

**Minutes of the Meeting of the LICENSING AND PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE
held on 19 January 2016**

PRESENT -

Councillor Graham Dudley (Chairman); Councillor Clive Smitheram (Vice-Chairman); Councillors Michael Arthur, Tony Axelrod, Neil Dallen (as nominated substitute for Councillor David Wood), Rob Geleit, Martin Olney, David Reeve and Humphrey Reynolds

Absent: Councillor David Wood and Councillor Tina Mountain

Officers present: Sandra Dessent (Democratic Services Officer) and Karol Jakubczyk (Planning Policy Manager)

37 SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Neil Dallen attended as a nominated substitute for Councillor David Wood.

38 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

In the absence of the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Clive Smitheram was appointed as Vice-Chairman.

39 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made by Councillors in the item on the Agenda.

40 GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION ON PROPOSED CHANGES TO NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY - THE COUNCIL'S RESPONSE

Following an urgent question asked by Councillor Liz Frost at the Council meeting on Tuesday 08 December 2015, Councillor Graham Dudley the Chairman of the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee called a Special Meeting to consider the Council's response to a Government Consultation regarding proposed changes to national planning policy.

The consultation was seeking views on some specific changes to National Planning Policy in the following areas:

- Broadening the definition of affordable housing to expand the range of low cost housing opportunities for those aspiring to own a home.

- Increasing residential density around commuter hubs to make more efficient use of land in suitable locations
- Supporting sustainable new settlements, development on brownfield land and small sites, and delivery of housing allocated in plans
- Supporting delivery of starter homes

Officers had prepared draft responses to the twenty three questions, in the Government consultation document. The Committee considered the scope of the proposed changes and was concerned that the proposals would diminish the Council's ability to meet local affordable housing need and that higher density development would have a harmful impact upon the Borough's visual character and appearance, and the openness of the Green Belt.

The Committee reviewed each question and response in order, and agreed to the following amendments:

- Question 3: Response to include a reference to the importance of visual character and appearance of the townscape when considering the definition of commuter hubs.
- Question 10: Amend to read; '...Our existing core strategy policy CS8 supports the principal of residential development within the existing urban area (the remainder of the Borough is Green Belt or **designated Strategic Open Space**). ...'
- Question 11: In response to the second part of the question, '*What should constitute significant under-delivery, and over what time period*', revise the emphasis of the response to point to the Annual Monitoring Report as the most favourable tool to assess performance.
- Question 13: In the response include Article 4 Directions as a form of evidence that could be used to justify retention of land for commercial or similar use.
- Questions 17 and 18: Amend the response to read; 'We have no comments on this question, **because we are not a rural borough/district.**'
- Question 21: Add specific request for a longer transitional period.

Accordingly, it was agreed that the responses discussed at the meeting, subject to the amendments detailed above, would constitute the Council's formal response to the Government Consultation on proposed changes to national planning policy.

The meeting began at 7.30 pm and ended at 8.50 pm

COUNCILLOR GRAHAM DUDLEY (CHAIRMAN)