

## THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee held on 16 May 2017 at 7.25pm in the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall

**Present:** Cllrs B Austin (Chairman), D Bretherton (Deputy Chairman), P Cowell, D Dodds, M Dyer, L Emery (Deputy Mayor), H Fickling, P Lambert and A Midwinter

**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 Stiles (Unwell) and Wyse (Holiday).

### 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 meetings held on 14 March 2017 and 9 May 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 5 Working Groups

To **receive** a verbal update from the chairmen of:

- a) NPCC Co-Ordination Working Group – Nothing further to report.
- b) The Infrastructure Delivery Plan Working Group

Cllr Bretherton reported that he was not aware that any new funds had been received. Very little funding had been generated through CIL to date. The first CIL funding was likely to be received by the Town Council in October. The District will pay CIL funds to parishes in six monthly tranches.

The Town Clerk reported that he had met with the District Officer responsible for CIL funding. It was a good meeting and a number of topics were discussed. One of the main outcomes was that the Town Council would have to carefully monitor CIL funding in relation to Thame, in a similar way as s106 funds are monitored. The Town Council would be responsible for reporting back on every penny received from CIL and where it was spent.

Thame will receive 25% of CIL with the remaining 75% being put into the District pot from which different authorities, including Thame, could apply for funding for specific projects. Allocations will need to be monitored to ensure that funds generated from developments in Thame were spent in Thame rather than elsewhere in the District. It was noted that the District had yet to finalise their processes to monitor and allocate CIL.

The Town Clerk had also met with a representative from TOE2 and the District Countryside Officer. Again this had been a good meeting at which the Town Clerk had raised the matter

of s106 funds being passed to TOE2. Both TOE2 and the District were impressed with the suggested projects coming forward in Thame.

A meeting with the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (OCCG) had also taken place at which the extension of GP capacity in Thame was discussed. There was funding specifically allocated to Thame and the OCCG would like some influence in where it is spent.

The Town Clerk had been invited onto a Panel at the next SLCC 'Leadership in Action' Conference to discuss CIL. It was expected to generate good debate as another member of the Panel was Andrew Whitaker whose view is understood to be that parishes should not receive CIL funding as they would 'fritter' it away.

c) The Green Living Plan Working Group

Cllr Fickling reported that the draft Green Living Plan had been received from the RSA who had worked very hard on the Plan. Cllr Fickling suggested that the draft be circulated to members of the Committee as well as the Working Group for comment. After a short discussion it was agreed that the draft Plan would be circulated to members of the NPCC.

d) The Town Centre Working Group

The Market Town Co-ordinator's report was noted. Members thanked the MTCO for organising a successful Easter Egg Competition.

e) Transport Plan Working Group

More comments from the public had been received on speed limits and the Town Clerk had put them in contact with the relevant County Highways Officer. Comments had also been received on parking matters, all of which added to the current evidence gathering.

f) Community Facilities Working Group

The Town Clerk reported that LEAP had sent the survey out to 87 groups and had received 26 responses to date. The Cattle Market Action Group (CMAG) were helping with follow up phone calls encouraging groups to respond who had not already done so. LEAP had a table outside the Town Hall, on a Saturday, to raise awareness of the survey. The survey had also been promoted in the Town Council newsletter and via Twitter. 77% of the public comments received so far said Thame needed a community facility. LEAP would prepare a high level document on the outcomes of the survey.

Lord Williams's School were keen to pursue their proposal for a Performing Arts venue on the Oxford Road site.

g) Burial Space Working Group

The Town Clerk stated there was no further progress to report on the burial site on Site C2. It was with Taylor Wimpey to submit the planning application. With regard to progress at Priest End, this was reported through the Community, Leisure and Recreation Committee. However, the archeological investigations had been completed with no significant finds. The next steps was for the earth to be put back and discussion with St Mary's church with regard to the necessary preparation of the site to enable burials to commence.

Members noted that a lot of time and attention had been diverted away from the Working Groups due to pressures of workloads associated with the response to the Local Plan Consultation and preparation for the recent planning application on The Elms site.

## **6 South Oxfordshire District Local Plan**

The Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer (NPCO) reported that the Local Plan Consultation Team (LPCT) had met twice and agreed the strategy on the response to the District Local Plan. In between these meetings the NPCO and Town Clerk had met with District Planning Policy Officers.

