

**Minutes of the Meeting of the LICENSING AND PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE
held on 23 January 2020**

PRESENT -

Councillor David Reeve (Chair); Councillor Clive Woodbridge (Vice-Chair); Councillors Neil Dallen, Liz Frost (from 7.25pm), Rob Geleit, David Gulland (as nominated substitute for Councillor Julie Morris), Steven McCormick (as nominated substitute for Councillor Chris Frost), Lucie McIntyre and Humphrey Reynolds

In Attendance: Councillor Bernie Muir

Absent: Councillor Monica Coleman, Councillor Chris Frost and Councillor Julie Morris

Officers present: Amardip Healy (Chief Legal Officer), Ruth Ormella (Head of Planning), Karol Jakubczyk (Planning Policy Manager) and Sandra Dessent (Committee Administrator)

22 QUESTION TIME

No questions were submitted by members of the public

23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations were made:

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Lucie McIntyre, Other Interest: Declared she was a member of the Epsom & Walton Downs Conservators.

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Neil Dallen, Other Interest: Declared he was a member of the Civic Society and TGMB (Training Grounds Management Board).

Declarations of Interest

Councillor Steven McCormick, Other Interest: Declared he was a member of Epsom Civic Society, Epsom & Ewell Tree Advisory Board, Woodcote (Epsom) Residents Society and the Epsom & Walton Downs Conservators.

24 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting of the Licensing and Planning Policy Committee held on 14 November 2019 were agreed and signed by the Chair as a true record.

25 ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2018-2019

The Committee received the AMR (Annual Monitoring Report) for the reporting period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019 which is the principal means of monitoring the performance and implementation of the Local Plan, and is fundamental to providing a sound factual basis for decision-making and plan preparation.

It was reported that 165 additional homes had been completed during the plan period, equating to 28% of the Borough's objectively assessed housing need. It was noted that Epsom & Ewell have a 1.14 year supply of housing and the housing trajectory predicted a housing shortfall of 8,484 over the period 2017 – 2037

It was further noted that performance in other areas remained strong i.e. Green Belt and Design Policies.

The following points were raised by the Committee:

- Officers clarified that parking free developments identified in the report were such as they were well located in terms of access to public transport, other sustainable travel modes, services, facilities and amenities. It was suggested for future AMRs that the methods for monitoring Parking Standards be reviewed.
- It was agreed to amend the details for Global House to reflect its use as an office. (page 33 under Plan E site allocations)

Having considered the AMR the Committee noted the contents.

26 HOUSING DELIVERY TEST 2019

The Housing Delivery Test is an annual assessment by the Government setting out the performance of the local planning authorities in delivering their identified need over the previous three years.

Whilst the actual results were yet to be published, the Committee noted that the anticipated outcome was a further deterioration in performance from 22nd to 13th worst achieving Borough nationwide.

The first test results, in 2018, had reported that 57% of the Borough's housing need had been delivered which resulted in the preparation of an Action Plan and the imposition of a 20% buffer. As it was improbable that performance would improve the further penalty of presumption in favour of sustainable development was likely.

Accordingly, the Committee noted the forecasted result for Epsom & Ewell in the government's forthcoming Housing Delivery Test 2019 and the implications for the local planning authority's plan-making and decision making process.

27 LOCAL PLAN DESIGN POLICIES

The Committee received a report setting out the extent of proposed design policies for the new Local Plan, and the need for planning balance to be exercised when determining planning applications.

Officers restated the conclusion of the Licensing & Planning Policy Committee in May 2018 i.e. the decision to acknowledge the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the local considerations of housing need alongside the consequential need to optimise use of the land. It was agreed that due weight would be given to these matters when assessing proposals against current policies.

Members raised the following points and suggestions:

- It was agreed to circulate the three annexes attached to the report to the Planning Committee to inform their decision making
- Additional training to be provided for Members, details of which would be circulated by the Head of Planning
- It was emphasised that the design guidance could be used to support the Council's adopted policies

Having considered the National Design guidance the Committee:

- (1) Noted the publication of the National Design Guidance and associated 10 characteristics which are used when assessing and determining planning applications
- (2) Agreed the key areas of focus of proposed policies being prepared for Regulation 18 consultation for the draft Local Plan as set out in paragraph 3.7 of the report.

28 BIODIVERSITY: LOCAL PLAN BACKGROUND PAPER

A Local Plan background paper regarding Biodiversity had been prepared detailing the biodiversity of the Borough including Sites of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI); Non-statutory designations; Ancient Woodlands and Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI's). Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA's) in the borough were also identified.

It was noted that biodiversity makes a positive contribution towards the Borough's visual character and appearance, and in terms of mitigating the adverse impacts of climate change.

The following points and suggestions were made:

- It was agreed to incorporate related issues of climate change, and health and wellbeing into the background paper

- It was noted (Page 212 Paragraph 5.1) that some of the Borough's open spaces were already at risk from overuse. Without extending areas of biodiversity or increasing the capacity of those open spaces that act as buffers (to protected sites/habitats) there was a risk that future growth would have an adverse impact in the borough's biodiversity. It was agreed that paragraph 5.1 be amended to reflect this.

The Committee recognised the amount of work that had gone into compiling the biodiversity information and thanked them for such a thorough and informative report.

The Committee:

- (1) Noted the content of the Biodiversity Background paper attached at Annex 1
- (2) Endorsed the approach as set out in section 8.0 of Annex 1 for the preparation of the Local Plan, subject to amendments agreed in the meeting.

