

CABINET (LOCAL PLAN) COMMITTEE

30 March 2015

Attendance:

Committee Members:

Councillors:

Read (Chairman) (P)

Godfrey (P)

Pearson (P)

Other invited Councillors:

J Berry

Evans (P)

Hutchison (P)

Learney (P)

Ruffell (P)

Deputy Members:

Councillor Learney (Standing Deputy for Councillor J Berry)

Others in attendance who addressed the meeting:

Councillors Jeffs (Portfolio Holder for Communities and Transport) and Power

1. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2015 be approved and adopted.

2. **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Councillor Godfrey declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in respect of the following items due to his role as a County Council employee. However, as there was no material conflict of interest, he remained in the room, spoke and voted under the dispensation granted on behalf of the Standards Committee to participate and vote in all matters which might have a County Council involvement.

Councillor Pearson explained that he had pre-determined Item 4 (Appendix 5) due to his involvement in his capacity as Ward Councillor. As a result, he did

not address the Committee on this matter and took no part in the consideration of the matter thereon.

Mr Tilbury, Corporate Director drew attention to the fact that he was a resident of New Alresford, in relation to Appendix 2

3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Questions and statements were made under the following item.

4. **DRAFT WINCHESTER DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN PART 2 (LPP2):
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT AND SITE ALLOCATIONS – FEEDBACK
ON CONSULTATION RESPONSES**
(Report CAB2676(LP) refers)

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting about 15 members of the public, some of whom addressed the Committee on the appendices, as set out within the report. A summary of their comments are outlined under the relevant appendix below.

The Head of Strategic Planning introduced the Report and explained that this was the second of two meetings examining the responses to the LPP2 consultation (the first held on 12 March 2015). It was noted that a large number of the comments received raised issues relating to site selection and the promotion of alternative sites for consideration. This would require further work to ensure the most appropriate sites were allocated through LPP2 and to also consider the technical matters raised in several responses. These would be investigated prior to additional meetings in early June 2015 to recommend and agree final changes to the draft Plan prior to submission for examination. The first of these meetings had been scheduled for 1 June 2015, with subsequent meetings to be arranged in due course, as necessary.

The Principal Planning Officer advised that the Committee that Officers would be liaising with the respective Parish Councils/Town Forum, specialists and technical experts to undertake the required assessments to ensure the sites allocated in the pre-submission version of LPP2 are the most sustainable, prior to the approval of any final changes.

The Committee then discussed each settlement area, as contained in Appendices 1 to 8 of the Report.

Bishops Waltham – Appendix 1

During public participation, Robert Shields (Bishops Waltham Parish Council) addressed the Committee and his comments are summarised below.

In summary, Mr Shields stated that the majority of the representations made were already known to the Parish Council which sought to retain the ambience of Bishops Waltham and overall this was achieved to residents' satisfaction. However, there were a number of representations made that expressed concern regarding the development access. It was noted that the Parish Council had previously made a representation on the issue of traffic

management and was currently involved in work to produce a design statement, to be incorporated as a supplementary planning document, to guide the Local Plan and due in early 2016, prior to the adoption of LPP2.

In response to Members' questions, the Head of Strategic Planning clarified that traffic assessments had been produced for Bishops Waltham and other areas to test the cumulative impact of the levels development proposed, as part of Local Plan Part 1 (LPP1). These had concluded that the number required for the village could be accommodated; the impact locally would be looked at in the light of comments made. Officers reported that with regard to the cumulative impact on the B2177, justification for a transport assessment to be carried out on this particular area would need to be established, in accordance with government guidance.

The Head of Strategic Planning responded to further comments made by the Committee with reference to the following:

- Cycle footpaths links from Bishops Waltham to Upham and suggested that the process be followed to achieve funding for this via the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) programme;
- Encouraging developers to hold back planning proposals until LPP2 had been adopted, although applications would have to be considered on their merits and the status of the Plan at the time;
- Omission sites and plans; and
- Lack of response to English Heritage comments. Officers advised they would assess the nature of the comments expressed by English Heritage to establish if a change to the Policy approach was required.

