

Planning and Development Policy Development Advisory Group
18 MAY 2020

Present: Councillors: Claire Vickers (Chairman), Karen Burgess, Brian Donnelly, Ruth Fletcher, Liz Kitchen, Lynn Lambert, Tim Lloyd, Godfrey Newman, Louise Potter and Diana van der Klugt

Apologies: Councillors: Nigel Jupp

Also Present: Councillors: Toni Bradnum, Jonathan Chowen, Paul Clarke, Mike Croker, Mike Morgan, Roger Noel

32 **NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The notes of the previous meeting held on 13 January were received.

33 **REGULAR UPDATE ON PROGRESS OF KEY STRATEGIC SITES ALLOCATED IN THE HDPF**

The Head of Development outlined the new planning guidance issued by the government on 13 May in the light of the Covid-19 pandemic. The guidance sought to allow some flexibility to compensate for issues arising from the current situation. It was noted that because HDC had proceeded with virtual planning meetings and had not changed the application process, the special powers now available for determining applications were very unlikely to be required.

The Group noted that a number of Neighbourhood Plans were being delayed because a referendum could not be held. The Cabinet Member confirmed that the government was aware of the implications of this, including the impact on CIL payments to parishes, and was therefore keeping this under review.

The Head of Development updated the Group on progress on allocated strategic sites. All the sites had been effected by the lockdown, with construction either stopped or slowed down.

Land North of Horsham: Development on site has been delayed because of Covid-19 but was expected to recommence shortly. The proposed amendments to the new access alignment and cycle strategy had been delayed because of the current situation, but were expected shortly.

Southwater: A full application for phase 5 for 80 dwellings would be brought to a forthcoming planning committee.

Billingshurst: Work on the spine road was progressing, with timescales on track.

Kilnwood Vale: Construction had ceased, but was due to recommence shortly, including work on the neighbourhood centre. The pre-application process for the next phase was about to begin.

Highwood: Work had now commenced on the southern section.

Novartis: Construction on the site was scheduled to start in early 2021.

34

HORSHAM DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN REVIEW UPDATE

The Cabinet Member read the Secretary of State's response to her request that the government extend the timeframe for the Local Plan review in the light of the pandemic. The response indicated that, whilst the government did not require Local Plan reviews to be completed in a five year period, local authorities should continue to prepare Local Plans and endeavour to complete their reviews on time. It was emphasised that the Government intends that all Local Authorities have a local plan in place by 2023.

The Senior Strategic Planning Officer presented a summary setting out the initial findings of the recent Local Plan consultation. Over 6,300 comments had been received from 3,350 individuals and organisations. The initial report gave a high-level overview of the comments received.

A large majority of responses concerned Policy 14 – Housing Provision. The Group noted that the majority of objections to strategic sites referred to infrastructure (existing and/or future transport capacity, health and education) and a significant number raised environmental concerns about the impact of the proposed development.

This initial breakdown of responses would be shared with all Councillors before being published on the Council's website.

The next stage of the review would include detailed analysis of these comments. The Head of Strategic Planning confirmed further work that would be undertaken would be in response to specific planning issues raised rather than the number of comments received on a particular issue.

The Group discussed the potential economic and social impact of the pandemic and the challenges these could bring to the review process, given the need to provide a five-year land supply with projections of growth up to 2036. The Cabinet Member advised she would continue to lobby government to review their current stance on Local Plan reviews. The Head of Strategic Planning confirmed that the review process would include a re-evaluation of the evidence base in the light of the pandemic.

The Head of Strategic Planning confirmed that, despite some delays caused by the pandemic, officers would continue to work to the current timetable with a view to adopting the revised Local Plan at the end of 2021. The Cabinet

Member thanked officers for their work to date, and for continuing the review process under difficult circumstances.

35 **FORWARD PLAN EXTRACT FOR THE PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO**

The extract from the Forward Plan was noted. The Legal Team had advised that the Charging for Horsham District Transport Modelling Data item could be delegated to the Cabinet Member and did not require Cabinet approval.

The Head of Strategic Planning agreed that an update on the development of the transport model for the district would be brought to the next PDAG.

The meeting closed at 11.30 am having commenced at 10.00 am

CHAIRMAN