

DEVELOPMENT & CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 3 March 2022 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Reay (Chairman)

Cllr. Thornton (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Barnett, Cheeseman, Clayton, P. Darrington, McGregor, and Pett

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs. Penny Cole, Fothergill, Hunter and Roy

Cllr. Perry Cole was also present.

30. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2021, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

31. Declarations of interest

There were no additional declarations of interest.

32. Actions from previous meeting

There were none.

33. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder updated the Committee on the services within her portfolio. She advised that the Development Management Team's new starters had settled in well. Determinations were 16 up on last year, which in real terms was an additional 270 new applications and performance remained good. The Enforcement Team continued to do a great job, and she expressed her thanks to the Team.

She was pleased to announce that the Planning Inspectorate had upheld the decision taken by the Council in regards to Broke Hill. A huge number of Officers had been involved with the process and she was grateful for their support.

The Portfolio Holder advised that the Building Control Service had been brought back in house since June, and customers had not been adversely affected by this process. 70% of all inspections in the District were carried out by the Team and had been involved with the new White Oak Leisure Centre. The Senior Building Control Surveyor was in attendance at the meeting and answered questions from the Committee which focused on building safety, fire brigade access and sprinkler systems.

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The Committee were also advised that following the Grenfell disaster there was a Building Safety Bill going through, which would mean all Building Control Surveyors would need to be registered with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE). An exam would need to be taken which would then determine who could assess the different properties. He advised that any planning permissions for buildings over 18 meters the HSE and Fire and Rescue Service would need to be consulted on for means of escape and fire safety.

Members discussed that a training session on Building Control would be useful and for a fact sheet to be produced.

Action: For a factsheet on building control to be circulated to the Committee.

The Committee thanked the Senior Building Control Surveyor and sent their best wishes to the Team.

34. Referral from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

There were none.

35. Local Plan Update

The Strategic Planning Manager presented the report which provided an update on the Local Plan since the last meeting in December 2021. The report set out the latest position and focussed specifically on the up-coming stages of evidence base preparation, the outcome of the recent Call for Sites exercise and the next steps in the plan making process.

It was highlighted to Members that as part of the duty to co-operate a Portfolio Holder meeting was held with Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council on 8 February 2022 and a Statement of Common Ground had been signed with Tunbridge Wells Borough Council.

The Senior Planning Officer (Policy) gave a short presentation updating Members on the Call for Sites exercise. A total of 371 sites were received and officers were currently assessing all submissions to determine suitability, availability and achievability. Consideration would be given to factors such as the constraints affecting the site, views of the landowner and development potential. 35% of the total number of sites received were 'new' sites and 65% were sites which were already known to the team. The assessment process consists of two stages. Stage 1 (an initial sieve of the sites to discount any that don't meet the minimum size thresholds and/or any that are not in sustainable/appropriate locations for development) which has already been completed, and stage 2 ((a full site appraisal for the remaining 158 sites) which was ongoing.

The next steps were to continue with the preparation of emerging evidence base studies including the Town Centre Strategy, District-wide Character Study and

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Green Belt Study. These important evidence base studies will further inform the site assessments and help to focus on what the plan should contain.

Members discussed the report and asked questions of clarification.

In response to questions Members were advised that the plan would be created based on the evidence provided by the studies from robust analysis. Looking at the sites within the Green Belt would be the last in the list of sites, focusing on sites within the existing urban areas and the duty to cooperate first.

Members were also advised that there were a number of strategies being developed including the Movement Strategy which would be considered by Cleaner & Greener Advisory Committee but all the Town Centre Strategies were valuable to the development of the Local Plan. It was a unique time, with collecting the evidence post pandemic, and the changes since the local plan was last looked at. Members acknowledged that the timetable for the Local Plan would be guided by the emerging evidence base and Call for Sites process.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

36. Work plan

Members discussed the work plan, noting that as the Local Plan developed further there would be separate reports on more specific elements coming out of the process.

July 2022

Local Plan Update

Digital Transformation Grant

Infrastructure update

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 8.23 PM

CHAIRMAN