

THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee held on 20 December 2016 at 7.30pm in the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall

Present: Cllrs B Austin (Chairman), D Bretherton (Deputy Chairman), N Dixon (Deputy Mayor), D Dodds, M Dyer, H Fickling, P Lambert, A Midwinter and M Stiles

Officers

G Hunt, Town Clerk

G Markland, Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer

A Oughton, Committee Services Officer

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Cowell (Unwell) and Emery (Unwell).

2 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Public Participation & Public Questions

There were no applications to address the Council.

There were no questions put to the Council.

4 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5 Working Groups

a) NPCC Co-Ordination Working Group

As discussed at the last meeting the Chairman had sent two emails, one to the District Economic Development Manager regarding the Cattle Market Site and one to the Leader of District Council regarding the distribution of s106 Green Living monies by TOE2.

The Economic Development Manager had replied stating the District Council acknowledged that the Cattle Market was an important site within the town and recognised its importance within the Neighbourhood Plan. The District Council would invite the Town Council to be involved in discussions on the possible options for the site at the appropriate time.

The Leader of the District Council had replied stating the money being distributed by TOE2 was in addition to the s106 funding. The District Council's relationship with TOE2 predated the introduction of Neighbourhood Plans and was an important partnership.

The Town Clerk reported that following the Community Facilities Working Group meeting a further email had been sent to the Economic Development Manager stressing the community's strong interest in the development of the Cattle Market site and the Town Council's wish to be involved in discussions.

With regard to the response from the Leader of the District Council, the Town Clerk would progress this on an 'officer to officer' basis with a meeting in the New Year to ensure there was no misunderstandings moving forward and to seek answers to the remaining questions in the original email.

b) The Infrastructure Delivery Plan Working Group

Cllr Bretherton reported that a new officer had been appointed at the District Council to monitor s106 funding and a meeting would be arranged. Requests had been received from some organisations as to when s106 funding would be available, including the Chinnor Rugby Club, the Thame Sports Club (Bowls & Tennis) and Lea Park Residents Association. A meeting is now needed with the Thame Football Partnership.

Cllr Bretherton would work on updating and prioritising the fifty plus projects on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan and bring the Plan back to Committee in March for discussion.

c) The Green Living Plan Working Group

Cllr Fickling reported that the RSA were making progress with the draft Green Living Plan. Lin Wylie, project manager for the RSA was keen to get involved and had offered to operate the Equipment Bank for 21st Century Thame.

Some further information had been established with regard to the Thame / Haddenham cycle path. It was suggested that the RSA speak with Haddenham Parish Clerk as the Parish Council was looking at some s106 funding from the new developments in Haddenham being assigned to the new cycle path.

d) The Town Centre Working Group

The report by the Market Town Co-ordinator summarised the approach being taken and the work that had been carried out since commencing employment in November. An Action Plan was being developed which would be presented to the Committee at the meeting in January.

e) Transport Plan Working Group

Cllr Austin reported that due to pressures of work Cllr Cowell was no longer able to Chair the Transport Plan Working Group and a new volunteer would be sought. In the interim Cllr Austin would work on breaking down the identified tasks under the four main headings as discussed at the last meeting of the Working Group.

f) Community Facilities Working Group

Cllr Dixon reported that the public meeting had been well attended with representatives from a wide range of the community. It was clear that more than one new community facility would be needed in order to accommodate all the needs. Proposals for a Performing Arts Studio at Lord Williams's School (Oxford Road site) may provide part of the solution.

The next steps would be to meet with the Cattle Market Action Group in January and to identify the appropriate tool to gather further information from the community.

g) Burial Space Working Group

The Town Clerk reported that a meeting had taken place with CEG, Nexus and Taylor Wimpey with regard to the new burial space on Site C. A site had been identified and further information would be given to the Town Council ahead of the planning application being submitted.

The archeological study at Priest End had been commissioned. Initial cost is within available (forward spent) s106 funds, but if further work was identified, funding could become an issue.

6 Neighbourhood Plan / SODC

Cllr Dyer reported that the Neighbourhood Planning Bill passed through Report Stage and Final Reading in the House of Commons. A Ministerial Statement had been issued which addressed concerns around five year land supply stating that where a Neighbourhood Plan is in place and there was a three year land supply land was protected from speculative development. This afforded some protection to Thame.

It was noted that the Planning Inspector had dismissed the Appeal for a development in Bull Lane. In making his judgement he cited not only national and local plan policies but also policies contained within the Thame Neighbourhood Plan in relation to the character of the site and local surroundings.

The procedure for amending a Neighbourhood Plan would be contained within a White Paper to be published in January. Thame had lobbied and made strong representations for an amendment process to be proportionate to the size of the proposed amendment.

A meeting had taken place with John Howell during which the Neighbourhood Planning Bill and the process by which a Neighbourhood Plan could be amended were discussed.

