

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel
15 February 2024

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

* Reporting to Cabinet

Minutes of a meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL CABINET PLANNING AND PARKING PANEL held on Thursday 15 February 2024 at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE.

PRESENT: Councillors K.Thorpe (Chairman)
R.Platt (Vice-Chairman)

S.Bonfante, J.Boulton, S.Goldwater, R.Grewal,
T.Kingsbury, G.Michaelides, L.Musk, A.Hellyer,
C.Stanbury, P.Zukowskyj and J.Cragg

OFFICIALS Chris Barnes – Executive Director (Place)
PRESENT: Chris Carter – Assistant Director, Planning
Matt Wilson - Planning & Policy Implementation Manager
Lucy Palmer - Planning & Monitoring Officer
Eliska Robova - Parking & Playground Services Manager
Laura Trainer – Democratic Services

86. SUBSTITUTIONS

Cllr Julie Cragg substituted for Cllr Sunny Thusu.

87. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Thusu.

88. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 18TH January 2024 were approved as a correct record of the meeting.

89. NOTIFICATION OR URGENT BUSINESS TO BE CONSIDERED UNDER ITEM 11

There were no items of urgent business.

90. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS

Cllr Zukowskyj & Cllr Kingsbury Declared interests as County Councillors.

91. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND PETITIONS

No public questions were received.

92. LOCAL PLAN ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2022/23

Officers presented the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) on the progress that had taken place in the Borough during the year between the 1st of April 2022 and the 31st of March 2023. The report contains a number of indicators to monitor progress including policy specific Local Plan indicators as well as more general indicators the report provides a valuable source of evidence which is used for monitoring against Local Plan targets as well as in planning appeals.

Members raised the following questions and points:

- A member asked about the proportion of appeals increasing from 32% to 40% and if this had this been driven by the decisions of DMC or been driven by delegated decisions? Officers advised they will find this information and respond to Cllr Hellyer in due time. Officers clarified they don't have the data highlighted in terms of the breakdown between DMC versus officer decisions, but, from experience the vast majority of cases that go to appeal would be officer decisions, lots of them being household applications which can be refused on design matters, but can be subjective and are sometimes allowed on appeal.
- A member noted concerns around projections on the number of houses required within the Local Plan and whether they need to be revised.
- Member also noted an observation on HO2 (page 38) and asked how much of the windfall allocation over 20 years of a Local Plan period had been built, as this may have a big impact on current local plan projections. Officer agreed with the observation and noted it will all be part of the context in terms of how we do that local plan review.
- Member noted the figures around health and social well-being and deprivation within the borough and asked if officers expect these figures to have increased by the 2025 report. Officers advised it's difficult to pre-empt the figures as they're trend based.
- Member asked if the consultation that took place on the Local Plan was effective in reaching hard to reach communities and underrepresented communities. Officers advised the reflection work needs to be done to discover lessons learned with this report and advised on intentions to revisit the statement of community involvement to collate the data.
- Member asked how the Welwyn Garden City BID was monitored, the effectiveness of strategies to attract new business to the town centre and whether this data is monitored. Officers advised there was not imperial evidence at this stage but reflecting on the events held and positive

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feedback from businesses and the public it would indicate the footfall has certainly increased.

- Member noted concern around falling behind with building what the borough needs as 37% builds were studio and one-bedroom flats and 11% being three-bedroom homes. Officers advised the projects coming from office to residential re-developments produces 1-2 bedroom flats, it was hoped that the borough will see more traditional houses on the sites that have been released from the Green Belt.
- Member asked if the officers were in contact with landlords that don't live in the area to make them aware of their obligations with regards to shops. Officers advised if shops are in private ownership the role of the Council is to encourage and engage good dialogue, as opposed to enforcement based as the Councils influence is limited.
- Member asked if the expected growth in housing was being accounted for when projecting the population figures. Officers advised this will be looked at in detail through commissioned pieces of work and was a key consideration and will be brought for discussion to future meetings.

**RESOLVED
(Unanimous)**

The Panel recommended to Cabinet that the AML be approved for publication and that the Assistant Director Planning be given delegated authority to agree any minor alterations to finalise the AMR, following the consultation with the Executive Member for Planning.

93. BROWNFIELD LAND REGISTER UPDATE

The officers reported on the government introduced legislation which required authorities to prepare and maintain a brownfield land register. This would be required to be reviewed and updated annually. The brownfield register is in two parts, part 1 included all brownfield sites appropriate for residential development and part 2 allowed local planning authorities to grant permission in principle. No sites have been proposed for permission in principle. There are no sites on part 2 of the register; the 2024 brownfield register includes 44 sites with a total dwelling capacity of 3,483, this compares with just over 3,700 dwellings in the last update. The sites which have been removed from the register were rural sites which had been completed since the last update, there were five new sites added to the register this year and amounted to 31 dwellings. The majority of sites included already have planning permission making up 75% of the total dwelling capacity, meanwhile, Local Plan allocations account for 21% of the dwelling capacity.

