
LOCAL PLAN PANEL

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber - Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT on Thursday, 25 July 2019 from 7.00 - 9.14 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Mike Baldock (Chairman), Alastair Gould, James Hunt, Benjamin Martin, Richard Palmer, Roger Truelove and Ghlin Whelan.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Katherine Bescoby, Andrew Jeffers and Jill Peet and Alison Peters.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Tim Gibson and Angela Harrison.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Monique Bonney and Eddie Thomas.

162 EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

The Chairman outlined the emergency evacuation procedure.

163 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 6 June 2019 (Minute Nos. 34 – 38) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

164 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman declared a Disclosable Non-Pecuniary Interest as he sat on Borden Parish Council, who had submitted comments regarding the draft Car Parking Supplementary Planning Guidance.

165 DRAFT CAR PARKING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

The Development Manager introduced the item, explaining that the Panel was asked to consider and comment on an early draft of the Vehicle Parking Supplementary Document (SPD) and agree the way forward for public consultation. Once formally adopted, the SPD would provide bespoke parking standards for Swale. Pursuant to Policy DM7 of the Adopted Local Plan, the document would carry significant weight in the determination of planning applications. He drew attention to the comments submitted by Borden, Bobbing, Iwade and Tunstall Parish Councils, which had been circulated, and summarised the points they had made. He also drew attention to comments from the Council's Parking Services Manager regarding controlled parking zones as Members had already formally agreed to exclude new/converted properties from the residents parking scheme.

The SPD had been prepared by consultants, following a Member workshop in February 2019, and Hannah Atkins and Paul Lulham of DHA Consultancy gave a presentation to outline the key issues and the reasons behind their proposals in the draft version. This covered examples of what they considered worked well and not so well in Swale and from wider research; and how their findings had been input into the draft SPD presented.

Members were then invited to ask questions and give feedback on the draft SPD. A summary of the points made are set out below:

- The need to encourage use of bicycles in residential areas not just non-residential, and to ensure that bicycles would be easily accessible for use;
- The need to consider provision of charging points for electric vehicles;
- Why the suggested width of 2.5 metres was proposed, when an example of what worked well was 3 metres;
- How to encourage people to use their garages for parking and making them accessible when a car was parked on the drive, without overhanging on the pavement;
- The need to consider parking requirements where there was business and residential use;
- The need to provide solar panels on structures such as car ports/garages;
- The need to consider environmental damage and have greener walkways and encourage biodiversity;
- Appendix A - many Members considered that the number of spaces proposed per house was inadequate; there was some support for a ratio of one parking space per bedroom;
- The need to ensure that there was not a limit on maximum parking and to reconsider the proposed standards;
- The need for proper design rather than just a minimum standard;
- Levels of car ownership and how realistic the averages set out on page 18 of the report were, which had been compiled from census data;
- The need to increase provision for charging of electric vehicles and to future proof developments;
- Whilst on-street parking could be controlled by permits, the need to ensure that the number of permits issued was not more than the number of spaces;
- Developers should consider using roller-shutter garages to maximise space, and provide a disabled access pathway from the car to the building;
- The need to be realistic about how many car spaces were needed, given that children were staying at home for longer and were also likely to have a car;
- The need to consider the conflict between business and residential use and to set a standard for this;
- The need for a definition of edge of town centre;
- The need to consider coach commuter points and the consequences for local residents parking if commuters parked on the street;
- The need to consider innovative ideas particularly in town centres, such as car lifts;
- A separate design guide was needed for parking, for example more guidance should be given as to what was expected for barns and ports, including landscaping;
- The need to consider visitor parking which often caused conflict and whether it should be referred to as 'auxiliary parking';
- Larger and clearer maps should be provided (Appendix B);
- The need to consider how parking was enforced, for example, there were issues where commuters caused parking issues, and to consider the parking restrictions that could be applied; and

- Whether developers would consider widening roads to offer more on-street parking.

During the discussion on this item, Members asked for the draft to be updated to reflect their comments (as outlined in the above minute) and the comments made by parish councils. The Chairman confirmed that the draft SPD would come back to a future meeting of the Panel, before going out to public consultation. Key areas for review included mixed use (business and residential use); electric charging points and/or infrastructure, and consideration of phasing this in to reflect the increase in use of hybrid/electric vehicles in the future; and to review the proposed numbers of parking spaces required for residential development.

The Chairman thanked DHA consultants, officers and Members for their contributions.

Resolved:

(1) That the Consultants consider the comments raised at the meeting and present a revised document to a future meeting of the Local Plan Panel in September (date to be confirmed), prior to public consultation.

166 HOUSING DELIVERY TEST ACTION PLAN

The Principal Planning Officer introduced her report, which explained why a Housing Delivery Action Plan was needed, and presented a draft plan for the Panel to consider. The Chairman drew attention to the covering report which had been circulated separately to the agenda.

There was some discussion regarding the recommendations, in terms of the process and timing of the item, given that the next scheduled Cabinet meeting was on 25 September 2019.

There was also discussion regarding the purpose of the report, and suggestions were made to make the document more robust and to make it clear that there was also a chronic social infrastructure deficit.

In response to questions, the Chairman confirmed that delivery of the SHLAA (Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment) was still on target for consultation in the Autumn and that many documents which formed part of the LDS (Local Development Scheme) needed to be revisited.

In response to questions, the Principal Planning Officer advised that there were no sanctions if Members chose not to submit the plan; that there were no penalties if the document was submitted at a later date; and confirmed that a holding response could be sent.

Further discussion ensued during which Members made comments around the time lag between the building of houses and the provision of social infrastructure; the need to ensure that the sustainable development argument took account of issues such as air quality and landscape sensitivity; the constraints faced in the Borough in terms of limited land supply; and the need for provision of affordable housing.

The Chairman clarified that the purpose of the document was to explain why the Council had not met the Government's target on house building, and to outline the efforts that had been made.

In response to further comments, the Principal Planning Officer undertook to look at the self-build register and how that could be promoted/reviewed. She also clarified that the next set of results on the Housing Delivery Test would be available in November 2019 and there would be a further opportunity at that stage to submit another Action Plan in the light of those results.

Members agreed that a response should be submitted on time, and that the Cabinet Member should be given delegated authority to agree an updated plan for submission, but that this should not be normal practice. The Chairman advised that the individual Cabinet decision-making procedure would give Members the opportunity to comment on the updated version.

Resolved:

(1) That the Action Plan be updated to reflect the comments made by the Panel.

(2) That the Cabinet Member for Planning be given delegated authority to agree a revised version of the Action Plan, prior to its submission.

(POST MEETING NOTE – an extraordinary meeting of the Cabinet has been convened to consider this item on Wednesday 7 August 2019).

Chairman

Copies of this document are available on the Council website <http://www.swale.gov.uk/dso/>. If you would like hard copies or alternative versions (i.e. large print, audio, different language) we will do our best to accommodate your request please contact Swale Borough Council at Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT or telephone the Customer Service Centre 01795 417850.

All Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel