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## LOCAL PLAN PANEL

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**MINUTES** of the Extraordinary Virtual Meeting Via Skype on Thursday, 7 May 2020 from 7.00pm - 9.17pm.

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

**OFFICERS PRESENT:** Philippa Davies, Natalie Earl, James Freeman, Andrew Jeffers, Kellie MacKenzie, Jo Millard, Jill Peet, Alison Peters and Anna Stonor.

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillors Cameron Beart, Lloyd Bowen, Steve Davey, Mike Dendor, Tim Gibson, Angela Harrison, Elliott Jayes and Mike Whiting.

Hannah Atkins and Paul Lulham (DHA Consultancy).

### 659 INTRODUCTION

The Senior Democratic Services Officer 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 and members of the public to the meeting.

### 660 CHANGE TO ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chairman advised that item no. 5, Neighbourhood Plans Update, would be considered first.

### 661 ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

The Chairman announced that the meeting would be adjourned at 7.50pm for 20 minutes to allow those present to part-take in the weekly public applause for the NHS and keyworkers.

### 662 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Eddie Thomas declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of item no. 5, Neighbourhood Plans Update, as he was a member of Faversham Town Council.

### Part A Minutes for Recommendation to Cabinet

### 663 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANS UPDATE

The Planning Policy Manager introduced the report and explained that it referred to two Neighbourhood Plans. She explained that the consultation for the designation of the Parish of Hernhill had concluded in March 2020. As a result of the Covid-19

pandemic, the process had been delayed and the designation had consequently gone through automatically. The Planning Policy Manager also advised that Faversham Town Council (FTC) had requested that the whole Town of Faversham be designated as a neighbourhood area for the purpose of the creation of a neighbourhood plan, which would replace the existing Faversham Creek Neighbourhood Plan. She referred to the annex in the report which set-out the area to be included, plus a formal application from FTC.

The Chairman invited Members to make comments.

Councillor Benjamin Martin asked how far Hernhill Parish had got in the process. The Planning Policy Manager explained that they had got through the first stage of the process of getting the designation agreed, and it was up to the Parish to progress the neighbourhood plan themselves now. Councillor Martin stated that the people organising the Faversham designation were concerned how they would get questionnaires to local businesses and residents and whether Covid-19 would also heed the progress of the Faversham neighbourhood plan? The Planning Policy Manager acknowledged that these were unique circumstances, and electronic communications were being looked at to get information out. This included everyone on the consultation data base being emailed a newsletter, to keep people informed of developments. The Planning Policy Manager agreed to look further into General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and whether the Council could share this information with the Town Council to allow businesses and households to be identified and to assist them with the designation process.

***Recommended:***

***(1) That the designation of the Parish of Hernhill as a neighbourhood area be noted.***

***(2) That it be agreed that the application made by Faversham Town Council to designate the Town of Faversham as a neighbourhood area complies with the initial requirements of the Regulations, and that officers proceed to the first stage in the designation process which is for the Council to publicise the application.***

**664 DRAFT CAR PARKING STANDARDS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)**

The Development Manager introduced the report which invited Members to agree the revised draft version of the Vehicle Parking Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This had been considered by Members at the Local Plan Panel meeting on 5 September 2019, and the document had been amended to reflect Members' comments at that meeting. There had also been a 6-week public consultation process at the end of 2019. The recommendations in the report would be submitted to Cabinet for their agreement so that the document could be formally adopted by the Council.

The Development Manager explained that some of the photographs in the SPD document needed to be updated, to include local examples. This would be done once the Covid-19 restrictions had been lifted, and the new photographs would be added to the final version of the document. The Development Manager also

responded to a question submitted by Councillor Alistair Gould, to explain in more detail the meaning of the words 'Advisory' and 'Recommended' as noted in Appendix A (page 35 of the SPD). He explained that Advisory standards had been applied where the accessibility of the location was likely to justify a reduced provision than that detailed. This should be supported by clear evidence and where necessary contribution given to other sustainable transport modes to encourage reduced car ownership for residents, as detailed in note 1. Recommended standards had been applied to more rural locations and those where parking controls were limited. In these instances, the recommended standards should be adhered to as opportunities for sustainable transport measures were likely to be more restrictive in nature. Should a developer promote sustainable transport through the provision of car clubs and dedicated bus services, reduced parking might be acceptable. Both these definitions would be added to the final version of the document.

