

Planning & Infrastructure Policy Development Advisory Group
31 OCTOBER 2023

Present: Councillors: John Milne (Chairman), Peter van der Borgh, Philip Circus, Mike Croker, Len Ellis-Brown, Alex Jeffery, Liz Kitchen and Lynn Lambert

Apologies: Councillors: Malcolm Eastwood
Absent: Councillors: Joanne Knowles and Clive Trott

Also Present: Ruth Fletcher, Tony Hogben and Alan Manton

15 **NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the meeting held on the 12th of September 2023 were received.

16 **WELLS COTTAGES CONSERVATION AREA**

Officers provided a presentation on the proposal to create a new conservation area in West Chiltington. Horsham District Council Planning Authority have identified that the Wells Cottages should be considered for designation as a conservation area due to historical interest. Once designated, the local planning authority will be required to ensure that special attention is paid to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the area.

The boundary area would be comprised of 176 cottages.

Evidence of the special interest of the Wells Cottages has been identified within the West Chiltington draft Neighbourhood Plan and earlier documents.

A public consultation was held in early 2023. With 51 comments received from 44 responders. The key elements from these were: the lack of special interest, constraints and costs of designation, lack of consultation, position of the Conservation Area Boundary, traffic, use of resources and the character of the area already changed due to new inappropriate development.

Next steps would be to update the Appraisal and Management Plan taking into consideration the public consultation, and then to take the report to Cabinet in January 2024.

Members of the PDAG were supportive of the proposal, but questioned if the planning authority could pursue a system of local listed buildings as the roads that would make up the proposed conservation area also contain more modern buildings, albeit they keep in character of the area. Members also asked how the conservation area would impact the residents within the boundary.

17 **PLANNING COMMITTEE REVIEW**

The Monitoring Officer presented the details of the proposed Planning Committee Review including the proposed timetable, following a recommendation from Full Council in 2019 to review any changes to the committee structure after 12 months. This review has not yet taken Place.

The Head of Development and Building Control highlighted challenges around ensuring sufficient training for all Members under the current arrangements, the provision of site visits and consistency in planning decisions across the current two committees.

The Head of Development and Building Control detailed a number of potential options for committee structures, the scope of the review, as well as the timetable.

Members discussed the participation of Local Ward Members at Planning Committee following proposed changes and the structure of neighbouring Planning Authorities. It was suggested that it would be useful to visit another authority to further understand their Planning Committee arrangements. Additionally, it was suggested that pre-meetings be held with Committee Members prior to the final report being published. It was also agreed that engagement was needed with all members and officers committed to holding a workshop.

18 **FORWARD PLAN EXTRACT FOR THE PLANNING & INFRASTRUCTURE PORTFOLIO**

The Forward Plan extract was noted.

The meeting closed at 6.50 pm having commenced at 5.30 pm

CHAIRMAN