

**Minutes of the Meeting of the LICENSING AND PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE
held at the Council Chamber, Epsom Town Hall on 30 January 2023**

PRESENT -

Councillor Steven McCormick (Chair); Councillor Peter O'Donovan (Vice-Chair); Councillors Steve Bridger, Neil Dallen, Liz Frost, Rob Geleit, Julie Morris, Barry Nash, Phil Neale, and Peter Webb

In Attendance: Councillor Kate Chinn

Officers present: Victoria Potts (Interim Director of Environment, Housing and Regeneration), Ian Mawer (Planning Policy Manager), Harry Burchill (Senior Planning Policy Officer), Sue Emmons (Chief Accountant), Susie Legg (Policy Planner), Tim Richardson (Democratic Services Manager) and Stephanie Gray (Data Protection Officer)

28 QUESTION TIME

The Committee received three oral questions from members of the public. An oral response was provided to each question.

Three supplementary oral questions were asked. The Chair, the Interim Director of Environment, Housing and Regeneration, and the Planning Policy Manager provided oral responses to these questions.

29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests in respect of any item of business to be considered at the meeting were made by Members.

30 MOTION REFERRED FROM COUNCIL

The Committee received a report which provided a basis for debate to the motion submitted to the meeting of Full Council on 06-12-2022 by the Labour Group about the Council's affordable housing specified in the new Local Plan.

The following matters were considered by the Committee:

- a) **Viability assessment:** Officers confirmed that any viability assessment submitted by a developer, would be subject to an independent check. This check would be commissioned by the Council, with costs to be borne by the developer.

- b) **Homelessness:** Members considered that homelessness was one of the biggest risks faced by the Council, but that Council also needed to be realistic regarding the calls on its purse.

Following consideration, it was resolved (6 voting in favour, 2 voting against, 1 abstention, and the Chair not voting) to:

- (1) Reject the motion as Local Plan Policy must be evidence based and as such the draft Local Plan provides a robust and more refined approach to maximise the delivery of affordable housing across both brownfield and greenfield sites.**

31 EPSOM AND EWELL LOCAL PLAN 2022-2040

The Committee received a report seeking approval to publish the Draft Local Plan (2022-2040) for public consultation for a period of six weeks commencing on the 1st February 2023 in accordance with our adopted Local Development Scheme (the Local Plan timetable).

This is the first stage of public consultation as the Local Plan progresses towards adoption.

The following matters were considered by the Committee:

- a) **Local Plan Made easy Guide and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document:** Officers confirmed that the FAQ document will be a living document on the website which will be added to as the consultation period unfolds.
- b) **Process leading up to Local Plan:** the Chair confirmed that a robust process had taken place in terms of preparation, member briefings and discussions, in the lead up to the production of the Local Plan.
- c) **Social responsibility to provide housing:** A Councillor asked about the Council's social responsibility to provide housing. It was explained that as a housing authority, we regularly assess the housing need, and look to meet these needs.
- d) **Health and Wellbeing:** a Councillor expressed a concern that if Epsom is becoming an aging population, it was important that sufficient provision is made for spaces for independent as well as team sports, and that there may be more of a call for appropriate outdoor spaces for such activities. Officers confirmed that there was some evidence base relating to formal sports pitches as well as regarding the provision of more secure spaces. It was pointed out that Epsom is very fortunate to have such extensive outdoor space available, and the Local Plan will look to improve the linkages and connectivity to these open spaces.

- e) **Call for Sites:** A Councillor asked whether if additional sites were identified through the Call for Sites process, this could possibly mitigate against the use of certain green belt sites. An Officer confirmed that this could well be the case, although there were other needs that also need to be met (not just the housing need).
- f) **Amendments to Local Plan:** it was indicated that the Local Plan would be published “as is”, although a schedule of amendments would be drawn up and Members were invited to email any amendments through to Officers.
- g) **Comments received during Consultation period:** Officers explained that following the Consultation period, all comments received would be incorporated into a Statement of Consultation. This Statement would also document how the comments have been addressed. The Statement would also be brought back to the Committee.
- h) **Methods for public to comment on Local Plan:** Officers explained that there were various methods available to the public to comment on the Local Plan. The preferred method was to comment using the consultation software which enabled comments to be made online at relevant places in the Plan. Other methods to comment include writing a letter or sending an email. Along with being available online, hard copies of the Plan will also be available in the Town Hall and in libraries. A pdf version of the Plan will also be available. Members of the public would also be able to fill out a Comment Form. Anonymous comments will not be accepted.

Following consideration, it was unanimously resolved to:

- (1) **Approve the publication of the Draft Local Plan (2022-2040) for public consultation to commence 1 February 2023 at noon and conclude on 15 March 2023 at midnight.**

32 REVENUE BUDGET 2023/24

The Committee received a report setting out budget estimates for income and expenditure for Licensing & Planning Policy services in 2023/24.

Following consideration, it was resolved to:

- (1) **recommend the 2023/24 service estimates for approval at the budget meeting of full Council in February 2023.**

The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 9.29 pm

COUNCILLOR STEVEN MCCORMICK (CHAIR)