The Development Manager said that this document would provide an appropriate and effective response to parking issues relating to new developments across the Borough and he gave an overview of the process. This included Members agreeing at the Local Plan Panel meeting on 5 September 2019 that the SPD document be consulted on. The document went through a 6-week consultation process. He advised that 14 different groups had responded to the consultation and these responses were set-out on pages 11 to 26 of the report. The Development Manager said that most responses were supportive of the document, and where necessary, changes had been made to the final document, set-out at Appendix 4 of the report. He advised that once adopted, this would provide bespoke parking standards for Swale and would carry considerable weight in the determination of planning applications.

Members were invited to ask questions and make comments.

Councillor James Hunt referred to paragraph 1.2 in the report, and asked what weight the draft SPD parking standards had? The Development Manager explained that it currently had limited weight, as the Borough was still working under the guidance of Kent County Council (KCC) parking standards and this is what any Planning Inspector would currently consider when determining any development proposals that were the subject of an appeal. Once the draft SPD was formally adopted, it would be given full weight and be considered a material consideration when determining planning applications and appeals. Councillor Hunt referred to Car Clubs, on page 19 of the SPD document and suggested the wording needed to be bolstered-up and more work carried out on this. The Development Manager acknowledged Councillor Hunt's point and explained that car clubs were currently not operational in Swale, and so there was not much detail at the moment. The Head of Planning Services explained that car clubs were included in the travel plans on large scale planning applications, and so could be looked at as these came through in the future. Councillor Hunt referred to Parallel Parking Bays as set-out on page 23 of the report, and to the dimensions on Table 7, on page 22 of the SPD, and a conflict in two widths of 2.7metres and 3.7 metres, and asked for clarification on the additional car park space width for disabled drivers, in relation to tandem parking. Mr Paul Lulham (DHA Consultancy) said that he would look at the measurements again, and update for the final version of the document. The

Development Manager confirmed that tandem parking for disabled drivers would be re-considered when there was an obstruction present.

Councillor Mike Whiting considered there should be one parking space per bedroom of each property and was disappointed that this was not included within the SPD, even though there had been support for this initiative in the consultation. The Chairman explained that this had been discussed at previous Local Plan Panel meetings, but had not been considered to be practical. He added that car parking spaces had been increased in out-of-town areas. Councillor Whiting considered 2metres was too narrow for a car parking space, and sought clarification on the scenarios that were considered in the process of determining the width of car parking spaces. The Development Manager said that different scenarios were looked at, such as being next to a wall, and the individual setting of the surroundings, and it was considered that 2metres was sufficient. Mr Lulham referred to Table 7, on page 32 of the SPD document and stated that the minimum parking bay, with no restrictions on either side, was now recommended to be 2.5metres, and with a hard boundary on each side, this would be increased by a minimum of 0.2metres on each side. Councillor Whiting stated that parking at the front or side of a property was the ideal situation where it could be accommodated, and that this was also good for Electric Vehicle (EV) charging points.

Councillor Ghlin Whelan supported the one car parking space per bedroom scenario, and sought clarification on whether figures were minimum or maximum. The Development Manager advised that whilst some figures in the report were minimum figures, he referred Members to Appendix A on page 35 of the SPD which set-out the advisory and recommended guidance on spaces in different scenarios including town centre, edge of centre, suburban and rural. This gave a more flexible approach to parking and he confirmed that the Council had moved away from maximum figures.

Councillor Eddie Thomas welcomed the information on Table 2, on page 9 of the SPD which showed vehicle ownership by type and tenure of dwelling. He also spoke in support of car clubs, and was happy to see further information within the document on car barns and stated that covenants should be placed on car barns to prevent them being converted.

Councillor Whiting referred to the comments made by the Development Manager on the flexible approach to parking and considered this could be taken advantage of, and robust minimum standards were the least the Council should expect. In response, Mr Lulham reminded Members that minimum/maximum standards had been discussed at previous Local Plan Panel meetings, and a flexible approach was preferred. Minimum standards might not be viable, especially in a town centre environment, but he referred Members to the advisory approach on this, with generally a minimum requirement, and any variation of this needed to be justified with evidence from developers.

