

PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION CABINET ADVISORY BOARD

Monday, 11 January 2021

**Present: Councillor McDermott (Chairman)
Councillors Bland (Vice-Chairman), Bailey, Backhouse, Hamilton, Lewis, Lidstone,
Rutland, Scott, Mrs Soyke and Willis**

Officers in Attendance: Stephen Baughen (Head of Planning Services), David Scully (Landscape and Biodiversity Officer), Hannah Young (Strategic Sites and Delivery Team Leader) and Emer Moran (Democratic Services Officer)

Other Members in Attendance: Councillors Dr Hall and Mackonochie

CHAIRMAN'S INTRODUCTION

PT10/20 The chairman opened the meeting and outlined procedural matters of the meeting.

APOLOGIES

PT11/20 There were no apologies received.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

PT12/20 No declarations of interest were made.

NOTIFICATION OF VISITING MEMBERS WISHING TO SPEAK

PT13/20 Mr Douglas Bond and Mr Stewart Gledhill registered to speak on agenda item PT16/20.
Parish Councillor Hugh Patterson registered to speak on agenda item PT16/20.
Borough Councillors Dr Hall and Mackonochie registered to speak on agenda item PT16/20.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED 9 NOVEMBER 2020

PT14/20 Members had the opportunity to review the minutes.

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting dated 9 November 2020 be approved as a correct record.

FORWARD PLAN AS AT 22 DECEMBER 2020

PT15/20 Members had the opportunity to review the Forward Plan.

RESOLVED – That the Forward Plan as at 22 December 2020 be noted.

REGULATION 19 CONSULTATION ON PRE-SUBMISSION VERSION OF LOCAL PLAN 2020-2038 AND SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL, AND SUBMISSION TO SECRETARY OF STATE LOCAL PLAN

PT16/20 Stephen Baughen, Head of Planning presented a report which set out the previous stages in the production of the new Local Plan for Tunbridge Wells borough, and provided information on the Pre-Submission version of the

Local Plan [the PSLP] which had been produced.

Mr Baughen gave a verbal update to Members on a correction which needed to be made to the Plan:

- Policy AL/CRS 3 Turnden Farm, Hartley Road, Cranbrook which was on page 238 of the Agenda papers, stated that the site was allocated for approximately 160 – 170 dwellings. This, was an error, as it did not take into account the existing dwellings permitted on this site. This should read 200 – 204 dwellings.
- Accordingly the cumulative figures at Policy STR/CRS1 needed to be corrected, and Table 4 of the PSLP, on pages 97 and 98 of the PSLP were also updated.

Ms Hazel Strouts, on behalf of Friends of the East End registered to speak, points raised included:

- In their opinion there were no amenities or infrastructure that equate with sustainability.
- The hospital comments advised that they were not prepared to provide amenities.
- In their opinion the plan was equally mistaken in its treatment of site 158, a site closer to Benenden.
- Friends of the East End called on this committee, to:
 - Apply Local Plan sustainability rules to the hospital sites; and
 - Restore 158 and its access point on New Pond Road.

Parish Councillor Hugh Patterson, Chairman of Capel Parish Council registered to speak, points raised included:

- The total housing allocation proposed was disproportionate in their opinion.
- The fact that the sites were in Green Belt.
- Reasons why in their opinion Tudeley Garden Village was unsustainable.
- Alternative sites were proposed and reasons provided.

Mr Douglas Bond registered to speak, points raised included:

- In his opinion key reports remained incomplete;
 - • Transport Assessment Report Update;
 - • AONB Setting Report;
 - • Green Belt Study Stage 3 Report;
 - • Strategic Sites Master Planning and Infrastructure Study; and
 - • Viability Study Update

Mr Stewart Gledhill registered to speak, points raised included:

- Location of affordable housing.
- Sustainable alternatives such as Castle Hill.
- The economic and social impact of the pandemic on decisions made.

Borough Councillor Dr Linda Hall registered to speak, points raised included:

- East End sought two actions:
 - Site 158 reinstated in Benenden.
 - Consistency and conformity to the sustainability policies applied.

Borough Councillor Carol Mackonochie registered to speak, points raised included:

- Provision of factual matters regarding the Local Plan proposals, including in Capel.
- Comments received from Capel Parishioners.

