

## THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee held on 8 August 2017 at 7.25pm in the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall

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

**Officers**

G Hunt, Town Clerk

G Markland, Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer

A Oughton, Committee Services Officer

### 1 Apologies for Absence

No apologies were received. Cllr Cowell absent without apology.

### 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 27 June 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 there had been no further movement. With regard to the artificial pitch, Lord Williams's School had indicated that they no longer wished to pursue an artificial pitch. Expressions of interest in providing a solution have been received from both Thame Football Club and Chinnor Rugby Club but there was no detailed information at this stage.

The Town Clerk confirmed this was also his understanding of the position and that at some point in the future the IDPWG would need to decide how the s106 funding identified through the Sports Facility Strategy for artificial pitches would be allocated. The two sports clubs were aware that they would, in effect be competing with each other for the funding.

On other matters the Town Clerk reported that a meeting had taken place with two representatives from the Tennis Club related to the proposed Thame Sports Club redevelopment to request further assistance with funding. The Town Clerk stated that

no funding was available unless the club could identify a specific funding gap in which case they could come back and submit a report to the Council for consideration. The Town Clerk also advised as to what level of funding the Town Council would consider, this was some way short of the current £120k funding gap.

The Cricket Club had just been out to tender for the proposed new Cricket Pavilion and a meeting was set for 10 August 2017 to discuss the next steps.

c) The Green Living Plan Working Group

Cllr Fickling reported that the draft Green Living Plan had been reviewed by a number of people including the GLPWG and all comments had been given to the Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer (NPCO) to collate. The NPCO reported that he was half way through the collation and committed to feeding back the comments to the RSA group by 18 August 2017.

d) The Town Centre Working Group

Members noted the Market Town Co-ordinator's Report. The Town Clerk highlighted that within the report a new sub structure was proposed under the TCWG, split into three areas; a Business Working Group, an Arts Town Team / Public Arts Steering Team and a Visitor Economy and Marketing Group.

With regard to item 9 of the report a meeting had taken place with SODC where the Executive Member had raised the question on the funding of Market Town Co-ordinators in Henley, Wallingford and Thame, inviting the towns to show the good work that is being carried out.

Cllr Austin expressed his concern that SODC had gone extremely quiet and were not engaging on the subject of the Cattle Market Site. The site was an important one for the Town to bring into the revised Neighbourhood Plan. The Town Clerk reported that the same Executive Member at SODC, mentioned in 5d, was also responsible for the Cattle Market site.

Cllr Dyer reported that it was the same Executive Member who was withholding publication of the raw data on the SODC Business Survey which had been requested several times.

The Town Clerk stated that Town Council Officers would continue dialogue with SODC Officers and Councillors were encouraged to do the same with their District counterparts to help move things along.

Cllr Midwinter expressed concern about the Food Festival event being held on the Show Ground this year and the possible effect it may have on the town centre. The Town Clerk reconfirmed the Town Council's informal 'wait and see' position, and reported that the Food Festival organisers have promised to minimise town centre impact. How this will be achieved was not yet clear.

e) Transport Plan Working Group

The Town Clerk reported that evidence and information continued to be gathered on a reactive basis. There had been requests from Moreton residents to help enable volunteers to monitor traffic speeds through the village and for a pedestrian crossing in Wellington Street.

As reported through the Planning & Environment Committee the Council continued to push for more information on the proposed changes to the No. 40 bus service in connection with Site C. During Lighthouse week a suggestion was made for a pedestrian crossing to be installed on Tythrop Way at the entrance to the Show Ground.

The Council had received a request to speak at the Historic Towns Conference on the positive effect of the parking time limits that operated in the two car parks monitored by the Town Council. The Town Council continued to deal with parking issues in the town centre.