Councillor Richard Palmer agreed with one parking space per bedroom especially out-of-town.

Councillor Alistair Gould defended the use of advisory, and considered this to be appropriate for town centre development where in the future there was likely to be a shift towards other modes of travel, away from car use.

Councillor James Hunt referred to the flexible approach and suggested the document be checked to ensure there was not too much flexibility in it before it was considered by Cabinet.

Councillor Monique Bonney referred to the comments made by Highways England on pages 13/14 of the report. She considered the measures set-out for 'last mile' deliveries, should also be applied to residential areas as well. Councillor Bonney suggested that page 25 of the SPD should be headed 'Parking for Ultra Low Emission Vehicles' (ULEV). She also sought clarification on the town centre maps, where it indicated that Sheerness Town Centre would not have town centre parking standards. Mr Lulham explained that they had looked at the potential of including Sheerness Town Centre in town centre standards, but because of the limited and fragmented nature of on-street parking controls here, relative to Sittingbourne and Faversham, an edge of centre approach was considered more appropriate. Mr Lulham explained that the 'last mile' was a very relevant issue. He added that some developments had van parking bays, but it was impossible to determine who would own a van. More generous parking was included so that vans could fit in those spaces as well, and there be more useable parking for vans. If the carriageway was increased for van deliveries, this would be to the detriment of landscaping and might result in higher vehicle speeds. Councillor Bonney asked whether the plug-in points for electric cycles, referred to on page 25 of the SPD, applied to commercial space as well as residential space. Mr Lulham agreed to confirm this to Members. Councillor Bonney referred to the parking dimensions on page 33 of the SPD, and whether there was a later version of the 'Design Recommendations for Multi-Storey and Underground Car Park' (2011).

Councillor Ghlin Whelan asked for clarification on Table 1, page 8 of the SPD, and Mr Lulham explained that the wards were not electoral wards, but areas defined by the census.

Councillor Carole Jackson asked about provision of parent and child parking bays. The Development Manager referred to Appendix D of the SPD and the child-friendly approach to space sizes, with there being different sizes of spaces, dependent on the circumstances. Mr Lulham drew attention to page 43 of the SPD, and the first note for A1 retail use where this looked at this issue in more detail and that parking was to be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

***Recommended:***

***(1) That the revised draft Vehicle Parking Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) be noted and agreed, and delegated authority be given to officers to make the final changes to the document.***

**665 STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (SHLAA)**

The Planning Policy Manager introduced the report which set-out the assessment of potential development sites that could, when considered with other evidence,

become development allocations in the local plan review. She explained that this was a technical exercise, and it did not allocate sites. There was a formal call for sites exercise, and this was extended up to July 2019. Sites needed to be a minimum of 0.25hectares and have the capacity for 5 dwellings or more. The Planning Policy Manager outlined the process as reported in paragraph 2.5 of the report. She explained that no decision on sites was to be taken, this was purely a catalogue of sites to note.

The Chairman asked that Members gave any factual evidence of site assessments to the Planning Policy Manager.

Councillor Lloyd Bowen asked for clarification on the inclusion of Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA), and said that some sites were listed incorrectly within the document, e.g. Teynham, rather than Lynsted, and whether parishes had been consulted correctly. The Planning Policy Manager advised that this was a list of potential sites for assessing and a site selection methodology, which included air quality, would be provided.

Councillor Cameron Beart asked whether the sites had been promoted by landowners, as he was aware that some landowners had no knowledge of the process in hand. The Planning Policy Manager said that the information came from landowners, developers or third parties.

Councillor James Hunt referred to paragraph 2.5 in the report, and considered sites that were currently assessed as being unsuitable, might change, and become suitable. He considered that brownfield sites, although unsustainable now, could be in the future. He referred to leases on brownfield sites, and that although the site might not available now, could be at a later stage. The Planning Policy Manager explained that the information received was the best information the Council had at that time, and she noted Councillor Hunt's comments.

Councillor Benjamin Martin sought clarification on the order of the sites and asked about the timeframe for the project. The Chairman advised that this would be looked at over the summer, and would form part of the information on what sites would go forward. The Planning Policy Manager explained that the sites were added in the order they were received, and confirmed that they would be listed by parish in the final version.