In conclusion, the Head of Strategic Planning confirmed that, where further work was required in response to representations received, further discussions would take place with the relevant technical experts involved, together with other organisations such as parish councils.

New Alresford – Appendix 2

During public participation, Jan Field, Robert Fowler, Ernest Piper, Janet Barker, Dr Brian Tippett and John Bernie addressed the Committee. A summary of their comments are outlined below:

- Jan Field (Chairman of The Alresford Society) advised that she was awaiting further detail but was generally in support of the proposals in the plan in particular in relation to the provision of extra care facilities for the elderly, the soundness of ecology testing and the job opportunities the development would bring. She stated that views submitted by a number of the groups were not representative of the general response of the Town and felt that New Alresford needed the protection of LPP2.
- Robert Fowler (Sun Hill Residents' Association and Tichborne Action Group) amplified points contained in the letter of objection and raised those addressed at a previous Committee, held on 9 February. Mr Fowler accepted the need for some housing on the Sun Hill site but drew

Members' attention to the strength of feeling among the vast majority opposed to the Local Plan site allocations in New Alresford, demonstrated by the submission of 565 comments objecting to individual points of the Policy. He drew the Committee's attention to the alternative plan for New Alresford and reported that 86% of those Sun Hill residents that had voiced their opinion were in support of this. As a result he urged the Committee to further consider the alternative scheme that had been submitted.

- Ernest Piper stated that he was concerned about the access on Sun Lane which, during school times reduced the already congested lane into a single track road. He suggested that building on the adjacent field and increasing traffic in this area would exacerbate the situation. Mr Piper also expressed concerns for managing access to the proposal and the potential impact on amenities for residents from the proposed motorway-style junction off the A31.
- Janet Barker stated that she had submitted a letter to the Chief Executive for consideration (and provided a copy at the Cabinet Committee) in relation to the lack of consultation throughout the process. In her view, the consultation process was flawed and New Alresford Town Council (NATC) had not proactively engaged with the community in an open and objective manner, nor had they represented the needs or the best interests of the residents, as such she considered this to be inappropriate conduct.
- Dr Brian Tippet suggested that officers be open to consider alternative ideas due to the unprecedented number of representations received. He felt that Council officers had made no attempts to engage with respondents and sought some assurance that officers were listening to residents to ensure the most appropriate sites are allocated.
- John Bernie (Sun Hill Residents' Association and Tichborne Action Group) reiterated that he considered the proposed plan to be developer led and unsuitable for the Sun Hill area. The alternative plan was driven by local residents and spread across the town area to achieve an improved utilisation of sites, as such the 90% of residents that gave the alternative plan their backing were calling for the withdrawal of the original plan.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillors Power and Jeffs addressed the Committee in their capacity as Ward Members and as Portfolio Holder for Communities and Transport respectively. They answered Members' questions thereon.

In summary, Councillor Power stated that she was in support of the LPP2 to remedy some of the issues faced by residents, at no cost to New Alresford. She emphasised the shortage of suitable accommodation for the local aging community, indicating that elderly residents may be forced to move away from family in the future to seek the necessary care they require, should adequate provision not be made available in New Alresford. Councillor Power stated that there were limited job opportunities in the area which was also indicated by the number of existing businesses units that currently remained vacant,

largely due to the lack of access and parking issues in the area. It was acknowledged that during school drop off /pick up times there could be traffic problems for approximately 10 minutes, which makes Sun Hill impassable during these times. Councillor Power reported that when open space needs were first looked at, school playing fields were not initially included as existing provision in the plan, and made reference to the inclusion of them in LPP2.

In conclusion, Councillor Power stated that there was a large amount of work required before the Council could move forward with LPP2, including further reviewing the provision of sheltered housing, nursing and dementia care and establishing transport links, bus services etc.

In summary, Councillor Jeffs noted the concerns raised by New Alresford residents and those reiterated in other areas of the District and stated the importance of the adequacy of road and transport infrastructure as a legal and procedural requirement for either of the two plans proposed for New Alresford.

