
LOCAL PLAN PANEL

MINUTES of the Virtual Meeting via Skype on Thursday, 9 July 2020 from 7.00pm - 7.55pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Mike Baldock (Chairman), Monique Bonney (Vice-Chairman), Alastair Gould, James Hunt, Carole Jackson, Elliott Jayes, Benjamin Martin, Eddie Thomas and Ghlin Whelan.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Philippa Davies, Natalie Earl, James Freeman, Kellie MacKenzie, Jill Peet, Anna Stonor, Rebecca Walker and Aaron Wilkinson.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Derek Carnell, Steve Davey, Mike Dendor, Angela Harrison, Ken Ingleton, Lee McCall, Roger Truelove and Tony Winckless.

Consultants Mark Aldridge, Simon Drummond-Hay, Cristina Howick and Richard Pestell.

734 INTRODUCTION

The Chairman explained that the meeting would be conducted in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panel (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 No. 392.

The Chairman welcomed all Members, officers, members of the public and consultants Mark Aldridge, Simon Drummond-Hay, Cristina Howick and Richard Pestell to the meeting.

735 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 30 January 2020 (Minute Nos. 492 – 497) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

The Minutes of the Extraordinary Meetings held on 25 February 2020 (Minute Nos. 543 – 547), 7 May 2020 (Minute Nos. 659 – 667) and 11 June 2020 (Minute Nos. 691 – 696) were taken as read, approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to recording Councillor Elliott Jayes as being in attendance as a visiting Member at the meeting held on 11 June 2020.

736 CHANGE IN MEMBERSHIP OF THE PANEL

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Elliott Jayes to the Local Plan Panel. Councillor Jayes replaced Councillor Richard Palmer.

737 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Eddie Thomas declared a Disclosable Non-Pecuniary Interest in respect of item 4 on the agenda (Neighbourhood Planning Update) as he was a member of Faversham Town Council.

Councillor Carole Jackson declared a Disclosable Non-Pecuniary Interest in respect of item 4 on the agenda (Neighbourhood Planning Update) as she was a member of Faversham Town Council.

738 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING UPDATE

The Head of Planning explained that following discussion with the Monitoring Officer, the recommendation in the report needed to be amended. He said that as the Local Plan Panel had no executive powers, it was considered that the Cabinet Member for Planning could make the decision whether the Council accepted the neighbourhood plan designation, after the consultation deadline of 27 July 2020.

The Planner introduced the report which provided an update on the consultation on the application made by Faversham Town Council to designate the whole town as a neighbourhood area for the purpose of the creation of a neighbourhood development plan, and also to inform on the next steps. He reported that one representation had been received so far which was neither in support or against.

Recommended:

(1) That the approval of Faversham Town Council's application to designate the Town of Faversham as a neighbourhood area be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Planning, and any comments from the Local Plan Panel be taken into account, plus any representations made, when making the decision.

739 LOCAL HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT (STANDARD METHOD)

The Planning Policy Manager introduced the report which presented revised papers following submission of the Local Housing Needs assessment report to the Local Plan Panel in February 2020. Members had expressed concern that the report had been too technical and could be clearer. Comments and questions from Members were submitted to the consultants and the report had subsequently been amended. The Planning Policy Manager said the report's conclusion remained the same. Members' endorsement of the reports was sought as part of the local plan review evidence base.

The Chairman invited Members to make comments.

A Member referred to the projections in Appendix I, on page 17 of the agenda pack. He noted the 2022 date and said that the situation could change and the Local Plan could be delayed, and this could then impact the projected figures. He asked whether the projected date could be extended further into the future? Richard Pestell explained that they had worked with 2022 as that was the start date for the next Local Plan. He acknowledged that there could be a delay. Using dates

beyond 2022 would result in even more sets of projected figures to consider. He felt the projections to be proportionate at the moment.

The Vice-Chairman thanked the consultants for the questions they had answered in the document. She asked whether there could be an impact from increased migration (from Hong Kong for example) and whether this would have an impact on population statistics and whether this had been looked into? Mr Pestell said that there was no data or information from the Government on this at the moment. The Vice-Chairman suggested a watching brief be kept. Mr Pestell agreed and added that there was a reasonable range within the projections for future-proofing. In response, the Vice-Chairman suggested that nearer the time, there might need to be an update on the figures. The Planning Policy Manager explained that the housing figure would not be fixed until the draft Local Plan was submitted, and so there would be updates to achieve a definitive figure.

Recommended:

(1) That the content of the report and the Local Housing Needs Assessment in Appendix I be noted.

740 STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Planning Policy Manager introduced the report which set out detailed information about the size profile and the tenure split for the period 2022 to 2038 for new dwellings, and presented the headline findings of this key piece of evidence base.