The Town Clerk had met with Mr David Hill, the new Chief Executive of South Oxfordshire District Council. One topic of conversation was the apparent lack of knowledge or weight given by District Planning Officers to policies contained in the Thame Neighbourhood Plan. It was acknowledged that planning officers that were in post when the Thame Neighbourhood Plan was made had moved on, mainly to work in the private sector. It was agreed that a meeting take place in the New Year with the Town Clerk and Paula Fox to find ways of addressing these issues.

7 Neighbourhood Plan Amendment Process / Life beyond a Neighbourhood Plan

Discussion of this item was covered under item 6.

8 Future Neighbourhood Plan Housing Allocations

Members noted that given the community's response to the Local Plan 2032 Preferred Options consultation (which emphasised that the adopted Thame Neighbourhood Plan provides for all the fully sustainable growth needed by Thame up until 2027, and that actual housing provision is in practice being front loaded as opposed to being developed over the whole life time of the plan) that there has been some discussion on offering the possible time-lined prospect to the Planning Authority of potential acceptance of 50 housing units per year from 2028-2032.

9 Affordable Housing

Cllr Austin reported that the group continued to push the District Council for information on the monitoring of the allocation of 20% of social housing in Thame being allocated to families with a local connection to the town.

The design of a poster to promote the opportunities of Shared Ownership and encouraging people to register with the District Council had been agreed and copies would be distributed for display around the town in the New Year.

10 Employment Land provision in Thame

The issue of the provision of employment land in Thame was discussed at the Thame Business Forum held in November. The Forum was attended by senior managers representing businesses in the town and representatives of the District Council's Economic team, Lord Williams's School and two commercial agents.

It was clear that there was a need for office space, smaller 'start up' units and medium sized industrial / warehouse sites. Further discussion took place on where this need could be accommodated and the regeneration of some existing sites. It was early days in the discussion but this together with information from the Economic Development team at the District Council and from local commercial agents would help to gradually work towards formulating a strategy for the future.

11 Community Facility s106 Funds

It was agreed at the Community Facilities Working Group meeting to establish further requirements informally but that in doing so the Working Group may need to spend a small amount of money.

RESOLVED that:

- i) Where the Community Facilities Working Group needed to progress requirements with regard to information gathering, funding up to a maximum of £2,000 would be made available, from s106 funds where possible.***

12 Neighbourhood Plan / SODC Economic Development Team

The Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer had met with members of the District Economic Development team. The main topic of discussion being the response made by the Economic Team to planning application P16/S3484/FUL – 3 Jefferson Way. In making their positive response to the planning application District Officers had not taken into account policies within the Thame Neighbourhood Plan to safeguard the vibrancy and vitality of the town centre. It was agreed to share information and establish ways of improving communication for the future.

The Town Clerk reported that Simon Rowberry had now left the District Council and a new Head of Planning Policy had been appointed. A meeting would be arranged in the New Year. During the Town Clerk's meeting with David Hill discussion had taken place on a District Champion for Thame, a post which used to exist. David Hill said he would consider reintroducing a Champion for Thame once the planned restructuring of the District had been completed.

13 Neighbourhood Plan Support

Members noted that the Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer had been interviewed by Planning Aid England for their e-bulletin UpFront, aimed at anyone with an interest in neighbourhood planning.

Planning Aid England were keeping a close eye on Thame and the Neighbourhood Plan and were very aware of the pressures it was under. They were not aware of any other town or parish council, with a neighbourhood plan, who had employed a Neighbourhood Planning Continuity Officer to monitor the Plan and were interested in the relationship between the Town and District Councils.

14 Oxford – Cambridge Expressway / East West Rail Link

Members noted that there had been further discussions on the Oxford – Cambridge Expressway / East West Rail link (as both mentioned in the draft Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan), with news of further funding allocations and that one of the three expressway road options brought the route along the A418 and on to Aylesbury. An expressway is a dual-carriage road designed to handle strategic traffic and built to deliver near-motorway levels of safety and resilience.

15 Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP)

It was noted that following recent changes to growth forecasts, Aylesbury Vale District Council was revising the housing numbers needed as they prepare the final version of their local plan (VALP). Their neighbouring authorities, Wycombe, Chiltern and South Bucks had also found more space for housing. All this meant the latest figure for new homes in Aylesbury Vale was now below 27,000 - over 6,000 fewer new homes than the draft local plan included earlier this year. Such a large

reduction in housing need required the local plan to be significantly revised before the next stage. This meant the consultation period of the final Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan was now likely to commence in April 2017, but dates had yet to be confirmed.

16 Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring and Delivery Report / Newsletter

Good progress had been made on drafting the required updates to the Neighbourhood Plan Monitoring and Delivery Report as last published in January 2016. In line with the resolution on 27 September 2016, the aim was to circulate the draft report to Councillors for review, with the aim of publishing during January 2017.

17 South Oxfordshire District Local Plan

It was noted that South Oxfordshire District Council had published the consultation responses received in response to its Local Plan 2032 Preferred Options consultation.

The meeting concluded at 8.43pm

Signed
Chairman, 31 January 2017