The Committee were referred to Government guidance with reference to transport requirements and it was noted that it was for the Council as the Local Planning Authority to assess the ability to meet forecast demand and ensure transport measures are deliverable in a timely fashion.

In response to questions, the Head of Strategic Planning confirmed that both plans would be fully examined and clarified that concerns regarding access, employment, care provision, traffic management and road infrastructure, together with the errors highlighted to population projections, would be addressed and further investigated. It was reported that guidance on transport assessment was being sought from Hampshire County Council (HCC) and discussions would take place to establish what information is needed to test soundness and deliverability of the proposed site options.

Reference was made to the special meeting of Cabinet held on 22 September 2014, where it was suggested that a meeting be arranged to look at the sustainability appraisal. Members expressed concern that, to date, this had not been formed and sought the opportunity to consider the sustainability appraisal as a significant part of the process.

The Head of Strategic Planning confirmed that the next stage of the LPP2 process would include consultation on the soundness of the proposals following the Council taking a decision on what is to be incorporated within the next version of the plan.

Denmead – Appendix 3

During public participation, Peter Ambrose (Vice-Chairman of Denmead Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group) addressed the Committee and his comments are summarised below.

Mr Ambrose made reference to the referendum on the Denmead Neighbourhood Plan Area held on 5 March 2015 which saw of 66% of voters in favour of the plan and thanked the Council, in particular Strategic Planning

Officers, on behalf of the Steering Group, for their support and advice in achieving a favourable outcome for the majority.

Smaller Villages and Rural Area – Appendix 4

In response to questions regarding the removal of reference to the Botley bypass as Eastleigh Borough Council's Local Plan had not been taken forward, the Head of Strategic Planning advised that there would be discussions with Hampshire County Council on this point. The Committee noted that where there were no housing targets for the smaller villages, so there was no need to agree and change the list of smaller villages (as set out in MTRA3) or review boundaries at this stage.

Development Management Policies - Appendix 5

In response to questions regarding development management policies and premature applications and what happens in the gap between the Local Plan and land allocations being adopted, the Head of Strategic Planning advised that land supply would be monitored annually, whereby the annual monitoring report would highlight any Government policy changes or flag up any problem areas.

Following a request from the Committee, the Head of Strategic Planning advised that comments about sustainable transport issues would be fully considered, and account would be taken of the Winchester Walking and Cycling Strategies. These were not adopted as supplementary planning documents but could be referred to in the explanatory text of future versions of LPP2.

Chapters 1 and 2, General Comments, Maps, Appendices and Sustainability Appraisal – Appendix 6

During public participation, Phillip Gagg (WinACC) addressed the Committee and his comments are summarised below.

Mr Gagg stated that WinACC were in support of the LPP2 being progressed but had concerns that the current draft would be turned down upon submission by the Inspector on the grounds that it was unsound. He was of the opinion that this was largely because it failed to meet national planning guidelines on sustainability due to weakness of transport policies, suggesting that separate City Council strategies would be overlooked by developers. Mr Gagg suggested that these issues were compounded by the inadequacy of the Sustainability Appraisal. It was noted that should the current draft be refused, the impact of such an outcome would cost time and money and create a large amount of additional work. It would also make the District vulnerable to speculative development..

The Head of Strategic Planning made reference to the fact that the Sustainability Appraisal had tested the plan against sustainability criteria and confirmed that consideration would be given to whether key points contained within non planning documents should be referred to within the text of the Plan.

In response to Members questions regarding policy omissions referring to climate change and changes to policy, following revisions to DCLG planning guidance in relation to the sustainable homes policy, Officers advised that they would look at the detail of the changes. LPP2 could be a mechanism to change policy to incorporate updated matters and cross reference to LPP1.

Winchester Town - Appendix 7

The Committee gave consideration to an additional response to the Draft Local Plan Part 2 consultation which summarised a comment from Winchester College, circulated to Members and placed on the website prior to the meeting, and attached as an addendum to the minutes.