Simon Drummond-Hay and Mark Aldridge from HDH Planning and Development gave a presentation on Housing Market Assessment, which had previously been emailed to Members and added to the website. Mr Drummond-Hay started by saying there were four key elements to the report, and these included: the overall housing need; overall housing need by tenure and size; affordable need; and need of specific groups. He and Mark Aldridge then presented the slides and Mr Aldridge highlighted the following in his conclusion:

- Annual affordable housing need of 287 per year represents 27.7% of the annual dwelling growth of 1,038 - no adjustment is required to the standard method figure;
- future tenure split: 72.8% market, 18.0% of housing to be Affordable Rented and 9.1% affordable home ownership (of which 4.2% could be Shared Ownership and 4.9% Help-to-Buy/ Starter Homes); and
- 516 additional units of sheltered housing for older people and 305 Registered Care spaces over plan period.

Members were invited to make comments and ask questions.

A Member referred to page 74 in the report, and to the affordable housing need in Swale being 287 units. He considered this to be a low figure and asked how much Universal Credit, Brexit and Covid-19 had been taken into account? Mr Drummond-Hay read-out a section from one of the slides: 'an increase in the total housing figures included in the plan may need to be considered where it could help

deliver the required number of affordable homes.’ Mr Drummond-Hay said that housing numbers had previously been realised by the methodology of objectively assessed need for housing, and developers had tried to get a higher figure so more of their sites were included in the plan. Now, with the standard method, that opportunity was lost, but developers could have the opportunity to go for affordable need, and if they were successful, the solution was to have a higher housing number in the overall plan, so 30 in every 100 houses could be affordable housing. He said the current need was the waiting list; and the newly arising need was from the newly formed households, and he outlined the calculations that were carried out to achieve the required figure. Mr Drummond-Hay acknowledged that waiting lists for affordable housing had increased dramatically since the pandemic, but this was a complex situation and difficult to resolve in this type of report which was looking over a period of 20 years. They had taken the waiting list at face value in accordance with the guidance. He did not think that it would be beneficial to delve into the minutiae of the current pandemic, and the longer-term view needed to be taken.

A Member suggested there should be a policy on having Category 2 standards on all new housing. She asked if the Council liaised with Kent County Council (KCC) in terms of the requirement for Registered Care spaces? The Principal Planning Manager confirmed that the Council did work with KCC, and also the Primary Care Trust. Mr Drummond-Hay added that the Council’s viability evidence was about to be updated and all the different requirements needed to be considered, both separately and together, with the aim of achieving a balanced plan in the end.

The Chairman referred to slide 25 in relation to older people, and he considered the rate of elderly people would increase. Mr Drummond-Hay explained that the figure would increase, but there would be the same percentage in the different categories of housing, and this was probably a cautious approach.

A Member referred to the recent change in criteria for the waiting list, and that this would expand the numbers, as the residency time had been dropped before someone could go on the list. He asked if this had been considered in the report? Mr Aldridge said the waiting list was as at March 2020. The Planning Policy Manager said that she would need to check. *Post Meeting Note: Colleagues in housing had confirmed that changes to the criteria for joining the waiting list was currently under consultation and any amendments to the criteria would not be in place until later in the year. The impacts on the waiting list would be unknown while the changes ‘bed in’ so could not be addressed at this stage.* Mr Aldridge said that they also looked at the size of the household, and number of rooms they required, and the likely ability of them being able to afford accommodation in the market including the private rented sector. The list was then taken with all the information and anybody not within housing need as defined by the Planning Policy Guidance was removed and they looked at the household’s ability to afford a potential market solution.

The Chairman thanked the Planning Policy Manager and the consultants for their work on this item.

Recommended:

(1) That Members note the content of the report and endorse it as part of the evidence base for the local plan review.

741 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The Planning Policy Manager provided the following dates in July for Members:

- 16 July 2020 – Member Workshop: Sustainable Construction and Design SPD;
- 28 July 2020 – Member Workshop: Viability Assessment; and
- 30 July 2020 – Local Plan Panel meeting.

A Member asked about the consultation process when housing developments came up which were not in the Local Plan, suggesting that there should be a policy so that the matter was dealt with how the Council wanted it to be. The Head of Planning stated that there were major non-allocated sites that could come forward and where pre-application discussions took place, the Council advised the developer to undertake consultation with the Parish Council and local community in advance of submitting such applications in accordance with the Council's statement of community involvement.

A Member acknowledged and praised the work of the planning team, and in particular the Planning Policy Manager and the Planner, and the Chairman shared the same sentiments.

Resolved:

(1) That the verbal update be noted.

Chairman

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