During the discussion members raised the following points:

- Member queried the dwelling capacity and asked if this could be provided by area and number of sites and settlements to show physical density. Officers advised the full brownfield land register included the site area but was not broken down by settlement.

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- Member queried list of settlements and sites dwelling capacity and asked why some settlements were included but Brookman's Park was not. Officer confirmed this was because Brookman's Park was listed in a previous year. Officers confirmed the hostel bed spaces differ which affects the overall number projection.
- Member asked officers to clarify the differing numbers around net dwellings and what had been approved, citing the numbers for YMCA 90 Peartree Lane. Officers confirmed the number difference is due to bedspaces in the hostel; projected 100 in comparison to previous spaces at 125.

RESOLVED

(Unanimous)

The panel recommended to cabinet that the Brownfield register be approved for publication and that the Assistant Director of Planning consultation with the Executive Member for Planning.

94. APPROACH TO MASTERPLANNING GUIDANCE NOTE

The panel received the report on the approach to master planning guidance.

During the discussion the following points were made:

- There was an item on the Sustainable Economic Growth Cabinet Panel at County Hall for service provision and a place-making guide that the Council had put together to outline and summarise the service asks required by County Council for large developments. Member asked the officers if the master planning guide referenced and utilised the information to guide the master plans so that they can deliver the service provisions that the County Council would look for. Officers confirmed it wouldn't directly reference that document, but that it would be used by them as a statutory consultee when engaging in these masterplan preparations.
- Member mentioned the previous Burchill Garden Suburb Master Plan and asked how this process differs from how it's been done before. Officers noted they are not looking to change the process but to encapsulate what had been previously done and build upon that. Officers confirmed they have a document that was endorsed by the councillors and the Cabinet so that they development industry that the council was engaging with had clear understanding of what our baseline expectations for this process is.
- Member noted there should be clear understanding on the masterplan to highlight these to the panel when submitting for approval.

RESOLVED

The panel recommended to Cabinet that:

A) The approach to master planning guidance note be endorsed

B) To delegate powers to the Assistant Director for Planning in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning to make minor updates to the guidance note if required in the future.

95. INTRODUCTION OF 2024-2026 PARKING SERVICES WORKS PROGRAMME

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The panel received the report on the introduction of 2024-2026 parking service works programme.

The parking services works programme sets out the areas within which the parking team are due to consider the need for and deliver parking measure. The areas being selected for consideration were listed in section 3.12 of the report and shown on the appendix B. These were selected due to their proximity to areas where current controls exist or are being consulted on in conjunction with the number of requests for parking restrictions received from each area and known parking measures, whilst taking into consideration the resources available to deliver the works programme.

During the discussion the following points were raised:

- Officers confirmed the re-surfacing of Halden's car park is separate from the parking works programme.
- Member noted the Panshanger work was being completed before Welwyn West despite Welwyn West having a higher number of requests and asked why the list is in that order. Officer confirmed the list was formed through looking at the areas they are currently consulting on, balancing resources and the types of consultation being carried out at any one time.
- Member asked if Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council consults with neighbouring boroughs to make sure the consultations are integrated. Officers confirmed they do not consult with Boroughs but liaise with Hertfordshire County Council and publish details in the local newspaper and on their website and would speak to counterparts in other districts where necessary.
- Member queried timescale of the projects and how these were calculated. Officer confirmed all timescales are initially created to align with the statutory process.
- Member raised the idea of placing a verge protection order across the Borough, through the 'experimental traffic regulation order' process and queried if this was a piece of work that officers could look into. Officers confirmed this would depend on the scope of work and officer resources available and how this may affect other programmes the officers are working on. Officers and Panel agreed that the officers would investigate estimated resource use and come back to the portfolio holder with an update.

RESOLVED

(Unanimous)

The panel recommended to Cabinet to:

A). Approve the new works programme 2024-2026

B). Delegate authority to the Assistant Director of Regeneration and Economic Development in consultation with the Executive Member for Environment to make minor modifications to the works programme including adding new small-scale schemes and re-prioritising projects to assist with the delivery of the Council's corporate projects and management of resources as and when required.

96. SUCH OTHER BUSINESS AS, IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIRMAN, IS OF SUFFICIENT URGENCY TO WARRANT IMMEDIATE CONSIDERATION

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97. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC
98. ANY OTHER BUSINESS OF A CONFIDENTIAL OR EXEMPT NATURE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE CHAIRMAN

Meeting ended at 9.00 pm