29 LOCAL PLAN EVIDENCE BASE: SPATIAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

The Committee received the Draft Spatial Economic Development Strategy, a technical study commissioned by the Council to inform the emerging new Local Plan on the provision of employment to meet the economic growth opportunities and options.

It was conveyed that overall the Borough was a great place to do business especially for entrepreneurs, start-ups and young businesses.

Sustaining the conditions that maintained and enhanced the Borough's local economy was reported as a key objective for the Local Plan and an important part of preparing the borough-wide growth strategy.

The Strategy aimed to identify solutions for the provision of employment space to meet the borough's needs for economic growth and change within the plan period. It also identified possible interventions, local plan policy changes and approaches required to deliver the solutions.

The following amendments were agreed:

- Page 249, paragraph 6.1.1 should read 'In order to **strengthen** the borough's longer term economic prospects...'
- Page 253, project no. 4 – It was agreed to provide additional detail and clarity to the text relating to 'Scope' – Epsom & Ewell Walking and Cycle Network to highlight the specific objective to improve the connectivity of the sustainable travel networks linking Kiln Lane and Longmead Employment sites.

The Committee:

- (1) Noted the contents of the Spatial Economic Development Strategy 2020 as a technical study that will form part of the evidence based for the emerging new Local Plan
- (2) Authorised the Head of Planning to amend the strategy in line with the suggestions made in the meeting (above).

30 RACE TRAINING & EQUESTRIAN INDUSTRY: LOCAL PLAN BACKGROUND PAPER

With Epsom being the home of the Derby the racecourse and equestrian sector have long been recognised as a key part of the identity of the Borough and to that end the Council had commissioned a Scoping report on the Racecourse and Equestrian sector which would be used to form part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan.

The Scoping report identified interventions that could form the basis of enabling policies for the new Local plan including:

- Establishing a racing or recreation area
- Enabling investment into the racecourse
- Key workers accommodation
- Capital investment and enabling development
- Inward investment into the sector
- Growing the visitor economy
- Building on Epsom 'Home of the Derby'

The following amendments and suggestions were made:

- Page 272 paragraph 6.2 – suggest amending the heading of the paragraph to read, '**Investment in** the Racehorse Training Sector'
- Page 273 paragraph 8.1 – suggest amending heading to read '**Equine Training** and Racing Zone'. It was also suggested that the Background Paper include an additional reference to the proposals for an Enterprise Zone as set out in the Spatial Economic Development Strategy
- Page 274 paragraph 8.2 – It was agreed to explore the Jockey Club's utilisation of the Conference Centre outside of racing fixtures and amend the paragraph if considered applicable

- Page 275 paragraph 8.6 – amend paragraph cross-reference from 7.4 to 8.5

The Committee welcomed and acknowledged the report which identified the huge potential for working with the racing industry.

Accordingly, the Committee noted the contents of the Scoping Report on the Racecourse & Equestrian Sector as a technical study that will form part of the evidence base for the emerging new Local Plan.

31 LOCAL PLAN EVIDENCE BASE: RETAIL NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND TOWN CENTRES HEALTH CHECKS

The Committee received the Draft Borough-wide Retail Needs Assessment and Town Centres' Health Checks a technical study commissioned by the Council to inform the new emerging Local Plan.

The study stated that there was evidence to demonstrate that Epsom & Ewell was a great place to shop and the retail centres provided a focus for the different communities across the Borough. It was highlighted that sustaining the conditions that maintain and enhance the borough's retail centres was a key objective for the Local Plan.

The following amendments were suggested and agreed:

- Page 320 – paragraph 5.65 final sentence should read 'The focus should **now** shift to the Church Street/East Street...'
- Page 322 final bullet point to read Church **Street**
- Page 358 Recommendations for Epsom Town Centre – clarification required as to how the primary retail frontage will be measured

Accordingly, the Committee noted the contents of the Draft Borough-wide Retail Needs Assessment and Town Centres' Health Checks as a technical study that will form part of the evidence base for the emerging new Local Plan, subject to minor amendments agreed at the meeting.

32 REVISED LOCAL PLAN PROGRAMME

The Committee received a revised Local Plan programme setting out the processes and timetable for the new Local Plan.

The key milestones included:

Spring 2020 – *Final Issues and Options Consultation (Regulation 18 Part2)*

Summer 2021 – *Pre submission Public Consultation*

Autumn 2021 – *Submission to the Secretary of State*

Winter 2021 – *Public Hearing*

Autumn 2022 – *Estimated date of adoption*

The following amendment was agreed:

- Page 404 paragraph 5.65 first sentence should read ‘In parallel to our new Local Plan **we have prepared** a Masterplan for Epsom & Ewell...’

The potential for future judicial reviews was discussed and it was agreed that any relevant articles/papers outlining recent judicial reviews of Local Plans (in Surrey Guildford or Waverley) would be circulated to Members.

The evolution of Duty to Cooperate was explained and the requirement that neighbouring authorities will be obliged to adopt agreed strategies to address key issues. The Council should be able to demonstrate clearly how they will work collectively with their neighbours to address unmet housing need.

Members requested that that sufficient staffing resources be made available to ensure the Local Plan meets its delivery timetable.

The Committee considered and approved the draft Local Plan Programme January 2020.

33 VOTE OF THANKS

It was announced that this was the final meeting for Sandra Dessent – Democratic Services Officer. The Committee thanked her for her support and hard work administering the Committee and wished her all the best for the future.

The meeting began at 7.00 pm and ended at 9.20 pm

COUNCILLOR DAVID REEVE (CHAIR)