
EXTRAORDINARY CABINET

MINUTES of the Virtual Meeting held via Skype on Tuesday, 26 January 2021 from 7.00 pm - 7.41 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Mike Baldock (Vice-Chairman), Monique Bonney, Angela Harrison, Ben J Martin, Richard Palmer, Roger Truelove (Chairman) and Tim Valentine.

DEPUTY CABINET MEMBERS: Councillors Derek Carnell, Alastair Gould, Hannah Perkin, Julian Saunders, Sarah Stephen and Ghlin Whelan.

OFFICERS PRESENT: Billy Attaway, Jayne Bolas, David Clifford, Philippa Davies, James Freeman, Jill Peet, Alison Peters, Larissa Reed and Emma Wiggins.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Cameron Beart, Lloyd Bowen, Roger Clark, Simon Clark, Steve Davey, Mike Dendor, Simon Fowle, Tim Gibson, James Hunt, Carole Jackson, Elliott Jayes, Denise Knights, Peter Marchington, Pete Neal, Ken Rowles, Paul Stephen, Tony Winckless and Corrie Woodford.

426 INTRODUCTION

The Leader explained that the Cabinet 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.

In welcoming all Members and members of the public, the Leader explained which Swale Borough Council (SBC) officers were in attendance.

427 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared.

Part A Minutes for Recommendation to Council

428 SWALE BOROUGH LOCAL PLAN REVIEW PRE-SUBMISSION CONSULTATION DRAFT

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance introduced the report which set-out the progress made to-date with the Local Plan Review document and presented the headlines for the final pieces of the remaining evidence that had now been completed in full. Two further tabled papers had been added to the online agenda and these had also been emailed to Members. The Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance said that this was a very emotive and challenging task with strong local community interest, and advised that the consultation would be carried out for a period of six weeks. He said the need to allocate new housing was not a choice made by the Council, but came from Central Government. There had been extensive discussion so far, in what was a slow process. He thanked the Cabinet Member for Planning and the officers for their work on the Review.

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance advised that the recommendations from the Local Plan Panel on 19 January 2021 were the same as the ones set-out in this report. He invited the Cabinet Member for Planning to present the four recommendations, and for Members to ask questions.

Recommendation 1: to note the summaries of the remaining evidence for the Local Plan Review.

The Cabinet Member for Planning echoed the comments made by the Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and praised the Planning Policy Team for the work they had carried out. An opportunity was given for questions and none were raised.

Recommendation 2: to agree the addendum to the Statement of Community Involvement that sets out how the Council will address Covid-19 related restrictions in light of the usual need to have hard copies of documents available for inspection.

The Cabinet Member for Planning said that Appendix IV of the report outlined the changes in the way the public could access the consultation due to Covid-19 restrictions.

The Cabinet Member for Environment asked how people, who could not access IT, could engage with the consultation and examine the Local Plan if they were unable to view it online? The Planning Policy Manager explained that a telephone number was published so that residents could phone the Planning Policy Team and they could also write in as well. With guidance on the document from the team, there was the option of having a printed copy of all or part of the document. The Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance acknowledged the difficulties of getting the document to all interested parties during Covid-19 restrictions and said that it was not financially feasible to print it in large quantities.

Recommendation 3: to agree the Local Plan Review pre-submission draft and accompanying documents as set out in Regulation 22 and commend them to Council for approval for the purposes of public consultation and submission to the Secretary of State in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

The Cabinet Member for Planning acknowledged that no one wanted the amount of housing required by Central Government, but he welcomed the inclusion of more sustainable housing, affordable housing, housing for life and catering for the needs of the elderly and disabled which he considered to be a huge step forward.

The Cabinet Member for Planning responded to questions on transport modelling; housing numbers; proposed development in Teynham, and consultation. He said that in terms of transport modelling, the Council was not going into this 'blind' as some modelling had already taken place on the Council's overall strategy and he explained that officers were confident that the transport modelling was sound. He added that there were small areas which needed addressing as sites had come forward. The Cabinet Member referred to housing numbers and said the Council had worked with the now lower Government algorithm housing target of 1,038, and the Council had a Local Plan which could deliver this target and it seemed prudent

to do so. The Council had recently achieved a 5-year housing supply, but that was based on this Local Plan going forward. Points were made on air quality in the Teynham area and about why public comment would only be bundled and given to the Inspector. The Cabinet Member responded to the question raised on what happened to comments and concerns from Members raised at previous Local Plan Panel meetings. He said the comments were not ignored, and any issues raised were considered by officers. The Cabinet Member said that officers would go through all the responses to the consultation and if there were any 'showstoppers' these would be looked into further. He noted the points that a Member had made about the A2 being referred to as a high street going through Teynham when in fact there was no high street through Teynham, but two parishes which converged onto the A2. A question was also raised as to what the rationale was for removing a 500-plus housing site. The Cabinet Member thanked the Member for the point on the high street and said officers would look to clarify this and explained that the Wises Lane, Sittingbourne allocation had to come out because the site was undeliverable, but it would depend on the appeal decision.

The Cabinet Member for Housing welcomed the amendment to Policy DM15 on affordable housing, in particular the provision of homes for life and a minimum required figure for accessible dwellings within affordable housing units. He considered there were a lot of positives within the document.

The Cabinet Member for Environment welcomed aspects of the Local Plan, including bio-diversity, good provision of affordable housing and the emphasis on active travel. He considered there should have been more consultation with Ward Members and referred to the site in Neames Forstal, Selling with the provision of 90 dwellings and questioned why a site was being put forward which was in an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty when the numbers delivered on that site were not needed to reach the target.

Recommendation 4: to grant delegated authority to the Planning Policy Manager and Head of Planning Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning to agree minor amendments to the documents that are non-material prior to submission and during the course of the examination if required.

The Leader and Cabinet and Cabinet Member for Finance reminded Members that the recommendations from this meeting would be considered by Full Council on 3 February 2021.

Recommended:

- (1) That the summaries of the remaining evidence for the Local Plan Review be noted.***
- (2) That the addendum to the Statement of Community Involvement that sets out how the Council will address Covid-19 related restrictions in light of the usual need to have hard copies of documents available for inspection be agreed.***
- (3) That the Local Plan Review pre-submission draft and accompanying documents as set out in Regulation 22 and commend them to Council for approval for the purposes of public consultation and submission to the***

Secretary of State in accordance with the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 be agreed.

(4) That delegated authority to the Planning Policy Manager and Head of Planning Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning to agree minor amendments to the documents that are non-material prior to submission and during the course of the examination if required be granted.

Chairman

Copies of this document are available on the Council website <http://www.swale.gov.uk/dso/>. If you would like hard copies or alternative versions (i.e. large print, audio, different language) we will do our best to accommodate your request please contact Swale Borough Council at Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, Kent, ME10 3HT or telephone the Customer Service Centre 01795 417850.

All Minutes are draft until agreed at the next meeting of the Committee/Panel