

TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

PARISH PARTNERSHIP PANEL

Thursday, 6th September, 2018

Present: Cllr N J Heslop (Chairman), Cllr M A Coffin (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Mrs J A Anderson, Cllr Mrs S M Barker, Cllr R P Betts, Cllr T I B Cannon, Cllr R W Dalton, Cllr D Lettington, Cllr B J Luker, Cllr R V Roud and Cllr T B Shaw.

Together with representatives from Addington, Aylesford, Birling, Borough Green, Burham, Ditton, East Malling and Larkfield, Hadlow, Hildenborough, Ightham Parish Council, Kings Hill, Offham, Platt, Plaxtol, Shipbourne, Stansted, Waterringbury, West Malling, Wouldham and Wrotham Parish Councils and County Councillors Mrs S Hohler and Mr H Rayner

Councillors H S Rogers, O C Baldock and M R Rhodes were also present pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 15.21.

Apologies for absence were received from County Councillor Mr P Homewood, Kent Police and the Kent County Council Community Liaison Officer.

PART 1 - PUBLIC

PPP 18/15 MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

PPP 18/16 UPDATE ON ACTION IDENTIFIED IN THE LAST MINUTES

The Chairman referred to Minute Number PPP18/10 (Update on Action Identified in the Last Minutes) regarding the 'service directory' for parish councils which had been circulated in advance of the last meeting. It was reported that the only comment received so far was a request to publish the 'service directory' onto a parish council website. This request was agreed as the information was available on the Borough Council's website, although the potential for contact details to change at short notice was noted.

As there had been no further comments received it was agreed that the 'service directory' reflected accurately the information required by Parish Councils.

PPP 18/17 LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

In his role as Leader of the Borough Council, the Chairman opened the discussion by reminding Members of the key milestones achieved so far in the preparation of the Local Plan.

It was explained that that every council in the country had a statutory obligation to identify sufficient land for future house building and this had to be set out in a Local Plan. The number of houses that had to be planned for was decided by an approach set down by central Government and not by the local council. In Tonbridge and Malling the housing need had been identified as 13,920 homes for the period of the Local Plan up to 2013. This represented a figure of 696 dwellings per year and meant that, over and above sites already approved, sufficient new land to build an additional 6,800 homes had to be identified.

Following the Call for Sites exercise and evidence-based assessment the draft Local Plan now included 31 sites, refined to achieve an estimated potential yield of 6,834 new dwellings. This had significantly reduced in size to reflect Local Plan evidence and changes arising from consultations.

The Leader reiterated the very severe consequences if the Borough Council failed in its duty to adopt a Local Plan. Without a Plan in place the Borough Council's ability to manage development would be weakened. In addition, the failure to submit a Local Plan within the transitional period set out by the Government in the new draft National Planning Policy Framework (published on 24 July 2018) would result in significant risks associated with having to address a substantially higher housing provision. It would also cause significant further delays, which would place the Borough Council in a more vulnerable position in terms of land supply in responding to planning applications and facing planning appeals.

In summary, the Leader indicated that generally it was accepted that more homes were required for future generations. However, these should be in the right place and supported by adequate infrastructure. This was what the Local Plan sought to do and it was the responsibility of the Borough Council to consider the strategic overview given the difficult task set by Government. It was noted that the Local Plan was unlikely to resolve community infrastructure problems completely, although it was hoped that the situation could be improved by maximising investment from developers, as identified in the Local Plan.

The Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health and the Planning Policy Manager then provided an update on the preparation of the Local Plan. A revised draft document with a refined development strategy, policies and proposals had been considered recently by the Planning and Transportation Advisory Board on 5 June and 24 July and at an Extraordinary Cabinet on 3 September 2018. The latter had

recommended to Council that the draft Local Plan be approved for submission to the Secretary of State and a further period of statutory consultation.

Reference was made to the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and it was confirmed that the transitional arrangements, previously outlined, remained in place. Consequently the target date for submitting the Local Plan to the Secretary of State was now 24 January 2019, if the Borough Council wished to have the Plan examined against the previous NPPF and in particular to avoid the new standardised approach to housing assessment.

