

COMMUNITIES AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CABINET ADVISORY BOARD

Wednesday, 9 June 2021

Present: Councillor David Scott (Chairman)
Councillors Fairweather (Vice-Chairman), March, Ms Palmer, Ellis, Rutland, Hill, Pope,
Allen, Patterson and Britcher

Officers in Attendance:

Other Members in Attendance: Councillors

APOLOGIES

COM37/21 There were no apologies received.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

COM38/21 There were no disclosable pecuniary or other significant interests declared at the meeting.

NOTIFICATION OF VISITING PERSONS WISHING TO SPEAK

COM39/21 Councillors Pound and Bailey registered to speak on agenda item 6 Affordable Housing Commuted Sums Expenditure Hornbeam Avenue.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING DATED 25 MARCH 2021

COM40/21 Members reviewed the minutes. No amendments were proposed.

RESOLVED – The minutes of the meeting dated 25 March 2021 be approved as a correct record.

FORWARD PLAN AS AT 20 MAY 2021

COM41/21 **RESOLVED** - That the Forward Plan as at 20 May 2021 be noted.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING COMMUTED SUMS EXPENDITURE

COM42/21 Councillor Matthew Bailey had registered to speak on Item 6, comments included-
The council has adopted aim to be carbon neutral by 2030 and to encourage others to reduce emissions. The carbon reduction plan adopted by cabinet means carbon emissions must be taken into account in all decision making. The Communities and Economic Development Cabinet Advisory Board can play a crucial role in reducing emissions; it advises cabinet on waste and leisure contracts. St John's Leisure Centre tops the list of co2 emissions in the sector with The Weald Sports Centre in Cranbrook coming third. The waste contract accounts for 27% of the council's total co2 output. Regarding this particular agenda item, by supplying funding we have some influence over the provider and we must try to make this development as energy efficient as possible – I would ask officers to speak to the developer and ask them to add further energy efficiency measures and to come back to members to advise if these are measures which are possible to implement.

Sarah Holmes, Housing Register and Development Manager, responded to

Councillor Bailey with the following comments –
We will discuss with the developer if further carbon reduction measures can be put in place which may result in further funding requirements.

Sarah Holmes introduced the report. Comments included -
Council holds section 106 contributions for affordable housing where it isn't available on site. This report is asking for section 106 funding. Town and Country cannot offer enough contribution to provide the developer to offer five 2 bed social rented housing units, therefore this needs to be subsidised by section 106 funding.

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

- There is no stipulation on time framed this needs to be used by.
- Concerns that Town and Country and Peabody are joined together and whilst Peabody are proactive in providing social housing Town and Country seem more reluctant.
- After 3 years tenants will get the right to acquire but this is very rarely done. Right to acquire should be reinvested.
- There has been no social rented housing built in Southborough since 2011.
- There are other projects coming up in the coming months which may also need subsidy to make them social rent instead of affordable rent so this will be budgeted for.
- Planning officer will see what developer has to offer in terms of green technologies but the Housing Team will try to go above and beyond. Planning condition 21 states developer has to advise officers what technologies they will be using.
- Thanks were given to Sarah and her Team for delivering social rented homes within the borough.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Cabinet agree the release of Section 106 funding for affordable housing totalling £292,250 held by the Council in lieu of affordable housing provision on the site known as 'Barretts 66-68 Frant Road, (Planning permission TW/17/01608/FULL applies) to Town and Country Housing Group; and

2. That the Cabinet authorise the Head of Housing, Health and Environment, in consultation with the Head of the Legal Partnership, to enter in to a grant agreement and all associated legal documentation with Town & Country Housing to facilitate the delivery of five 2 bed social rented houses at Hornbeam Avenue, Southborough using the Section 106 funding released.

PSPO CONSULTATION 2021

COM43/21 Terry Hughes, Community Safety Manager, introduced his report which outlined the Public Spaces Protection Orders Consultation 2021. He provided an outline of the proposals for members which included the following comments:

- Outcomes that have been in place since 2018 include the following:
 - Alcohol control areas – allows officers to intervene. It is recommended to renew this. This is not in operation in Southborough – this was identified around 2000 as needing intervention so it is recommended to add this.

