

Minutes of a meeting of the LOCAL PLAN SUB-COMMITTEE held on Thursday, 5th July, 2018 in the Civic Community Hall, Vicarage Lane, HAILSHAM (2.30 p.m. to 3.50 p.m.).

PRESENT: Councillors A Newton (Chairman), R Standley (Deputy Chairman), R Galley, S Shing and S Stedman.

In attendance were the Director of Planning Policy & Economic Development (N Hannam), Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development (M Brigginsshaw), Planning Policy Manager (K Sharp) and Democratic Services Officer (W Newton-May).

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence were received from Councillors N Collinson and J Howell.

17/1 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting dated 13 March 2017 were agreed and confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

17/2 WEALDEN LOCAL PLAN - DRAFT PROPOSED SUBMISSION DOCUMENT

The Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development, Marina Brigginsshaw, presented the Wealden Local Plan – Draft Proposed Submission Document which had been prepared for publication for Representations from 13 August to 8 October 2018, following approval at the Full Council meeting on 18 July. She explained that the draft Proposed Submission Document (attached as Appendix A) was divided into three sections. The first section related to the vision, objectives and strategic growth policies including housing, the economy, infrastructure and environment and contained an overview of the Habitats Regulations Assessment conclusions for the Ashdown Forest SAC, Pevensey Levels SAC and Ramsar Site and Lewes Downs SAC in relation to air quality, along with the proposed approach to move forward with development despite the impacts of nitrogen deposition and other pollutants on these areas.

The second section covered the sustainable settlement strategy and identified specific policies relating to settlements, including housing distribution amongst settlements and town centre development. The third section dealt with planning themes and development policies, including housing, rural and countryside policies, the natural and historic environment and health and wellbeing.

The Sub-Committee considered each section in turn and the following comments and questions were raised by Members:

Section One

- (1) Meeting Housing Need* – Although it was noted that the housing need had been assessed as 950 houses per annum, concern was expressed

that this might not be achievable as previous years' housing delivery had not exceeded 550.

Miss Briggshaw advised that the Council had been constrained in previous years as the Core Strategy in 2013 had specified a target of 450 houses per annum; therefore the Council had not sought to deliver at a higher rate. The new Plan identified land in villages and towns to accommodate an increased number of housing and assist this growth.

- (2) *Core Areas close to Ashdown Forest* – Concern was expressed that the Council would not be able to sustain its argument of the need to protect Ashdown Forest with a series of mitigation measures, but still allow some small development to take place so close to the Forest.

Miss Briggshaw explained that the transport modelling had illustrated that different areas surrounding the Forest affected different roads and therefore had varying impacts on the Forest. She stated that the overall impact had been accounted for.

- (3) *Level of Nitrogen Deposition* - Members were reassured that levels of nitrogen deposition had been measured using scientific criteria, and this had been refined as the science had emerged over the period of time that the testing had taken place. Miss Briggshaw stated that she was confident with the scientific advice the Council had been given and confirmed that this had been tested using different scenarios.

- (4) *Windfalls* – Regarding planning for windfalls, it was explained that no specific sites had been identified for windfalls, but it would be unusual not to have windfall allowances in a Local Plan. Because of the unique circumstances within Wealden, it was important that the geographical locations of the windfall sites were identified in order to meet the Habitat Regulations.

A comment was made that there was a large number of windfalls in places where there was a development boundary. Members were reassured that there was land available within those development boundaries for the numbers of windfalls. Miss Briggshaw referred to WLP6 – Neighbourhood Development Plans, which provided for a level of flexibility in smaller villages to accommodate for the level of growth identified.

- (5) *Job Growth Figures* – These were calculated using a national model following work undertaken in terms of transport modelling and in terms of Ashdown Forest, Lewes Downs SAC and Pevensey Levels. In addition, the air quality associated with them had been modelled, and together with the housing allocation and windfall allowance the Council had the best scientific knowledge as to the impact of these figures.

- (6) *Transport Modelling* - It was confirmed there was a cumulative impact of development on the road network which would have to be accounted for. Many improvements were required, which the County Council would be responsible for.

- (7) *Reinstatement of Lewes to Uckfield Line* – It was acknowledged that there were many different views on whether this should be pursued. Members noted that the line had been safeguarded in case it was needed in the future and Miss Briginshaw stated that its reinstatement would have many benefits within Wealden and assist in protecting the Forest in future years.
- (8) *SHELAA sites* – Miss Briginshaw clarified that there were two types of sites identified in the Local Plan; allocated sites (which were larger sites requiring a written policy alongside them) and a smaller number of SHELAA sites (which were smaller in scale and did not require a written policy). These sites corresponded with the policies in the Local Plan and Members were advised where those SHELAA sites had been identified within Wealden.
- (9) *Mitigation Measures* – Members were advised that the suitable mitigation measures for Ashdown Forest, Lewes Downs and Pevensey Levels Special Area of Conservation and Ramsar Site were identified in Chapter 5 of the Plan
- (10) *Core Areas* – An explanation of Core Areas was provided for Members, which related to Policy RAS1 in Chapter 27 of the Plan.