During public participation, Imogen Dawson, Neil Holmes, Rupert Pitt, John Beveridge, Ashlynn Hanning-Lee and Patrick Davies addressed the Committee. A summary of their comments are outlined below:

- Imogen Dawson made reference to the large scale blocks of offices proposed in the Station Approach area which she considered would impact on the loss of the historic sense of place of the area, as an integral part of Winchester Town. She referred to the similar large scale block of development proposed next to Victorian buildings in the Hyde Conservation Area which she considered did not meet the needs of the local community. It was noted that there were currently empty large office units in other areas of the Town i.e. Andover Road.
- Neil Holmes referred to the schedule on Development Management policy DM1 which he felt did not fully summarise his client's comments. These raised points in relation to the settlement boundaries severely limiting the provision of affordable housing, housing trajectories, and general affordability with the first two years since the adoption of LPP1 showing a severe decline in the amount of affordable homes available, with costs being over nine times the average household income proving out of reach for the large majority.
- Rupert Pitt reiterated comments made in relation to the provision of further office space within the Station Approach area and was of the opinion that a further development of this nature was not required.
- John Beveridge (WinACC) stated that he felt the report contained contradictions in transport and parking policies and made reference to the Parking Strategy, Winchester Town Access Plan and the requirement for sustainability appraisals to meet criteria to make the LPP2 sound. He made reference to the high levels of traffic and poor air quality caused by traffic congestion in the Town area and the opportunities to improve this within the Station Approach proposals.
- Ashlynn Hanning-Lee expressed concern regarding the levels of open space that had been significantly reduced over the past five years in the Town area by overdevelopment and the impact of the new Barton Farm

development. Congestion on Stockbridge Road and Andover Road and car parking on Worthy Lane exacerbated already high levels of road use.

- Patrick Davies (City of Winchester Trust) made reference to density levels within the Barton Farm development and was of the view that all policies, particularly those in relation to the Silver Hill and Station Approach developments needed to be reviewed due to significant changes and queried the management of timescales.

In response, the Head of Strategic Planning addressed the points raised and reported that further consultation had been carried out regarding the development proposals for the Station Approach area. Officers would review the results and take into account the comments going forward. He stated that the LPP2 attempted to establish the broad principles, not necessarily the greater detail of each site, although policies would be considered in the light of comments made and would be changed if necessary to reflect decisions i.e. Silver Hill. It was noted that compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was crucial. LPP1 had been assessed for compliance and it was necessary for LPP2 to provide detail and allocate sites accordingly.

The Committee considered that it was essential that matters in relation to higher housing density, the affordability of housing and levels of affordable housing provision, infrastructure, the cross referencing of the Winchester Walking and Cycling Strategies, and the importance of sustainability were all areas that needed to be further addressed. Members also made reference to the removal of reference to the Tibbalds report in relation to the Station Approach development, contained within policy WIN 5, as set out in Appendix 7 of the report

The Head of Strategic Planning confirmed that all concerns and necessary changes to policies raised by the Committee would be addressed and, where appropriate, further work and discussion would take place in response to representations received with the relevant technical experts involved, together with other organisations.

Implementation and Monitoring – Appendix 8

No public participation or comments were received in relation to this appendix.

Following discussion, the Committee thanked Officers for their work in compiling the Report and Appendices into a very useful and informative format. With regard to the next meeting on 1 June 2015, it was noted that Officers would address comments and concerns raised in order to progress matters as much as resources would allow to present recommendations to this meeting date, but suggested that it may be necessary to hold a series of meetings to move the plan forward and would keep all parties informed accordingly.

The Committee agreed to the following for the reasons set out above and outlined in the Report.

RESOLVED:

That the responses received to the draft plan be noted and, subject to the suggested changes set out above, the 'recommended responses' proposed be agreed, as set out in the Report.

The meeting commenced at 10.00am, adjourned for lunch between 12.30pm and 2.00pm and concluded at 3.10pm.

Chairman