- Dog control – prohibition in play areas. Officers visited after this was introduced. Penalties have been increased from £50 to £100 with support. Sports grounds – St Marks and Nevill. Dogs on leads requirement. Street Scene Officers have enforced this and issued some penalty notices. It is recommended to introduce an outright ban at Nevill, at St Marks they are happy with dogs on leads.
- New psychoactive substances – Stakeholder conversations have coincided with new legislation and amendments and a number of shops have been closed in Tunbridge Wells and across the county. Police officers prefer established legislation to seize substances it is recommended to discharge this prohibition.
- Amplified music in Tunbridge Wells Town Centre – no breaches but order has helped manage busking in collaboration with businesses and local residents.
- Rough sleeping and begging – no penalty notices issued but has given an opportunity to engage with rough sleepers and challenge certain behaviours. It is believed that the greater support has decreased incidences of this on the whole. A certain rough sleeper was particularly challenging but has been managed. There is a potential for an increase in rough sleeping and begging post covid especially with empty retail units on the high street and this prohibition gives us the opportunity to support individuals, so it is recommended to renew these measures for a further three years.
- Proposals include:
 - Alcohol control and other restrictions - Sherwood Lake and it's proximity to residential properties in Warren Walk and Lakeside. There is frequent reporting of antisocial behaviour including shouting and loud swearing, smoking cannabis, drinking alcohol, urinating near properties and frequent alarms going off both day and night. Other issues include off road motorcycles, with varying frequency and the harassment and killing of wildlife. A visit was carried out by the Community Safety Officer and Kent Police's Crime Reduction Officer who carried out an environmental visual audit and developed an action plan which includes PSCO visits as often as they are able. There has been strong representation from local councils on this issue. There is an increase in anti-social behaviour at certain times. Enforcement is an issue and expectations will be high.
 - Dog Control - Dogs on Leads (requests from the Parks Team at Dunorlan Park). Complaints include dogs knocking people over, jumping in the lake and chasing wildlife and a recent dog bite caused by an unleashed dog. Bylaws are ancient and unenforceable.
 - St Marks and Nevill Ground for rugby club. Nevill have considered a number of options and had considered continuing to allow dogs on leads as the most pragmatic option. Some early successes in enforcement followed officer visits but attendance from officers was difficult. The issue has not gone away and the rules are regularly ignored by dog owners. Current restrictions involve officers in attendance having to wait to catch owners in breach of the rules. An outright ban on dogs is thought to offer improvements to the situation and

- make it easier to enforce.
- Access control at St Johns Park - A popular location for young people to congregate on benches by the café, the shelter by the tennis court (where the bench has been temporarily removed) and the meadow. This is discussed regularly at the youth focused district contextual safeguarding meeting and workers are deployed to engage with young people. The gate was locked of an evening last summer to some success but was not fully sustainable over a longer period. The Beltring Road gates are being locked regularly on Friday and Saturday evenings. There are other access areas such as Reynold Lane which aren't being locked however. Further conversations are ongoing. Options include police penalising people being there overnight and refusing to leave, issuing penalties and taking statements from those present causing a disturbance to the Communities Safety Team. Police discretion would be used.
- Car Parks - Town Centre multistorey car parks. Skateboarders are regularly present at quieter times but they are not causing a disturbance. There are some reports of congregation and drinking, smoking and nuisance in some car parks. Displacement would be an issue, particularly for skateboarders. There are skate parks but they offer very little risk and reward, particularly the St John's one we are advised. The Community Safety Officer is looking to see how this may be improved and seeks to secure some funding. It is not thought that enforcement will be necessary but will need reassessing.

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

- Difficulty locating PSCOs.
- Frequency of the enforcement of dog control and issues surrounding this.
- Regarding those registered blind or registered disabled including use of assistance dogs, it is confirmed that exceptions are already in place including prohibition on children's play areas.
- Regarding Park Watch, going forward Terry will have conversations with the parks team. Friends of the park have been very active recently.
- CCTV – Cost is an issue with deployable cameras. CCTV manager in discussions for Knights Park and other areas. They are accessible remotely so it could be that officers could be put in control room but would take them away from their main monitoring banks. It would be better to have them being monitored live instead of only being reviewed the following day, even if this is only for a limited period of time.
- Alcohol control at Sherwood Lake would be welcomed by residents having issues with noise and antisocial behaviour and also the local councillors.
- Regarding dogs in parks, the idea of a total ban unlikely to work as the people who are least likely to follow rules are probably most likely to let their dogs off the lead. If the plan is to ban dogs there needs to be a general agreement to ensure this is followed. Nevill Park is necessary, Dunorlan might be trickier to police. There are other areas

where dogs can roam free on fields and there is one local to the Nevill which can be used for this, which is a requirement from the Kennel Club so the Communities Team will be in consultation with them and the local residents regarding this.

- Regarding skateparks, the Grosvenor is quite worn out and dangerous to use. Councillor Pope suggests a contact who may be able to provide help with the one at St Johns.
- Regarding the enforcement of dog control, discretion will be given to dog owners dependent on individual circumstances of incidences. This will be an internal enforcement so the officers can be instructed to act as necessary - it is not the aim to make revenue but to change behaviours.
- Regarding public use of CCTV – it was suggested that local residents could have access to CCTV for the purpose of live monitoring, but the Community Safety Manager advises this is problematic due to camera encryption and that there are likely to be issues with GDPR conditions on CCTV use.

RESOLVED - That the proposed Public Spaces Protection Orders, as set out in this report and in the appendices to this report, be approved for consultation or discharged.

URGENT BUSINESS

COM44/21 There was no urgent business for consideration.

DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

COM45/21 The next meeting was scheduled for 14 July 2021.

NOTES:

The meeting concluded at 7.30 pm.

An audio recording of this meeting is available on the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council website.