The Thame Housing / Infrastructure Profile, tabled at the meeting, had been produced which clearly showed the infrastructure requirement needed before the development of additional allocated dwellings.

The LPCT agreed that the Town Council should work with SODC to identify where each could help one another. There was a need to regenerate some of the industrial estates and create new employment opportunities. It was important to get the best benefit for Thame from the regeneration of the Cattle Market site and how it is delivered, particularly in terms of lost parking provision during the development phase. Edge of town centre convenience provision would probably now also be needed on this site.

With regard to the housing methodology, the Town Council did not agree with the method of allocating 15% on housing numbers as at 2011 and that Oxford's unmet need should be allocated to a site accessible for people who wanted to live and work in Oxford. Infrastructure needs identified in the Core Strategy were still outstanding and needed to be addressed.

No account had been taken of proposed housing developments in Haddenham and the infrastructure issues that would affect Thame. The NPCO stated that the Aylesbury Vale Local Plan had been delayed as it had been decided to reexamine the methodology by which the housing need was allocated.

It will help the Town Council to have a sound local plan, off which the policies identified in the next Neighbourhood Plan could hang. If the District Plan were to fail there could be a rise in local appeals. The Town Council's response to the Local Plan Consultation would be submitted tomorrow, under the formal delegation as agreed at the Planning & Environment Committee meeting on 4 April 2017.

## **7 Neighbourhood Planning Act / Housing White Paper**

The Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer gave a summary of the latest planning initiatives from central Government. The Neighbourhood Planning Act had been enacted on 27 April 2017, key points to note were; the provision of a new amendment process, that a process was now in place to secure a plan should the existing plan area change, clarification on the duties of a district authority to assist local areas with amending a plan and the protection of public houses (Class A4).

The NPCO apologised that there had not been time to formulate and send a response to the Housing White Paper. However, good representations had been submitted by NALC, Civic Voice and the Town & Country Planning Association which covered the responses Thame would have submitted.

## **8 Neighbourhood Plan Review / Amendments**

Members noted that it now seemed inevitable that a fully revised Neighbourhood Plan would be required to be prepared over the next two years. Which while still allocating land for housing, employment and retail would need to have more detail on specific infrastructure provision. It would provide an opportunity to strengthen the existing Neighbourhood Plan, a lot of which would carry over into the new Plan.

With this in mind Members discussed the lifting of the current moratorium on discussions with potential developers to enable evidence to be gathered at a local level, rather than being left to the Planning Authority. The strength of feeling was that if the current moratorium remained in place the Town Council would be left out of the loop and developers would talk directly to the District Planning Authority.

**RESOLVED that:**

- i) The current moratorium on discussions with potential developers be lifted, to enable evidence to be gathered at a local level for the purpose of the new neighbourhood plan.*

**9 Affordable Housing / Community Land Trust**

Cllr Austin reported that a meeting had been arranged with the Director of the National Community Land Trust Network on 25 May 2017 to assess the potential for community based housing provision in Thame. The briefing paper for that meeting was noted.

**10 Employment Land provision in Thame**

Cllr Dyer reported that Angle Properties had acquired the Kingsmead Business Park (Tesco site) and were proposing a residential led mixed use site. Angle Properties had already approached the District Planning Authority for pre-application discussions. The Town Council would strongly oppose any such planning application, and will provide input to the pre-application response.

At the last Business Forum meeting the SODC Economic Development team had given a brief summary of their proposed Business & Innovation Strategy. It had not been formally adopted by the District and a full presentation would be given at the next Business Forum meeting in July.

It was interesting to note from the study that small and medium enterprise businesses (SME) accounted for 99.8% of business in the SODC area. The main barrier to expansion was the lack of suitable premises. The next Neighbourhood Plan needed to reinforce policy and strategy for the implementation and promotion of deliverable employment sites and regeneration of existing sites.

The new Local Plan still only allocated 2ha of employment land to Thame. There was a need to establish an evidence base which included provision for employment land lost through permitted development since 2011 as well as new provision. Given the success of the Groves and Windles site any new single employment site would need to be occupier led rather than developer led.

It was agreed that residential growth needed to grow hand in hand with that of employment to maintain an acceptable balance, keeping both in and out commuting at an acceptable level.

The meeting concluded at 8.50pm

Signed .....  
Chairman, 27 June 2017