

Minutes of the meeting of the **SCRUTINY (COMMUNITY AND REGENERATION) COMMITTEE** held at the Council Offices, Whitfield on Wednesday, 24 May 2017 at 6.00 pm.

Present:

Chairman: Councillor L A Keen

Councillors: T A Bond
P I Carter
G Cowan
N Dixon
R J Frost
P J Hawkins
M J Ovenden
G Rapley

Officers: Policy and Projects Manager
Team Leader – Democratic Support
Democratic Support Officer

1 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

2 APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitute members appointed.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made by Members.

4 MINUTES

The consideration of the Minutes of the meetings of 15 March 2017 and 19 April 2017 were deferred until the next meeting.

5 PUBLIC SPEAKING

The Team Leader – Democratic Support advised that no members of the public had registered to speak on items on the agenda to which the public speaking protocol applied.

6 DECISIONS OF THE CABINET RELATING TO RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE SCRUTINY (COMMUNITY AND REGENERATION) COMMITTEE

Members received the decisions of the Cabinet relating to recommendations made by the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the decisions be noted.

7 ISSUES REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE BY COUNCIL, CABINET, SCRUTINY (POLICY AND PERFORMANCE) COMMITTEE OR ANOTHER COMMITTEE

There were no items of business for consideration.

8 ITEMS CALLED-IN FOR SCRUTINY OR PLACED ON THE AGENDA BY A MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE, ANY INDIVIDUAL NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBERS OR PUBLIC PETITION

There were no items of business for consideration.

9 NOTICE OF FORTHCOMING KEY DECISIONS

The Team Leader – Democratic Support presented the Notice of Forthcoming Key Decisions to the Committee for its consideration.

RESOLVED: That the Notice of Forthcoming Key Decisions be noted.

10 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Team Leader – Democratic Support presented the Scrutiny Work Programme to the Committee for its consideration.

Members agreed that the following items be included within the work programme:

- Private sector landlords
- Dover District Council's Communication and Engagement
- Dover regeneration – the 'Banksy' building and the connectivity to/from the town to the waterfront / Bench Street (including the crypt) / Dover museum.

RESOLVED: (a) That the Work Programme be noted subject to the inclusion of an item on Private sector landlords and Dover regeneration connecting the town and waterfront.

(b) That it be recommended to the Cabinet that it explore the options available to protect the Banksy on the former Shakespeare Hotel in Dover as a matter of urgency.

The Policy and Projects Manager presented the report on the Local Plan Engagement Strategy.

The Committee was advised that the Cabinet had agreed at its meeting held on 1 March 2017 to proceed with a review of the Local Plan. The Local Plan Engagement Strategy set out the Council's approach to consulting and engaging the community as part of the review.

The Council would be undertaking statutory public consultation for 8 weeks in autumn 2017 on the key issues for the Local Plan to consider. The Council would also hold topic specific workshops with key stakeholders, infrastructure and service providers, land owners, developers, Parish and Town Councils, the Project Advisory Group and other groups as appropriate between autumn 2017 and autumn 2018.

It was intended that following this a Local Plan would be produced in autumn 2018 for public consultation and after the responses had been analysed and reported to Cabinet/Council the Plan would then submitted to the Secretary of State for examination in winter 2018.

Q1. Why do we need to review the Local Plan and call for more sites when we can demonstrate a five year supply of deliverable sites? Instead of taking up officer time in this 'engagement' surely we should be putting pressure on those sites/owners/developers not currently being built out to get on with delivering?

The Policy and Projects Manager advised that the Government had advised that Councils should review their Plans regularly and they were required to be updated in whole or in part at least every 5 years. If the Council did not have an up-to-date Local Plan it could have one imposed upon it.

In respect of the five year housing land supply, the Council had to undertake a review of this calculation annually as part of the Authority Monitoring Report. As part of this sites that have been granted planning permission were monitored to establish if they had started, were under construction or completed.

The Council couldn't make a developer build out a site only encourage them, with the exception of sites in the Council's ownership which it could develop itself.