Councillor Davey asked whether the person who made the application for the site to be put forward, was made public. The Planning Policy Manager explained that this had not been made public due to GDPR, but she could look into this further for the final report. Councillor Davey considered it should be a matter of public knowledge who had brought the land forward, and that it should not be restrained by GDPR.

Councillor Eddie Thomas asked whether only part of the larger sites could go forward. The Planning Policy Manager explained that there was no reason why that could not be done, and the boundaries could be amended and reviewed.

***Recommended:***

- (1) That the report be noted.***

**666 INTERIM POLICY STATEMENT - USE OF CARAVANS/CHALETS AS PERMANENT RESIDENCES**

The Planning Policy Manager introduced the report which sought a way forward on the holiday parks planning policy position by seeking to adopt an interim policy statement that would be a material consideration in determining future planning applications.

The Chairman invited Members to ask questions and make comments.

Councillor Cameron Beart commented that most of the sites where the 200 planning enforcement notices were issued, did not meet the criteria on page 533 of the report. He explained that the majority of holiday parks were on the Isle of Sheppey, and that most Parish Councils had objected to the proposal. Councillor Beart also added that some people had not been able to comment as they had not received the information because the holiday parks had closed due to Covid-19. The Planning Policy Manager gave a brief overview of the process that had taken place. She advised that the Council had written to Park Home owners and operators in January/February 2020 to gauge interest in whether there was an appetite for a revision to the Policy. There had been a 60% response rate, with the majority supportive of the policy change, and 23% did not support it. All operators were written to on 6 March 2020 and asked to submit comments on the policy by 6 April 2020, and this was later extended to 20 April 2020. The Planning Policy Manager explained that the Council could not consider comments made in January/February 2020 as comments on the draft policy because that correspondence was received in response to the initial letter as above. This was why they had subsequently been contacted specifically with regard to the draft policy.

Councillor Benjamin Martin asked for clarification on the use of the sites as fully residential. The Planning Policy Manager said that all individual sites would be assessed on their individual merits. Each site would need to come forward with its proposals like any other planning application.

Councillor James Hunt asked what the impact on individual residents would be, i.e. with Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Scheme (SAMMS) payments, and he also asked how many residents would be affected by this policy, and where they were in the Borough? The Chairman explained that this was across the Borough, not solely on the Isle of Sheppey. He added that most park homes on the Isle of Sheppey were in a flood risk zone, and this limited numbers coming forward. The Planning Policy Manager confirmed that SAMMS payments would still need to be paid. Councillor Hunt considered this change in policy was happening too quickly and the full implications had not been looked into, with residents being left with costs they did not know about. He said that more information was required, and the Council needed to listen to the Parish Councils.

Councillor Richard Palmer spoke in support of the interim policy and said the park home sites would need to come up to standard, and that not every holiday park would change to residential. He considered any problems could be 'ironed-out' at the planning application stage.

Councillor Cameron Beart said that this would legitimise occupants of holiday parks who had been issued enforcement notices.

Councillor Monique Bonney said that the proposal would work better than the existing system which was difficult to enforce, and doing nothing would make the matter worse.

Councillor Harrison asked whether the number of units that became permanently residential would count towards the Council's allocation of housing, and the Planning Policy Manager confirmed that it would.

Councillor Richard Palmer agreed that enforcement action should continue if planning permission for permanent residential use did not go ahead.

Councillor James Hunt moved a motion to defer the decision until more information had been received, on the numbers involved and the impacts on those residents taking up the option. This was seconded by Councillor Carole Jackson. On being put to the vote, the motion was lost.

On being put to the vote, Members agreed the substantive motion.

***Recommended:***

- (1) That the report and appendices be noted.***
- (2) That the Interim Planning Policy as set-out in paragraph 3.2 be agreed..***
- (3) That the Interim Planning Policy be adopted as a material planning consideration.***

**667 SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME**

The Head of Planning Services advised that there would be several workshops coming forward over the next 2 to 3 months including topics such as:

- Transport Strategy;
- Sustainable design and construction
- Town centre development; and
- Biodiversity

***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