to around 270, particularly if the Council built its own homes.

The following comments and opinions were expressed during the debate:

• the proposed Local Plan presents a deliverable strategy for the District and balances the conflicting needs of providing additional housing (especially affordable homes for younger people) and protecting the Green Belt;

• the absence of a Plan would present unacceptable risks and a submission needed to be made on or before the 24th January 2019 to avoid uncontrolled development and exposure to the higher OAN housing requirements of the Government's revised National Planning Policy Framework;

• the Council was achieving significant buy-in from key prospective infrastructure providers.

These views were countered by the following concerns and criticisms:

• certain aspects of the plan represented a poor outcome, especially for Tier 1 settlements, and the threat of 6000 new homes having to be built throughout the District was unjustified – the opportunity to strike a better balance between new housing provision and open space protection had been missed;

• Oxted was misrepresented in the settlement hierarchy (officers explained that regardless of the number of points allocated to Oxted and whether it ranked above Caterham or not, it would always still constitute a Tier 1 settlement);

• the Local Plan documents were weak, flawed, inconsistent and not compliant with national planning policy;

• the plan was not infrastructure led with no guarantee of the infrastructure required to support new developments; the Coast 2 Capital Local Enterprise Partnership had submitted representations about the soundness of the plan and Surrey County Council’s significant budgetary deficit cast doubt on its capacity to support key projects;

• additional, recently published local plan documents should have been consulted upon;
• the alleged negative consequences of not submitting the intended plan at this stage were being exaggerated and the intended plan was now being rushed through;

• Tier 1 areas were vulnerable to excessive windfall development and developers should be held to account regarding the provision of affordable housing;

• the Council needed to demonstrate leadership and champion residents’ needs and reasonable demands.

The circumstances behind housing allocation policy HSG13 (land west of Red Lane, Hurst Green) were clarified, i.e. it reflected the County Council’s ambition for the Hurst Green infant and Holland junior schools to merge within a new building to be funded via the possible sale of the infant school site. Regarding other school sites, it was confirmed that SCC:

(i) had not withdrawn its interest in relocating and expanding Warlingham Village Primary School as referred to in housing allocation policy HSG15 (land west of Limpsfield Road, Warlingham); and

(ii) had not committed funding for improvements to Burstow Primary School.

Discussion ensued about policy TLP 25 (retail frontages) and the requirement for 50% of frontages in ‘local centres’ remaining in A1 use. Warlingham Parish Council had advocated that, where a proposed change of use would result in the proportion of A1 frontages falling below that threshold, planning permission could still be granted if it was demonstrated that the proposed use would make a positive contribution to the vitality and viability of the area. It was agreed that officers would review the wording against the evidence which underpinned the policy for local centres in response to the Parish Council’s representations.

Councillor Fisher moved that the recommendations within the report be put to the vote. Upon being seconded, this motion was carried and the Chair advised that he would be conducting four separate votes, i.e. on recommendations:

• A, B and D;
• C;
• E; and
• F

Recommendations A, B and D were duly carried.

Councillor Sayer moved that recommendation C be amended by the deletion of the following words:

“the schedule of main modifications attached as Appendix ‘H’ [to the agenda] be approved and authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Policy Committee, to submit such further main modifications as she considers necessary, including such modifications as currently appear as minor modifications by way of tracked changes in the Local Plan which the Council is subsequently advised constitute main modifications”
The Chair proposed the following counter amendment which was duly seconded:

“the schedule of main modifications attached as Appendix ‘H’ be approved and, subject to her notifying members of the Planning Policy Committee in advance, authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Policy Committee, to submit such further main modifications as she considers necessary, including such modifications as currently appear as minor modifications by way of tracked changes in the Local Plan which the Council is subsequently advised constitute main modifications”

The Chair clarified that, at its meeting on 16th January 2019, the Committee would have the opportunity to consider the proposed main modifications for submission to the Planning inspectorate. Upon being put to the vote, the counter amendment to recommendation C was carried.

Recommendations E and F were then subjected to separate votes, both of which were carried.

**RESOLVED** – that:

A. the Local Plan (Appendix ‘A’ to the agenda) be submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination before 24th January 2019, together with the:

   (i) Infrastructure Delivery Plan (Appendix ‘B’ to the agenda);
   (ii) Sustainability Appraisal (Appendix ‘C’ to the agenda);
   (iii) Habitat Regulations Assessment (Appendix ‘D’ to the agenda);
   (iv) Equalities Impact (Assessment Appendix ‘E’ to the agenda);
   (v) Policies Maps (Appendix ‘F’ to the agenda); and
   (vi) Regulation 22(3) Statement of Consultation and responses received (Appendix ‘G’ to the agenda);

B. power to make minor alterations to those documents prior to such submission be delegated to the Chief Executive;

C. the schedule of main modifications attached as Appendix ‘H’ to the agenda be approved and, subject to her notifying members of the Planning Policy Committee in advance, authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Chair of the Planning Policy Committee, to submit such further main modifications as she considers necessary, including such modifications as currently appear as minor modifications by way of tracked changes in the Local Plan which the Council is subsequently advised constitute main modifications;

D. the Chief Executive be authorised to submit additional or amended documents to the examination library as the need arises, subject to her notifying members of the Planning Policy Committee in advance;

E. the amended Local Development Scheme, attached at Appendix I to the agenda, be approved; and
F.  the ambition to increase the rate of delivery of homes in the South Godstone Garden Community be noted and, to that end, the acquisition of land by the Council within the area of search for the South Godstone Garden Community, including by use of its compulsory purchase powers if necessary, be agreed in principle.

Declarations of interest:

(i)  At the beginning of the meeting, Councillor Jecks declared that his brother lives in Blindley Heath. Whilst not a disclosable pecuniary interest under the Members’ code of conduct, he wished this to be recorded in the minutes in view of the South Godstone garden community policy within the local plan.

(ii) Arising from the debate about the Local Plan, Councillor Botten declared that he was the chair of governors at Burstow Primary School. This amounted to a non-pecuniary interest under the Members’ code of conduct.

Rising: 9.35pm