The Town Clerk had met with County Councillors Carter and Matelot who had offered to help wherever they could, there was a lot to report and it was a positive meeting.

f) Community Facilities Working Group

The Town Clerk reported that he had chased LEAP Design for an update on the results of the survey and would chase again. The project was taking longer than expected. It was likely that LEAP would need to draw some correlation between the new data gathered and that previously gathered by the Cattle Market Action Group.

g) Burial Space Working Group

The Town Clerk reported that the Asset Manager had met with a fencing organisation to progress the fencing at Priest End. With reference to item 16 on the agenda and the request from Curtin & Co to meet, the Town Clerk had established that they wished to talk about the burial space on Site C. In response the Town Clerk has stated that his understanding was that the next step was for Curtin & Co to submit a draft planning application for review.

## **6 Neighbourhood Plan Revision**

The NPCO presented the proposed governance document for the revision of the Thame Neighbourhood Plan with three levels of management and the Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee acting as the project board.

It was proposed that the project team would be the Neighbourhood Plan Working Group made up of the current members of the Local Plan Consultation Group, Cllrs Austin, Bretherton, Dodds, Dyer and Fickling. Any other Councillors interested in joining the group would be welcome. The Chairman asked Members if they were happy to proceed with the proposed project team and Governance document (the latter subject to review by the project team). All were in agreement.

A question was raised with regard to the timeline for the revised Neighbourhood Plan, the NPCO stated the aim was to submit the new Plan by Spring 2019 but this would be somewhat dependent on the progress of the SODC Local Plan as it was in the interests of the town to proceed in line with the Local Plan. The project planning stage of the new Plan would be underway soon and details of evidence gathering identified. It was expected that SODC would provide the strategic figures.

## **7 South Oxfordshire District Local Plan**

Since publication of the agenda the NPCO reported that the summary report of the Second Preferred Options Local Plan consultation, along with all the comments received had just been published on the SODC website. Unfortunately the layout of the comments meant you could not go into each chapter of the Plan to see who said what and where. The comments submitted by

the Town Council had been dealt with in a reasonable way, however, some had been treated as comments rather than objections which was disappointing.

The Town Clerk reported that Persimmon had requested a meeting to discuss the proposed intensification of Site D. The Town Clerk had written back to advise that the Town Council could not consider any plans to intensify the site but may do so in the future as part of the evidence gathering for the new Neighbourhood Plan. Persimmon responded to say they intended to submit a planning application by the end of the year.

The NPCO reported the result of the Thames Farm Appeal which had been published late last week. The District housing supply, under the Inspector's calculation had failed by one house per annum. The NPCO had sent comments to the Chair of Cholsey Neighbourhood Plan and to District Councillor Matelot who had forwarded them onto the Leader of SODC. The granting of permission for the development at Thames Farm alone would solve the lack of housing supply identified in the Inspector's report.

#### **8 P17/S2624/PDO – Building 1 (DAF Trucks), Kingsmead Business Park, Howland Road**

Members noted that the above application for Permitted Development had been considered at the Planning & Environment Committee meeting held on 8 August 2017 at 6.30pm and also the informal response sent by the NPCO to the District Planning Officer on 31 July 2017. Members felt strongly that SODC should understand the impact on Thame this application would have if it was allowed to proceed.

Members discussed the policy of Permitted Development agreeing it was thoroughly flawed and reprehensible. It was agreed that the Town Council should take action and make representations to the Secretary of State for a change in the law. Every avenue available must be used to raise awareness of the problem including the involvement of John Howell, MP, the National Association of Local Councils and other towns and parishes with adopted neighbourhood plans.

The Town Clerk stated that the Town Council had already written to the Secretary of State (Item 18 on the agenda). It was agreed that a further letter should be sent to include the adverse impact Permitted Development was having on the Town.

#### **9 P17/S2210/FUL – Land Adjacent to Park Meadow Cottage**

Members noted that the planning application, P17/S2210/FUL - The erection of 4 x 3 bedroom houses and 5 x 2 bedroom houses, car and cycle parking, bin stores, access and landscaping, was considered at an additional meeting of the Council on 18 July 2017. A recommendation of refusal was agreed, given its non-compliance with the Neighbourhood Plan and highways safety concerns.

#### **10 Health Hub**

It was noted that a meeting had taken place with Hallam Land on 18 July 2017. The meeting was informed that, owing to lack of progress by NHS bodies in defining more detailed needs, Hallam had unilaterally committed to establishing further requirements for a health hub via Montpelier.