Section Two

- (11) *Site MAY1* – Members were advised that part of the site identified in MAY 1, relating to Policy RUGA 17 was not available and therefore it was proposed to remove this small element of the allocation – however this would not have a material impact upon the policy.
- (12) *Steel Cross, Crowborough* – Members noted that, in order to reflect the planning application at Steel Cross and to protect the most environmentally sensitive part of the site, it was proposed to amend the development boundary at Crowborough from that contained within the document.
- (13) *Deliverability of Sites* – Miss Briginshaw explained that the sites that had been assessed to be allocated had been allowed to proceed so there was a level of certainty in terms of deliverability.
- (14) *Housing in Horam* – Concern was expressed at the increase in the number of proposed housing in Horam and Miss Briginshaw explained that the total allocation and SHELAA sites were 324, with 137 windfall allowance. She reminded the Committee of the settlement hierarchy which outlined how settlements were categorised, based on sustainability and other factors such as the Ashdown Forest. Horam had a number of suitable sites, which would have less impact on certain roads within the network and Ashdown Forest than other settlements. A significant amount of housing had also been put in Hailsham. In addition, it was noted that as part of the Council's Strategy, there was a need to have growth in the villages to maintain

the 5-year housing supply.

- (15) *School Provision* – Miss Brigginsshaw explained that this was the responsibility of the County Council, but some sites had been identified for community provision, which could include schools. It was confirmed that no housing allocation had been identified on Mornings Mill, Polegate, only community facilities.
- (16) *Bus Service* – Members were advised that, due to the volume of detail within this Plan, details of the bus services were included in other associated documents for Members' information.

Section Three

- (17) *Dark Skies* – South Downs National Park had made reference to the protection of dark skies and Miss Sharp reassured Members that Officers would take this into account. It was noted that Policy NE3 considered light pollution. Concern was expressed at the proposal of the County Council to implement 12 additional street lights between Horebeech Lane and Chiddingly Road, Horam, in an attempt to slow the traffic down. It was felt by some that this could have an adverse impact and speed the traffic up instead, particularly at the accident black spot outside the May Garland Public House. In response, Miss Brigginsshaw referred to Policy NE3 which would ensure that development did not have an adverse impact. She added that further discussion would take place with the County Council regarding this issue.
- (18) *Elongated Marketing Process* – Councillor Newton explained that this was included in the Plan due to Members' concerns regarding protecting establishments such as village pubs by extending the marketing period and ensuring the correct form of marketing took place. Miss Brigginsshaw added that the new NPPF focussed on community facilities, including commercial premises.
- (19) *Health Impact Assessment* – In response to a question, Miss Brigginsshaw confirmed that this assessment was required under the Environment Assessment Regulations. She added that health and wellbeing was now becoming a more prominent feature within planning.
- (20) *Design Guide* – Miss Brigginsshaw explained that both PCN and PCS Members had expressed concern about good design, as well as the Council's Housing Officers, and therefore this had been included to protect the amenities of people moving into affordable housing.
- (21) *Affordable Housing* – In response to a comment, Councillor Newton explained that if there was a proven viability test that the applicant could not build out to the percentage that the Council required, then if that was accepted the rest of that total should be marketable properties but of the much smaller size. Therefore there would still be an element of affordable housing, but not within the definition within the NPPF.

The Director of Planning Policy and Economic Development, Mr Hannam, clarified that although Chapter 36 of the Plan stated that the requirement for affordable housing had reduced across the district, this was compared with the previous Local Plan. He confirmed that affordable housing did remain high at some 331 affordable dwellings per annum. Officers were asked to amend the wording in this Chapter to clarify this point.

- (22) Appendices – Councillor Newton advised the Sub-Committee that the wording in Table 7 in Appendix 1 would be amended from ‘Non allocated SHELAA sites’ to ‘Identified SHELAA sites’

RESOLVED to request that the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development recommends the Draft Submission Wealden Local Plan and the Wealden Local Plan Implementation and Monitoring Framework to Full Council, subject to the comments made by the Local Plan Sub-Committee as identified above.

17/3

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development, Marina Briggins Shaw, presented the Local Development Scheme (LDS) to the Sub-Committee, which set out the programme, content and timetable of Local Plans that it intended to prepare. She advised Members that the current LDS had been agreed in November 2015 and therefore the document required updating to reflect the revised timetable of the Local Plan.

The revised timetable proposed for the Local Plan in the revised LDS was set out for Members’ information at Appendix A of the report.

Councillor Newton thanked all the staff for the tremendous work that had gone in to the production of the draft Local Plan. She also thanked her fellow Councillors for their patience and contribution, as well as the residents for their patience during this period of uncertainty.

RESOLVED to request that the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Development recommends the approval of the Local Development Scheme timetable to Full Council, attached at Appendix A to the report.

Councillor A Newton
Chairman