A number of changes made since the last meeting of the Panel were summarised and included amendments to the following policies related to strategic sites:

- LP27: Strategic Site Bushey Wood, Eccles – transport assessment added to the masterplan;
- LP29: Strategic Site Borough Green Gardens - following further consideration it had been decided to revert to the previous policy wording i.e. that the whole relief road is completed and open by no later than the completion of 15% of the total number of dwellings in the masterplan;
- LP30: Strategic Site Broadwater Farm – detailed transport assessment added to the masterplan;
- LP35: Employment Land at the former Aylesford Newsprint site and amendments to ensure that the site was subject to a masterplan in advance of a planning application.

Further detail of these amendments was set out in the Extraordinary Cabinet report of 3 September which could be viewed on the Borough Council's [website](#); together with the completed evidence base and the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Members were advised that, subject to Council approval, the next step would be further public consultation (Regulation 19) and all parish/town councils would be provided with a detailed information pack and a full set of documents to comment on. It was envisaged that a six week public consultation would start at the beginning of October 2018, or very soon after, and would give local residents and other parties the opportunity to comment on the proposals. These comments/representations would be submitted to the Secretary of State with the Local Plan and would ultimately be considered by an appointed Planning Inspector.

A number of tools would be used during the consultation including the website, social media platforms, YouTube, infographics and an

opportunity for face to face discussions via drop in sessions. There would also be hard copies of documents at various locations (Council offices and libraries) to maximise coverage.

Although there was opportunity to comment on the Plan (via the Regulation 19 consultation arrangements) it was unlikely that the Borough Council would make any substantive changes as the document was believed to be 'sound'. However, the Planning Inspector could decide on amendments and it was, therefore, important for parish/town councils and residents to participate in the consultation process. All information related to the draft Local Plan, including representations received under Regulation 19, would be submitted to the Secretary of State and made publically available, subject to General Data Protection Regulations compliance.

It was emphasised that if Council did not approve the draft Local Plan the process would need to be substantially restarted and be subject to the revised NPPF which would lead to significant delay and an increase in housing figures to address.

The following comments and points were raised, discussed and noted:

- A number of representations had been received in advance of the Regulation 19 consultation and it was suggested that these be resubmitted to avoid confusion.
- It was confirmed that the 15% referred to in relation to the proposed relief road in Borough Green equated to 450 new dwellings. In addition, the Local Plan set out the proposed approach for the road which would be subject to detailed appraisal as part of master-planning and ultimately a planning application. It was also intended that the road would be integral part of the proposed development and be fully developer funded. Funding streams to assist the implementation of the overall scheme were also being explored but the Local Plan proposals were not dependent on that initiative.
- If the Planning Inspector returned the draft Local Plan for modification there should not be an uplift in housing figures as long as it was submitted during the transitional period. i.e before 24 January 2019.
- A priority at this stage was to help residents understand the context of the draft Local Plan and Parish Councils had a role to play in that regard. Representations would be sent to the Secretary of State to review and make a final decision.
- Infrastructure and transport remained a significant concern for most areas and Members were reassured that the onus would be

on developers to ensure appropriate infrastructure existed to mitigate the impact of proposed development.

- Members were advised that Transport Assessments had been undertaken by independent consultants in collaboration with Kent County and Tonbridge and Malling Borough Councils.
- It was confirmed that there was a collaborative approach between neighbouring authorities and other public sector organisations, such as health and education, when considering the cumulative effect on infrastructure. However, it was unrealistic to expect new developments to address historic infrastructure issues.
- There was good communication with local Clinical Commissioning Groups which had identified need for additional facilities to accompany new development. Beyond that there was limited ability for the Borough Council to directly address wider health service problems. It was hoped that the Health Authority would have regard to housing provision when commissioning services.
- The process of a Local Plan Public Examination was summarised and once an Inspector was appointed they would contact the Borough Council to make arrangements for a hearing. The venue would be within Tonbridge and Malling. Public examinations ordinarily took 4 – 6 weeks to review all the evidence with a further 3 months before a final decision was made. There was also the possibility of the Inspector asking to hear from those who had made representations but this was subject to their discretion and subject to the points made.
- Concern was expressed around viability assessments and affordable housing. Members were advised that whole Plan Viability Assessments, setting out parameters around land values and costings would be provided to developers, to reduce the potential of over paying for land.
- Reference was made to the Duty to Co-operate and the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning and Infrastructure (Councillor Howard Rogers) advised he was in close communication with his counterparts at neighbouring authorities to identify areas of potential conflict and to commit to a statement of common ground.
- Flexibility around parking standards was welcomed as it provided opportunity to address parking concerns as part of a planning application.

