

DEVELOPMENT & CONSERVATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2022 commencing at 7.00 pm

Present: Cllr. Reay (Chairman)

Cllr. Thornton (Vice Chairman)

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

Cllrs. Hunter and Purves were also in attendance.

13. Minutes

Resolved: That the Minutes of the Development & Conservation Advisory Committee held on 5 July 2022 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject to Minute 9 being amended to read as “This item was deferred by the Chairman until a future Development & Conservation Advisory Committee meeting.”

14. Declarations of interest

There were none.

15. Actions from previous meeting

The action was noted.

16. Update from Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder updated the Committee on the services within her portfolio. The Development Management team were performing well, with 95% of major applications, 87% of minor applications, and 92% of other applications determined within expected timeframes. The success rate at appeal had been nearly 70% this year.

Planning Enforcement had served 31 enforcement notices since April 2022. The Planning Enforcement Manager was due to leave at the end of November, and the Committee thanked him for his hard work in the role. The opening of recruitment for his replacement had been approved and would begin shortly.

Building Control held a market share of over 70%, and had received very positive feedback from customers. They had been recently commissioned by Tonbridge and Malling Borough Council for some site-specific work in their borough.

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The Design and Conservation team had hired a new Urban Designer, and the Portfolio Holder welcomed her to the team.

17. Referral from Cabinet or the Audit Committee

There were none.

18. Local Plan Regulation 18 - Consultation

The report was presented by the Planning Policy Team Leader and the Strategic Planning Manager, who outlined the draft of the Local Plan to be issued for consultation. The Plan covered the period up to 2040, and emphasised making best use of land in existing settlements. The plan focuses on the key themes of promoting health and well-being, delivering Net Zero and supporting high quality design. They advised that the draft Plan listed three tiers of development density, but that these would be further refined in each case to ensure development respects local character and the environment.

They outlined the Community Involvement measures of the Consultation. In addition to the Council's website, mailing list, and social media accounts, the Plan would be publicised on a new consultation portal. Three drop-in sessions would be held in person in the urban centres of the District, with an additional session over Zoom. Commuters and secondary schools would be specifically targeted also to ensure the Council received feedback from those demographics, as they had previously been under-represented in responses.

They updated the Committee on the evidence base for the Local Plan. The Character Study had been completed and was due to be published shortly. The Strategic Transport Study baseline stage is complete and junction modelling is currently underway where the gap analysis had identified data gaps. The second stage of assessing the impact of the planned growth across the District, will take place in 2023.

They further updated the Committee on the discussions with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing, and Communities (DLUHC). The Draft did not contain finalised policies, but instead aimed to establish whether the scope and coverage of the plan was sufficient. This allowed the Council to respond to changes in national planning policy as they occurred.

In response to questions, they outlined the measures to make the Plan accessible and prevent technical knowledge from being a barrier to participation in the Consultation. They further explained the role of the Character Study in evidencing local context and density. It would allow the Council to take an active role in assessing the capacity of sites for development, by identifying sensitivity to change within an area.

The Committee discussed the role of schools in the Consultation process, and the possibility of addressing a larger number of them. They heard that providing resources to more schools would be looked into, and that it was important to encourage responses from this younger demographic as they tended to be under-represented in previous consultations. They further discussed the inclusion of specific encouragement of renewable energy and sustainable design in the Plan.

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Resolved: That the report be noted, and that the Committee recommend to Cabinet that

- a. The content of the “Plain Text Version” of the Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan at Appendix 1 be approved for public consultation purposes;
- b. The presentation and formatting style of the consultation document, as reflected in the Indicative Formatted Version at Appendix 2, be agreed;
- c. The authority to approve the final formatting and presentation of the Regulation 18 Consultation Draft Local Plan and an minor pre-consultation text changes, be delegated to the Chief Officer - Planning & Regulatory Services and the Development & Conservation Portfolio Holder; and
- d. The withdrawal of the December 2018 Regulation 19 Proposed Submission version of the Local Plan, which was submitted to the Secretary of State in April 2019, be recommended to Council before the Regulation 18 Consultation Draft is issued for consultation.

19. Work plan

The Work Plan was noted.

THE MEETING WAS CONCLUDED AT 7:56PM

CHAIRMAN