Minutes of the Meeting of the LICENSING AND PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE held on 20 April 2017

PRESENT -

Councillor Graham Dudley (Chairman); Councillor David Wood (Vice-Chairman); Councillors Michael Arthur, Chris Frost, Rob Geleit, Tina Mountain, Martin Olney, David Reeve, Clive Smitheram and Jean Steer

Officers present: Mark Berry (Head of Place Development), Rachel Jackson (Licensing, Grants and HIA Manager), Karol Jakubczyk (Planning Policy Manager), Rachael Thorold (Senior Planning Policy Officer) and Sandra Dessent (Democratic Services Officer)

27 QUESTION TIME

The Chairman of Ewell Village Resident's Association addressed the Committee regarding the Council's policy on managing the use of Estate Agent's boards and suggested a way forward to regulate the current practices.

The Chairman of the Committee thanked the speaker for his comments which were duly noted and undertook to investigate further following the meeting and provide a written response in due course.

28 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made at the meeting:

Epsom & Ewell Green Belt Study 2017
Councillor Graham Dudley, Other Interest: Member of the Nonsuch Park Joint Management Committee, which is an area designated in the Green Belt study to be considered for inclusion in the green belt.

Epsom & Ewell Green Belt Study 2017
Councillor Tina Mountain, Other Interest: resides in an area designated in the Green Belt Study to be considered for inclusion in the green belt.

29 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2017 were agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

30 HACKNEY CARRIAGES - ACCEPTANCE OF CARD PAYMENTS

The Committee were informed that all Hackney Carriages licensed by the Transport for London (tfl) were required to have a mechanism to accept card payments for fares. The Authority had a long standing agreement with the tfl that enabled certain drivers the right to be dual licenced and apply the tariffs set by the tfl. In April 2016, the Committee were asked to consider if it should be mandatory for drivers licenced by this Authority to accept card payments and it was agreed that a period of monitoring be undertaken to assess the demand.

Subsequently, the Committee received a report detailing the findings and noted that extensive consultations had led to the conclusion that the majority of drivers could not see any reason to impose a mandatory requirement. It was noted that the main ranks are all situated in close proximity to ATM cash dispensers. In addition, the Council had not received any complaints from taxi users about the lack of the facility.

The Committee noted that the ten drivers operating in the borough who held a dual licence would not be disadvantaged in any way by this Authority not introducing mandatory card acceptance facilities.

Accordingly, the Committee agreed that it was not necessary to introduce a mandatory requirement for Hackney Carriages licensed by Epsom and Ewell Borough Council to have the facility to accept payment by card or other cashless methods.

31 EPSOM & EWELL GREEN BELT STUDY 2017

The Committee were informed of the importance that the Government attaches to the Green Belt and the opportunities provided by a review of a local plan to consider Green Belt boundaries and their relevance beyond the plan period. Subsequently, external consultants were appointed to prepare a study that assessed the performance of the Borough's Green Belt against the relevant purposes set out in national planning policy. The Committee noted that the study was a technical evidence base document the outputs of which would be used to inform the partial review of the Core Strategy. Any recommendations arising from the review would be detailed in the Issues and Options Consultation paper scheduled to come before the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee in September 2017.

Officers were pleased to conclude that the Study revealed that on the whole the Borough's designated Green Belt areas performs well against the criteria. In addition four discrete parcels of land not within the Green Belt designation had been assessed against the purposes of the Green Belt and all four had performed highly against at least one of the purposes.

The Committee were informed that further suggestions for sites to be assessed against the purposes of Green Belt should be forwarded to the Planning Policy team.

Members expressed their thanks to officers for their hard work and diligence in preparing an excellent report on a subject of great importance to the Borough's residents.

Accordingly the Committee considered the Green Belt Study and agreed:

(1) To its publication, subject to the correction of a minor typographical error.

(2) Noted that the green belt identified four sites which are not part of the designated green belt but have been assessed as performing strongly against at least one of the purposes of the green belt.

(3) Agreed that the Green Belt Study outputs, including those relating to sites not currently designated as being within the green belt, be used to inform the partial review of the Core Strategy.

32 HOUSING ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2015/16

The Committee received the Housing Annual Monitoring Report 2015/2016 the main objective of which was to identify and maintain a rolling supply of specific deliverable sites sufficient to provide five years' worth of housing against housing requirements. Members were informed that the report covered an historic reporting period and included sites that were anticipated to be developed at the time of the reporting period. It was also noted that the CIL implications would be detailed in a separate report and a regulation 62 statement would come before the appropriate Committee when available. It was agreed that Members would be informed when the information was published on the Epsom & Ewell website.

The Committee noted the contents of the Housing Annual Monitoring Report 2015/16 and agreed to its publication on the Council's website, subject to the investigation of a discrepancy in paragraph 4.5 –the number of units for 2015/16 Lintons Centre.

33 THE HOUSING WHITE PAPER 2017 - DRAFT RESPONSE

The Committee were informed that following the publication of the recent Housing White Paper, the Government had issued a consultation consisting of 38 questions to assess the viability of their proposals.

Members appraised the draft responses and agreed to the following amendments/additions:

- Question 8: Delete the final sentence of the answer, '*This amendment is not considered necessary.'*

- Question13: Add a reference to high density developments, as follows: *';It should be noted that high density developments in their totality do not automatically lead to a more efficient use of land. The infrastructure requirements to support a resulting concentration of new residents often lead to further land requirements, for example, to deliver school expansions and car parking.'*

- Question 23: Add sentence to clarify the term 'applicant', as follows: *'It cannot be assumed that the applicant of the planning application will be the developer or indeed has any intention of developing the site themselves. It is not uncommon for planning permission to be obtained prior to a site being sold as way of increasing profit.'*

- Question 31: Insert reference to concerns in changes to affordable housing between paragraphs one and two as follows: *'Furthermore, the Borough Council is concerned that the proposed changes to the definitions of affordable housing will result in products not remaining affordable in perpetuity'.*

- Question 32: Add a sentence that emphasizes the conflict with the ministerial statement, as follows: *'The Borough Council would like to highlight the potential conflict with the current written Ministerial Statement in relation to affordable housing contributions and sites of 10 or fewer new homes.'*

Accordingly, subject to the amendments agreed above, The Committee approved the draft responses to the consultation questions, and agreed that the responses would constitute the Council's reply to the proposals.

34 VOTE OF THANKS

Councillor Clive Smitheram on behalf of the Committee expressed thanks to the Chairman, Councillor Graham Dudley for his hard work and support as Chairman to the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee.

35 GENERAL ELECTION

The Chairman informed the Committee that following the announcement that a snap election was to be held on 8 June, the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee meeting due to be held on the same day had been cancelled. The next meeting would be held on 12 July.

The meeting began at 7.32 pm and ended at 9.15 pm

COUNCILLOR GRAHAM DUDLEY (CHAIRMAN)