The evidence base for the Plan included an assessment of the Objective Assessed Need for housing, an assessment of leisure and retail floor space which would include a review of the (primary and secondary) shopping frontages, a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and a review of the Coastal Change Management Areas, a Sustainability Appraisal Habitat Regulations Assessment.

In response to questions from Members it was stated that the Government provided a definition of what constituted affordable housing and this would be circulated separately to the Committee after the meeting.

Concerns were expressed about the impact of Right-to-Buy on any new affordable housing stock built by the Council and examples were cited of where other local

authorities such as Gravesham and Southampton had managed to build housing in such a way that the Right-to-Buy requirement did not apply.

Q2. What are the staffing and other resources required to implement all this, and how are they to be found?

The Projects and Policy Manager advised that as part of the report to Cabinet in March 2017 an additional budgetary provision of £300,000 had been made for the Local Plan review. A new member of staff would be starting in July 2017 and a request had been made for maternity cover for an existing member of staff.

Q3. Could we have more details please about (a) the number and location of the public exhibitions; (b) the arrangements for providing full 'paper', as opposed to online information for the significant number of local residents who do not use or have access to electronic media; (c) the specific sessions for hard-to-reach groups; (d) the use of local media in addition to formal 'public notices' required by law; (e) the involvement of parish councils who are a good disseminating mechanism in rural areas; and (f) the 'guidance' to be provided on the tests of soundness – maybe an example?

In response the Policy and Projects Manager advised:

- (a) The use of public exhibitions formed part of the Strategy but as it was not yet known where the development sites would be so at this stage it was not possible to advise where the public exhibitions would be held. However, there would definitely be events in Dover, Deal and Sandwich and invitations from parish councils to attend would be considered.
- (b) There would be paper copies at deposit points such as the Council Offices and libraries. For town and parish councils, who were used to using the electronic documentation for commenting on planning applications, it would be made available digitally.

There was concern expressed by Members that this would not be satisfactory for the digitally excluded or those not confident with electronic media and it was proposed that a short summary document for each parish area would be a satisfactory alternative.

- (c) As part of the consultation there would be liaison with the Head of Community Services to identify hard to reach groups and engagement with specific groups as necessary.
- (d) There would be social media engagement, press releases, local events, liaison with the town and parish councils and use of the electronic 'Keep me Posted' service to provide updates to local residents.
- (e) There would be engagement with town and parish councils as set out in previous answers.
- (f) The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) set out the definition of soundness.

There would also be an Infrastructure Delivery Plan and the Council was liaising with Kent County Council which was undertaking work with utility companies (water, waste and energy) that could be used as part of this.

Members expressed concern that development was being undertaken prior to the infrastructure being in place and that this needed to be prevented in future.

Q4. Are parish/town councils involved in the list of specific consultees/stakeholders? If not, how will they be involved?

The Policy and Projects Manager confirmed that town and parish councils would be consulted as part of a wide programme of engagement. If Members wished to know if specific groups or organisations were involved in the consultation it was suggested that they contact the Policy and Projects Manager or a member of his team.

Members suggested that the list of consultees should include the following if they were not already in the list:

- (i) Highways England and Kent County Council Highways;
- (ii) The rail franchise operator;
- (iii) Bus/Coach operators (such as Stagecoach);
- (iv) Education (Kent County Council and church school authorities); and
- (v) The River Stour (Kent) Internal Drainage Board

- RESOLVED:
- (a) That the Local Plan Engagement Strategy as set out in the report at Appendix 1 be approved and made available on the Council's website.
 - (b) That the Cabinet be requested to explain why the capacity for 100 housing units on Dover District Council land had not been brought forward by property services for development.
 - (c) That the Cabinet be requested to investigate investing in building houses that could be used to meet the strategic rental housing need for local people in such a way that the 'Right-to-Buy' would not apply.
 - (d) That the Cabinet be requested to ensure that there was a full complement of staff/consultants as needed to conduct the Local Plan review.
 - (e) That as part of the Local Plan engagement, paper copies of a short summary document and local area plans be made available to parish councils.
 - (f) That the Council should ensure that it met the National Planning Policy Framework and that infrastructure was in place and working in accordance with the test of soundness criteria before the first house was completed in any development.

The meeting ended at 7.50 pm.