Finally, the Panel was reminded that the Local Plan was a strategic document and would be a valuable tool in supporting and guiding development management throughout the Borough.

PPP 18/18 WASTE SERVICES CONTRACT UPDATE

Members were reminded that the current Waste Services Contract for refuse, recycling and street cleansing was due to expire at the end of February 2019 and was being retendered on a partnership basis with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council and in liaison with Kent County Council.

Following consideration by the Street Scene and Environment Services Advisory Board and the Extraordinary Cabinet on 4 September 2018 the new South West Kent Waste Partnership contract had been awarded. Although this would commence on 1 March 2019 the existing service would continue while arrangements were made to launch the new service. The name of the successful contractor would be announced on 25 September 2018.

The new contract enabled a much improved service to be delivered to residents and included:

- Weekly food waste collection;
- Fortnightly collection of residual waste;
- Alternative fortnightly collection of plastics, cartons, cans and glass (mixed dry recyclate) in a wheeled bin with a separate container for paper and card; and
- A separate fortnightly collection of garden waste (as an 'opt in' charged service)

It was reported that the proposals maintained the current frequency of high speed roads cleansing, which was the highest in Kent, retained the Saturday bulky waste collection service and would contribute to the Borough Council's Savings and Transformation Strategy.

Particular reference was made to the proposed introduction of 'opt-in' charges for the collection of garden waste. Members were advised that the Street Scene and Environment Services Advisory Board and the Cabinet had recommended to Council a standard charge of £40 per year, with further detail related to any introductory offers to be considered by the Advisory Board at a future date. It was explained that these 'opt-in' charges would support the enhanced recycling service, particularly the introduction of kerbside collection for plastics and glass.

Residents would be fully informed of all details and an independent PR consultant had been engaged to develop a Marketing and Communication Strategy. The Borough Council recognised that effective communication and messaging was vital in promoting the new service.

The Cabinet Member for Street Scene and Environment Services (Councillor David Lettington) welcomed the proposals, which delivered a

much improved service, and would encourage increased recycling of plastics and glass. However, it was reiterated that a significant amount of work remained to ensure the smooth introduction of the new service.

The Panel participated in significant discussion on a number of issues including the future of 'bring sites'; the size and number of containers; home composting; opportunities for additional services to be added such as the collection of textiles, batteries and other small electrical equipment; availability of additional bins for garden waste; collection of light bulbs and recycling rates within Tonbridge and Malling.

In response Members were advised that all options regarding the contract and service were subject to further review and discussion with the preferred contractor, the Street Scene and Environment Services Advisory Board and the Cabinet. However, it was likely that the Borough Council would retain a number of 'bring sites' at key locations within the borough, although experience suggested that recycling sites might not be required due to improved kerbside collection. It was also unlikely that light bulbs would be collected for recycling unless an efficient and cost effective solution could be identified. Shops were required to help customers recycle old bulbs for free by offering an in-store 'take back scheme' or paying towards a recycling service and retailers should be encouraged to honour this requirement.

In conclusion, the new Waste Services Contract aimed to offer fairer recycling for all.

PPP 18/19 KENT POLICE SERVICES UPDATE

Kent Police had submitted apologies, due to operational pressures and Members noted the report of Inspector Kerry Rothwell, which set out details of a number of recent initiatives and operations. Further detail was set out in the update report attached to the agenda.

PPP 18/20 KENT COUNTY COUNCIL SERVICES UPDATE

Members noted the report of the Kent County Council Community Liaison Officer (Anne Charman) which set out details of a number of County initiatives and consultations. Further detail was set out in the Kent County Council Services update report attached to the agenda.

All Kent County Council consultations could be viewed online at:

<http://consultations.kent.gov.uk/consult.ti>

PPP 18/21 TONBRIDGE AND MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL SERVICES UPDATE

The Chairman, in his role as Leader of the Council, advised that key points of relevance to Tonbridge and Malling had been covered elsewhere on the agenda as the Local Plan and the Waste Services Contract represented significant challenges for the Borough Council at the current time.

However, Members were reminded that the Heritage Open Days were running from Thursday 6 – Sunday 16 September and enabled free entry into 27 historical properties in the Borough.

The meeting ended at 9.40 pm