
LOCAL PLAN PANEL

MINUTES of the Meeting held in the Council Chamber, Swale House, East Street, Sittingbourne, ME10 3HT on Thursday, 17 February 2022 from 7.00 pm - 7.26 pm.

PRESENT: Councillors Mike Baldock (Chairman), Mike Henderson, James Hunt, Denise Knights (Substitute for Councillor Monique Bonney), Peter Marchington, Richard Palmer, Ken Rowles (Substitute for Councillor Carole Jackson), Eddie Thomas Ghlin Whelan and Corrie Woodford (Substitute for Councillor Elliott Jayes).

PRESENT (Virtually): Councillor Tim Valentine (Substitute for Councillor Alastair Gould).

OFFICERS PRESENT: James Freeman, Jo Millard and Jill Peet.

OFFICERS PRESENT (Virtually): Simon Algar, Billy Attaway and Natalie Earl.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Mike Whiting and Ben Meekings (consultant).

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE (Virtually): Councillors Simon Clark, Councillor Julian Saunders and Tony Winckless.

APOLOGIES: Councillor Monique Bonney, Alastair Gould, Carole Jackson and Elliott Jayes.

607 **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

The Chairman ensured that those present were aware of the emergency evacuation procedure.

608 **Declarations of Interest**

No interests were declared.

Part A Minutes for Recommendation to Cabinet

609 **Swale Borough Local Plan Review: Strategic Transport Modelling Evidence**

The Senior Planner introduced the report which set out the results of the strategic transport modelling work that had been undertaken as part of the Local Plan Review. She explained that it was a technical piece of evidence base focused on highways and it intended to give a broad overview of how the network would perform.

The Senior Planner explained that there were challenges, including several hot spots of congestion in Swale and further analysis of problem junctions had commenced with Kent County Council Highways and National Highways in order to consider whether any potential congestion could be overcome. She explained that following this assessment, consideration would be needed as to whether development proposed in the Local Plan Review could be accommodated or whether an alternative distribution of sites which resulted in fewer congestion hotspots was necessary. A further transport modelling run would then be required to test the establishment of the agreed development strategy and sites to be included. The Senior Planner said that a certain level of increased congestion as a result of Local Plan allocations was expected, but a Local Plan Inspector would need to see initiatives from both the Council and the promoters of allocations on how this would be minimised. She highlighted that negative impacts on safety would not be acceptable.

Finally, the Senior Planner stressed the importance of promoting and implementing more sustainable and active travel initiatives across Swale and she gave examples of how this work had already started, which included the Council's recent recruitment of an Active Travel officer and Faversham Town Council's excellent draft Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

Recommended:

(1) That the strategic transport modelling results at Appendix I be noted.

(2) That Cabinet agree that this work be part of the evidence base used to inform the Preferred Option stage (Regulation 19) of the Local Plan Review.

(3) That Cabinet agree that further, focused analysis work be undertaken, on what the optimum development strategy would look like in terms of minimising the impacts on the transport system.

610 **Proposed new conservation area at Rodmersham Parish Church**

The Conservation and Design Manager introduced the report which proposed the designation of a new Conservation Area following the recent Conservation Area review of Rodmersham. He said following an assessment, the area possessed the appropriate qualities to be considered as a Conservation Area.

The Conservation and Design Manager explained that a public consultation had been carried out, and most feedback had been positive. He drew attention to the summary and conclusions set out on pages 200-203 of the report, and he listed the significance and key characteristics of the proposed area.

Referring to the consultation, the Conservation and Design Manager said that there was strong support for the Conservation Area Designation but some changes were also suggested, most notably to include Ashgores House, a more isolated property to the north of the cluster of buildings in the proposed Conservation Area, and the proposed boundary designation had now been extended to include this property. He added that another suggestion arising from the consultation was to include a cluster of development which included Rodmersham House, a Listed Building, to the south west of the proposed Conservation Area. This was considered to be too far away from the proposed Conservation Area and it was noted that this Listed Building already had its own protection. In addition, its setting would need to be taken into account in relation to any development proposals.

The Conservation and Design Manager said that one of the reasons for bringing the review forward was as a result of the Highsted Park planning applications and he presented a plan showing the location of the proposed Conservation Area in relation to the Highsted Park planning applications for the south side of the A2.

The Chairman praised the report and asked whether there was any glebe land that should have been considered as part of the proposal? The Conservation and Design Manager said that he was not aware of any glebe land in the location and nor had any been highlighted to him.

A Member sought clarification on whether there was a risk that by extending the Conservation Area, the built up village envelope would be extended and would encourage development applications in the intervening open land? The Conservation and Design Manager said there would be a strong presumption against development taking place in that location because the area was considered as countryside in Planning terms. The small cluster of buildings forming a hamlet did not have a built up area boundary and the designation of a Conservation Area would strengthen the existing controls, making any such development unlikely.

The Conservation and Design Manager said that Ashgores House, being at a higher level than other buildings in the area, provided some longer distance views that were not achievable elsewhere closer to the church and in particular provided a view that aided understanding of the proposed Conservation Area in its rural context. This, together with Ashgores House acting as a clear visual entry point into the hamlet reinforced the argument to include the property within the proposed Conservation Area.

Recommended:

(1) That the content of the public consultation draft of the character appraisal and management strategy document proposed for the assessment relating to the proposed new Rodmersham Church Street area, and the representations made on this by interested parties, the details of which are set out in the report appendices be noted.

(2) That the changes to the assessment document proposed by officers in response to the representations received during the course of the public consultation be supported.

Chairman

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