

Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel  
5 October 2017

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

\* Reporting to Cabinet

Minutes of a meeting of the CABINET PLANNING AND PARKING PANEL held on Thursday 5 October 2017 at 7.30pm 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, N.Chapman, M.Cowan,  
M.Larkins (substituting for G.Hayes), P.Shah

ALSO

PRESENT: Tenants Panel (M.Kandekore and R.Read)

OFFICIALS

PRESENT: Head of Planning (C.Haigh)  
Planning Policy and Implementation Manager (S.Tiley)  
Governance Services Officer (G.Paddan)

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9. SUBSTITUTIONS

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

Councillor M.Larkins for G.Hayes.

10. APOLOGY

An apology for absence was received from Councillors G.Hayes.

11. MINUTES

The Minutes of meeting held on 13 July 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

12. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY PRELIMINARY DRAFT CHARGING SCHEDULE CONSULTATION

This item was withdrawn and an updated report will be considered at a future meeting.

13. REQUIREMENT TO PREPARE A BROWNFIELD LAND REGISTER

Report of the Executive Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) summarising the requirements of the Government's new legislation required planning authorities to prepare a Brownfield Land Register, but only published detailed guidance on how to go about doing so and the data requirements on 28 July 2017. The Brownfield Land Register (BLR) had to be published by 31 December 2017.

The Government wanted to ensure that 90% of suitable brownfield sites had planning permission, which could be in the form of permission in principle, for housing by 2020. The Register would comprise a list of brownfield sites in the Borough considered suitable for housing development. It was noted that the Council could be designated a 'poor performing planning authority' if this percentage was not achieved. Clarification was sought on how some sites would secure planning permission through the normal planning application route and others would need to be submitted by the Council to the Council to secure permission in principle through part 2 of the Brownfield Register. Members were advised that the Planning Authority would engage with the landowner at this stage to seek to cover the Council's costs.

The Regulations stipulated that BLRs should have two parts. Part 1 being effectively a list of brownfield sites within a local authority area which were likely to be able to come forward for development within a 15 year period. Part 2 of the Register comprised those sites to be given permission in principle. Members were advised that some sites would be considered discussed at the Borough's Development Management Committee in line with the Council's procedures. This Panel would have an opportunity to view the list at the Panel's December meeting. Once a site had permission-in-principle it would only need to go through a technical detailed consent process to get full planning permission. The Government believed this would offer greater comfort to landowners/developers and increase housing delivery across the Country.

Concern was expressed in respect of type of development and what could be built on the sites identified. Also a question was raised regarding the Council contacting and dealing with highways, the water authority and utility suppliers before granting permission in principle.

As the preparation of the Brownfield Land Register was a new duty it was requested that Officers email all Members a summary of the new legislation and on the report on the Self-build and Customer Housebuilding Register below.

RESOLVED:

That this Panel notes the Council's new duty to prepare a Brownfield Land Register and proposed process for doing so set out in the report,

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including the site screening site information templates in Appendix 1 and 3.

14. SELF-BUILD AND CUSTOM HOUSEBUILDING REGISTER

Since 1 April 2016 and consistent with its legal duty, the Council had publicised and maintained a Register of individuals and associations of individuals who wished to acquire serviced plots of land for Self-build and Custom Housebuilding in the Borough.

This was part of the Government's strategy to increase housing delivery and was referred to in the Housing White Paper as a means of providing more choice in the market.

A legal duty to grant development permission for enough serviced plots to meet the demand for Self-build and Custom Housebuilding in the Borough had come into force. Regulations set out the time for compliance with the duty and provided relevant authorities with the option of introducing new local eligibility conditions (subject to consultation) and a fee to enter into and remain on the Register.

The report of the Executive Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) explained how the Council's Register currently operated and summarised the current level of demand.

The report also made recommendations about the introduction of local eligibility conditions and made draft proposals for the introduction of a fee for applicants to enter into and remain on the Register (to be introduced at a later date).

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the proposed eligibility conditions, including a local connection and a financial resources test, be agreed by the Cabinet and made available for consultation for a six week period on the Council's consultation portal.
- (2) That Officers report the results of consultation back to the Panel, together with a schedule of any recommended changes as considered appropriate.
- (3) That the Panel notes the draft proposal for a fee to be set by the Council for applicants to enter the Register and that a final proposal would be included in a future report to the Panel alongside the results of consultation for recommendation to the Cabinet to agree.

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15. COLE GREEN WAY GREENSPACE ACTION PLAN 2018-2023  
CONSULTATION

Report of the Executive Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) on the Greenspace Action Plan (GAP) which was being prepared for Cole Green Way by the Countryside Management Service (CMS) on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC).

The report noted that Cole Green Way was a 6.2km non-motorised transport route following the former Hertford to Welwyn Garden City branch line. It provided a traffic-free connection between Hertford and Welwyn Garden City connecting at both ends to link to the respective town centres and formed part of the Sustrans National Cycle Network Route 61. The GAP would focus on the section of Cole Green Way between Hertford and the A414 which was owned by HCC and would make recommendations for the management of the remainder of the route.

The briefing document had been produced as a first stage of engagement on the GAP. This report summarised the GAP briefing document and set out the proposed officer response to the consultation.

Members were advised that the consultation on the briefing document was open until Thursday 12 October. Officers had considered the document and the proposed response was circulated within the report. Members asked whether it would be helpful to have half of the path gravel and the other as tarmac. The Tenants' Panel Members raised the issue of wheelchair users and the route being accessible in all weathers; also the route needed to be safe and protect the environment. It was suggested that more information was required and Officers advised that this was a scoping document and further information would be produced and consulted upon.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That this Panel notes that a Greenspace Action Plan was being prepared for Cole Green Way by the Countryside Management Service on behalf of Hertfordshire County Council.
- (2) That this Panel notes the proposed approach of the Countryside Management Service to preparing the Greenspace Action Plan, particularly the stakeholder engagement strategy, as well as the outline proposals for Cole Green Way as set out in the briefing document.
- (3) That this Panel agrees the proposed Officer response to the Cole Green Way Greenspace Action Plan briefing document consultation.

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16. VERBAL UPDATE ON LOCAL PLAN EXAMINATION

The Officers provided a verbal update on the Local Plan Examination and the following points were discussed:

- The legal tests with regards to consultation and the Local Development Scheme had been met.
- The Inspector had reserved his position on the Duty to Cooperate.
- The main issues/criticism had been around the Council's co-operation with St Albans District Council which had its Local Plan dismissed on these grounds. It was the only local authority that had suggested that the Borough had not complied with the duty to co-operate.
- The need for housing and the proposed numbers would be considered at the next session.
- The Local Plan examination was being webcast.
- The next session would commence on 24 October 2017.

Meeting ended at 8.25pm  
GP