

DEVELOPMENT & CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2021 commencing at 5.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Hunter (Chairman)

Cllr. Thornton (Vice Chairman)

Cllrs. Cheeseman, Clayton, Penny Cole, P. Darrington, Fothergill, McGregor, Pett and Roy

Cllrs. Perry Cole and McArthur were also present.

64. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Development and Conservation Advisory Committee held on 3 December 2020, be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

65. Declarations of interest

No additional declarations of interest were made.

66. Actions from previous meeting

There were none.

67. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder, Development & Conservation, reported that 1729 planning applications had been determined so far this year, which was up on previous years despite the pandemic. The Development Management Team had been very productive and performance was strong with performance indicators for determination at 88% for major applications, 84% for minor and 92% for others. Performance indicators on winning Appeals had also improved and stood at 86%, which was a significant increase from previous years.

She advised that the Enforcement Team was performing well and she had received positive feedback. The Enforcement Plan was being looked at and new performance indicators added, which would come before the committee in the near future.

Member training was being well received with training on 'Sunlight and Daylight assessments' on 16 March, and Enforcement in April.

The following week would see meetings of the Community Infrastructure Levy Spending Board which was considering 6 applications for funding, and the

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Development Control Committee which amongst other applications would be considering the application at the former Tesco site in Sevenoaks High Street.

Work was still ongoing on the dissolution of the Building Control partnership, and a report would be brought to committee later in the year. The Local Plan update and latest policy considerations were to be discussed later on the agenda.

It was noted that despite lockdowns and tier restrictions Staff had continuously performed at a high level.

68. Referrals from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

There were none.

69. Adoption of Edenbridge Character Area Assessment Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

The Design Officer presented the report recommending the adoption of the Edenbridge Character Area Assessment Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The report provided the background to the Edenbridge Character Area Assessment SPD and summarised the outcome of the public consultation. The purpose of the SPD was to build upon and provide guidance on Policy SP1 of the Core Strategy: 'all new development should be designed to a high quality and should respond to distinctive local character of the area in which it is situated'. The Design Officer demonstrated the interactive map, Appendix D to the report, and Members took the opportunity to ask questions of clarification.

Overall Members welcomed the document as excellent, which read well and was comprehensive, and thanked officers for their work especially with the consultation work.

In response to a question relating to how well it read, it was noted that the National Design Document 2019, which had informed much of the assessment, had been released as guidance since the production of the Sevenoaks Residential Character Area Assessment.

Public Sector Equality Duty

Members noted that consideration had been given to impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Resolved: That it be recommended to Cabinet that the Edenbridge Character Area Assessment Supplementary Planning Document, be adopted.

70. Local Plan Update

Members considered an update on the Local Plan, the Planning White Paper and the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment 2017, which provided Members with the opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification. The news on no longer having unmet need for new permanent Gypsy and Traveller pitches was

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welcomed and the Principal Planning Officer advised that relationships with the communities was much improved. She added that just because the allocation need was met did not mean that future applications would not be agreed, but it did provide a better policy position to resist and enforce.

It was noted that whilst there was not yet a new adopted Local Plan in place, the District was still protected by the existing Local Plan much of which was still live and relevant and in accord with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

Resolved: That the report be noted.

71. National Model Design Code consultation

Members considered a report which provided an overview of the current Government consultation on changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the introduction of a national model design code and an initial response.

Most of the changes responded to the Building Better Building Beautiful Commission's recommendations which were at the heart of the Government's White Paper in 2020. In addition to changes related to the Building Better Building Beautiful Commission recommendations, the consultation also proposed a number of other revisions to the NPPF which focussed on strengthening policies related to climate change and the environment, clarifying the use of Article 4 Directions and the status of Written Ministerial Statements and providing legal and factual updates.

Members were concerned about plots of Green Belt land being advertised for sale, it was suggested that the Enforcement Team should be contacted and the position of notices could be looked at. Members were advised that ultimately the Council could not intervene in a landowner selling their land.

It was noted that whilst the word 'beautiful' was subjective, the document did explain that it was about well-designed spaces and the challenge would be to explain all the elements it entailed concisely.

Officers hoped to get a draft response out to Members for any comments by the end of the following week.

Resolved: That the Government consultation and the proposed response, be noted.

72. Work plan

The work plan was noted with the Local Plan added as a standing item to all future meetings; an update on Enforcement in July, along with Performance Indicators and a possible update on Building Control; and budget 2021/22 service dashboards and service change impact assessments (SCIAs) in October.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 6.42 PM

CHAIRMAN