

## THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee held on 27 June 2017 at 7.30pm in the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall

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

**Non Voting**

Cllr N Dixon

**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 (Business), Emery (Holiday) and Wyse (Council Business).

### 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 16 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

The Town Clerk reported that the s106 contributions connected to the Sports Facility Strategy of £6,531.10 had been lodged with SODC and the Town Clerk had applied to draw down the allocation. The actual cost of the Strategy, which was forward funded by the Town Council was £8,000. A decision would need to be made at year end as to how the £1,468.90 shortfall will be covered.

The Town Clerk will next apply to draw down s106 contributions connected to the Green Living Plan to cover time spent on the plan to date by the Town Clerk and the Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer.

The Committee Services Officer had started work on monitoring CIL allocations, the spreadsheet would also include a record of how the CIL funding was eventually spent. The first tranche of CIL funding was expected to be received by the Town Council in October.

c) The Green Living Plan Working Group

Cllr Fickling reported that the first draft of the Green Living Plan, produced by the RSA, had been circulated to Members of the NPCC and to the Green Living Plan Working Group and comments were being collated. The Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer had met with Charles Boundy (RSA), Cllr Austin and Cllr Fickling and progress was being made towards wider circulation of a refined document.

Cllr Austin thanked the RSA for all their hard work in pulling together the first draft of the Green Living Plan.

d) The Town Centre Working Group

The Town Clerk drew Members' attention to the Market Town Co-ordinator's report which covered the depth and variety of work being carried out by the MTCO. The results of the Town Centre Business Survey had been circulated and would be further analysed by the Working Group.

The MTCO was appealing for people who would be interested in forming an Arts & Events Town Team. The group would be responsible for co-ordinating, identifying and developing arts projects to help allocate s106 Public Arts funding.

e) Transport Plan Working Group

The Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer reported that no new evidence or comments from members of the public had been received. A meeting between Cllr Stiles, the Town Clerk and a County Council Officer had been arranged for 7 July 2017 to discuss the new bus service for Thame which the County Council had put out to tender.

f) Community Facilities Working Group

Cllr Dixon reported that Leap Design had submitted an interim report which would be analysed in due course.

g) Burial Space Working Group

The Town Clerk stated there was nothing further to report on the burial space on Site C. Progress on work to convert Priest End allotments to burial space was reported through the Community, Leisure & Recreation Committee. The archeological survey had been completed and St Mary's church was pushing hard to have the land transferred to them as soon as possible. The Town Clerk could not see any reason why that should not happen. Work on the boundaries and paths would be funded from s106 contributions.

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

Members noted that the Town Council's response to the consultation on the second Preferred Options draft of the emerging Local Plan had been submitted on 17 May 2017.

The Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer reported that it was hoped that the response would help to focus minds at the District Council. Aylesbury Vale District Council had originally proposed to disperse housing across the district in their draft Local Plan in the same way as that proposed in the SODC Local Plan but had since withdrawn from this idea and gone back to the drawing board. It was interesting to note that developers had also picked up on the Town Council's response.

## 7 Neighbourhood Plan Review

The report raised awareness of key dates and the lengthy process to be considered when applying for neighbourhood plan grants and potential issues that may arise when the current neighbourhood plan funding scheme ends on 31 March 2018.

The intention was to have a good project plan in place and identify when expenditure was expected. The idea would be to make as few applications as possible and no more than four. The situation may arise when quick action was needed to apply for funding and permission was sought from Members to allow the Town Clerk and Officers to make any such applications.

Members felt the grant funding process was fairly restrictive and the production of an over-elaborate project plan added an extra layer to the neighbourhood planning process. As the Government was trying to encourage communities to have a neighbourhood plan this additional work did little to motivate parishes. It was suggested that Mr John Howell, MP should be made aware of the Council's concerns.

### **RESOLVED that:**

- i) The Town Clerk and Officers be delegated responsibility to apply for grant funding in connection with the review of the Neighbourhood Plan. Any such applications would be reported to Members at the next NPCC meeting following an application.***

*Cllr Lambert entered the meeting during this item.*

## 8 Site Allocation Discussions

Members noted that following the lifting of the moratorium that meetings had been held with Cala on 20 June 2017 and Bloor on 27 June 2017 to hear their latest proposals for land west of Site D and Site F respectively. A meeting with Hallam Land is arranged for 18 July 2017.

An additional approach had been received from Bathurst, but this was established to be Rycote Meadow and so was rejected in line with previous rejections for the same site.

## 9 Five Year Housing Land Supply Statement

The latest figures from South Oxfordshire District Council that their land supply was now 4.1 years was noted. It was the Town Council's continued understanding that given that this was greater than 3 years, Thame was protected by the Written Ministerial Statement of December 2016, which provided additional protection to areas with a Neighbourhood Plan and a Land Supply figure of greater than three years.

It was further noted that the Ministerial Statement provided protection until the end of the year and that this protection was expected to be formally extended in the Housing White Paper. However, there was no mention of this in the Queen's Speech at the opening of Parliament.

It was agreed that the Town Clerk would write to Mr Alok Sharma, MP congratulating him on his new appointment as Minister of State for Housing and Planning and ask what the plans were for extending the Ministerial Statement.

## 10 Affordable Housing / Community Land Trust

Cllr Austin reported that a meeting had taken place with Catherine Harrington, Director of the National Community Land Trust Network and members of the working group. It had been a very good and informative meeting.

The intention was to arrange for a similar presentation by the National CLT Network to Full Council on 15 August 2017. Members of the NPCC agreed that the concept of a Community Land Trust was both interesting and exciting but questioned whether a presentation during a Council meeting would allow adequate time for discussion. It was agreed that the working group would consider this and agree on the best approach.

## **11 Employment Land provision in Thame**

The Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer reported that a conversation had taken place with Thame Farmers Mart who had an option on 17 acres of land close to Thame. It could now be reported that the land was west of the Gregory's employment site, not the immediate field next to Gregory's but land beyond it to the west. The site was officially located in the parish of Great Haseley but the Farmers Mart were keen to say it would still be known as the Thame Farmers Mart at Thame.

The Farmers Mart had identified the site as having good multiple access routes, which prevented the possibility of vehicles loaded with livestock leaving site being delayed in traffic and adhered to animal welfare criteria. The Farmers Mart were keen to work with the Town and District Councils and present their proposals for the site.

The field immediately next to Gregory's had been identified for employment by developers and was currently being marketed as potential for office development. Again this was on the boundary of the parish and cooperation between Great Haseley Parish Council and the Town Council was essential.

It was noted that a For Sale board had appeared on the Kingsmead Business Park site but no feedback had been received from either Angle Properties or SODC. The Town Council would continue to robustly defend this site against any development proposals, other than that for employment.

## **12 Lord Williams's Lower School Site**

Members noted that Lord Williams's School had now obtained funding from Oxfordshire County Council to progress the viability assessment with regard to the Lower School Site. The Town Council had provided input to the brief stressing the need for continued conformance and fairness relating to the adopted Thame Neighbourhood Plan.

The meeting concluded at 8.23pm

Signed .....  
Chairman, 8 August 2017