

Cabinet Planning & Parking Panel
13 July 2017

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

* Reporting to Cabinet

Minutes of a meeting of the CABINET PLANNING & PARKING PANEL held on Thursday 13 July 2017 at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE

PRESENT: Councillors S.Boulton (Chairman)
M.Perkins (Vice-Chairman)

D.Bennett, H.Bromley, M.Cowan, G.Hayes,
T. Mitchinson (substituting for N. Chapman) and
P.Shah.

OFFICIALS Head of Planning (C. Haigh)
PRESENT: Planning and Monitoring Officer (R. Webster)
Governance Services Officer (G. Paddan)

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN:

It was noted that Councillors S. Boulton and M. Perkins were appointed Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Committee for the 2017/18 Municipal year at the Cabinet meeting on 12 June 2017.

2. SUBSTITUTIONS

The following substitution of a Panel member had been made in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 19-22.

Councillor T. Mitchinson for N. Chapman.

3. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors N. Chapman and A. Chesterman

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of Cabinet Housing and Planning Panel meeting held on 19 April 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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5. WORK PROGRAMME

The circulated work programme was noted and Members were advised that items will be added throughout the year; for example consultations.

6. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS

There were no declarations of interest.

7. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME AND PETITIONS

The following question was received from Mr Ramasamy and the Chairman responded:

Question - Ensuring Planning Policy Protects Young Children

The Wilshere Park development and the type of housing lends itself to young families. In Akers Court alone there are 7 young children. It is paramount that the Council consider the safety of children first and foremost in planning decisions. I completely object to glass fencing being erected where it intrudes into resident's privacy especially young children. Is it the Council's policy to protect young children's privacy or not? Does the Council endorse viewing galleries for young children?

Chairman's response:

It is the Council's policy to consider matters of overlooking and privacy when determining applications for planning permission. Policy D1 'Design' of the Welwyn Hatfield District Plan 2005 states that "the Council will require the standard of design in all new developments to be of a high quality. The design of new development should incorporate the design principles and policies in the Plan and the guidance contained in the Supplementary Design Guidance (SDG)".

The Supplementary Design Guidance (SDG) specifically deals with matters of overlooking and privacy on pages 31 and 32. It states specifically that "the Council expect all new residential development, whether extensions or new units to be designed, orientated and positioned in such a way to minimise overlooking between dwellings, which would affect their internal living areas and their private rear gardens or amenity areas" The SDG does not specify quantitative standards for separation distances but requires consideration of orientation, design and aspect to maintain privacy and prevent overlooking.

It is these policy standards that should be applied to all new development, regardless of the type of development being proposed and regardless of the occupants of any property. Considerations of overlooking do not vary according to potential future occupiers as the Local Planning Authority would not have prior knowledge of these occupiers.

Council policy values the reasonable privacy of all residents and is aware of a particular case at Wilshere Park which is currently under investigation.

8. GOVIA THAMESLINK 2018 TIMETABLE CONSULTATION - PHASE 2

Report of the Executive Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) on the Govia Thameslink Rail (GTR) which is currently carrying out second phase of public consultation on the proposed timetable for train services serving the Borough from May 2018 was considered. The report on the first phase of consultation was presented to Cabinet Housing and Planning Panel in December 2016 – whilst some aspects of the proposals were welcomed, it was agreed that the Council would object to other aspects which would effectively result in a deteriorated rail service for the Borough.

The Phase 2 consultation provided a greater level of detail than at Phase 1, including actual proposed timetables rather than a more simplistic indication of the number of trains per hour proposed to serve each station. However, it was apparent that very little had changed since the Phase 1 consultation and the proposals for Welwyn Hatfield's services did not appear to have changed at all. Due to extremely short four week consultation on the Phase 2 consultation included a consultation event which was scheduled for 12 July but did not take place so no verbal report was available at the Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel meeting.

Members noted that GTR had not been willing to consider changes at all where the response to the broad questions posed at Phase 1 were positive, regardless of what ever nuances there may have been. It was also apparent that some cohesive local campaigns had been persuasive in securing positive changes; for example petitions from smaller areas.

Members raised the following points:

- The reduction in services during peak periods.
- Local campaigning at Baldock having influenced GTR – although the population is approximately 10k.
- The housing growth in Hatfield and Welwyn Garden City being significantly higher than other areas – this is a stronger point for the Borough.
- The Borough needs good train links to be an attractive place in which to invest.
- Could a petition be organised by the Council and would it have an impact on the proposals?
- There has been a trend of GTR pulling out of organised meetings.
- The frequency of late trains and trains departing too early.
- It was felt that this timetable appeared to be the most that was being put forward service wise.

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- The timetable does no justice to Government's strategy for getting people out of cars and travel by train, as the proposals set out make no contributions to encouragement.
- A further meeting has been identified for 10 August at Hertfordshire County Council and it was agreed that comments be sent to GTR following the meeting.
- Members noted that comments made at Phase 1 had not been taken into account and would concerns be heard at Phase 2?
- Agreed that a letter be sent by the Chairman expressing the Council's concerns and requesting that a response be provided by GTR confirming that the comments made on/after 10 August would be taken into account.

RESOLVED

1. That the Panel maintain the objection made during the Phase 1 consultations.
2. That the Head of Planning be given delegated authority to agree the final response to the consultation with the Executive Member for Planning, Housing and Community prior to the end of the consultation period on 27 July 2017.

Meeting ended at 8.15 pm
GP