In response to the speakers, Officers made some points of clarification, which included:

- Site 158 was considered by Officers following its submission in the call for sites, it was discussed with the Benenden Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Development Plan (NDP) Group, however the wider site was deemed to be sensitive in landscape terms.
- Access was not precluded from site 158 for the future.
- Pages 276-282 of the report outlined the clear requirements for allocations at Benenden hospital and how those matters would be secured at planning application stage.
- The draft NDP had the same proposed allocations as the TW LP.
- It was recognised that the Local Plan would affect all communities of the borough with substantial change to Paddock Wood and Capel.
- Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council (TMBC) comments were carefully considered and infrastructure matters were discussed with TMBC.
- The pre submission Local Plan was clear that funding for the Five Oak Green bypass came from strategic sites.
- A summary of the approach taken to the strategic sites and what was hoped to be achieved by the creation of new settlement in Tudley Village and the extension and expansion of Paddock Wood including in east Capel was given.
- There had been a further and more thorough review of brown field land opportunities and this would be available in brown field land topic papers.
- The need to progress the plan was stressed.
- Pages 912 to 918 of the agenda provided evidence of the assessment options for Paddock Wood including land in east Capel in terms of numbers of properties and direction of growth.
- Members were assured that the site at Castle Hill as well as other alternatives had been considered through the sustainability appraisal and discounted for reasons outlined in pages 941 to 944 in the report.
- Members were aware that the evidence documents had been available to Members since December and would be available for public view by late February or March.

Members of the Committee took account of the report and raised a number of questions and issues within their discussions. Points raised included:

- The key differences between Regulation 18 and Regulation 19 consultation was addressed in paragraph 4.1 page 43 of the report and an explanation was given.
- It was advised that one of the key elements in the Government's standard method was the affordability ratio i.e. the difference between income and house prices which was factored into the housing numbers for the borough.

- It was confirmed that the policies would result in an increase in affordable housing to 40% on green field sites, and would be 30% on brown field sites, with significant increases in the delivery of social rented housing.
- Members' attention was brought to the policies EN1, EN2 and EN3 related to sustainable design standards and climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Policies EN9, EN10, EN11, EN12, EN13, EN15 addressed biodiversity net gain, biodiversity protected habitat as well as other elements.
- Strategic policy STR6 addressed concerns related to travel and parking and it was confirmed that active travel was a priority and made clear reference to upcoming changes in travel technology.
- Concerns related to the sustainability of developments at Canewood Farm, Baldwin's Lane and Benenden were addressed.
- The council had commissioned local cycling and pedestrian infrastructure plan along the A26.
- The LUC report concluded that the harm to the Green Belt land at that particular part of Canewood Farm unlike the remainder of the larger site.
- It was advised that the planning practice guidance was clear about undertaking consultation during the pandemic with either socially distanced or lockdown measures and it set out that online should be the key way to carry out consultation, with provision made for those without access to, or less able to use, the internet.
- There were ongoing discussions with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and other councils that had successfully carried out consultation during the pandemic and their practices were being reviewed.
- Concerns raised from residents in Capel were acknowledged.
- An explanation was given of the supplementary planning documents related to the garden communities which would be carried forward in 2021 and 2022 subject to the decision at Full Council and the Inspector decision.
- It was confirmed that throughout the preparation of the Local Plan the Council had been engaged with their neighbouring Council's, the County Council and other relevant infrastructure providers and consultees particularly in relation to Paddock Wood including, land in east Capel and Tudeley.
- It was advised ongoing wider sub regional levels of unmet need and timetabling for the next round of planning, had been discussed with neighbouring Council's.
- A further advisory visit with the Inspector had been arranged for February which would focus mainly on the Council's Duty to Cooperate.
- It was confirmed that the Council had a signed statement of common ground with Rother District Council and one with Wealden District Council was expected
- The policies within the Local Plan related to biodiversity and agricultural land as well as local green space were explained.
- It was advised that there was a requirement for 5 year review of the Local Plan and this would produce information on how requirements and behaviours have changed since the pandemic.
- It was important to note that it was a census year and therefore the move into the next Local Plan would be based on the

- comprehensive information gained from the census data.
- It was confirmed that there was a requirement to investigate for the potential conversion rather than demolition of the sanatorium at Benenden Hospital to be looked into at planning application stage.
 - Policy EN1 dealt with place shaping and design and the requirements needed for high quality.

RESOLVED:

- i. That the Cabinet Advisory Board supported the recommendations in the report.

URGENT BUSINESS

PT17/20 There was no urgent business for consideration.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

PT18/20 The next meeting was scheduled for Monday 15 February 2021.

NOTE: The meeting concluded at 9.26 pm.