The Town Councillor Representative Cllr Champken-Woods had shared a two page vision document at the Policy & Resources Committee meeting on 1 August 2017 to help establish the requirements of a Health Hub. Provision of a Health Hub should be part of the next Neighbourhood Plan and included in the scoping item already discussed under item 6.

## **11 Employment Provision**

It was noted that further discussion had taken place with the proposers for provision of various sized business premises on a green field site along Rycote Lane, within Great Haseley parish, adjacent to the Thame boundary.

Discussion took place on how the Town Council might deal with the impact such developments may have on the Town's infrastructure. The governance document discussed under item 6 suggested including neighbouring parishes in parts of the development of the next Neighbourhood Plan. For the present the Town Clerk agreed to undertake initial discussions with Great Haseley on the parish boundary and how the impact of the proposed business premises might positively benefit both parishes.

## **12 Affordable Housing / Community Land Trust**

Members noted that a presentation by the National CLT Network will take place on 15 August 2017 at 6.30pm in the Upper Chamber. It will be open to the public, with a related discussion scheduled at the Full Council meeting that immediately followed the presentation.

## **13 New Residents Survey**

It was noted that the Town Council is progressing a survey of new residents on the newly populated sites to assist with evidence gathering on affordability, local allocation, commuting practices. Questions will probably include: No of bedrooms / ownership status / where moved from / commuting information / occupancy / reasons for move. It needed to be brief and easy to respond to. For anonymity while ensuring 100% coverage it would need to be executed via door knocking. It would seem appropriate for the door knocking to be executed by Councillors, although no volunteers were directly forthcoming.

## **14 Emerging Community Event**

The NPCO and the Community Services Manager had attended the emerging communities event on 4 July 2017 to assist with further work on ensuring effective engagement of the newly populated sites within Thame.

At the end of the same week the Town Clerk met with a resident of Site C and during discussion asked what level of support the resident had received since he had moved in. There had been very little support to help residents become integrated members of the community. Members felt the integration of all the sites within the Town was a fundamental part of the Neighbourhood Plan. The MTCO was looking at information to include in Welcome Packs for new residents and the implementation of the Residents Survey would provide the opportunity to meet and talk to new residents.

## **15 Settlement Assessment**

The NPCO had provided updated details to the Planning Authority, at their request, to enable a more accurate Settlement Assessment for Thame.

## **16 Site Allocation Discussions**

Following the lifting of the moratorium Members noted that meetings with Cala (20/6/17), Bloor (27/6/17) and Hallam Land (18/7/17) had taken place. Requests for meetings received from Curtin & Co and Persimmon are reported under items 5g and 7 respectively of the minutes.

## **17 Neighbourhood Planning Legislation**

The recent correspondence from John Howell, MP in his role as Neighbourhood Plan Champion and the recent debate in the House of Commons was noted.

## **18 Letter to the Housing Minister**

It was noted that following the last meeting a letter was sent to the Housing Minister, Alok Sharma MP. A response was still awaited. As agreed under item 8, the Town Clerk would write a further letter to the Minister including discussion on Permitted Development.

## **19 Neighbourhood Plan Support**

Given Thame's reputation for Neighbourhood Planning, and it's ever increasing experience in life beyond the adoption of a Neighbourhood Plan, Members noted that:

- (a) The Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer's contributed to the NALC and Local Government Chronicle 'Where next for Localism' report.
- (b) The NPCO and Cllr Dyer were due to meet with a MSc student from Oxford Brookes University to help support his research into the effectiveness of neighbourhood plans.
- (c) Final details of the presentation to be made at the NALC Annual Conference are still awaited.

In addition to the three items above, the following was reported:

- (d) The Town Clerk and Cllr Dyer had attended the OALC AGM to support Tom Fort who provided a signed copy of his book in acknowledgement of the Town Council's support.
- (e) St Agnes parish council had approached the Town Council for advice on the formatting of a neighbourhood plan and the cost of printing.
- (f) Mr Vicary (a representative of Cala Homes) had requested a meeting as a member of his local village, who were developing their own neighbourhood plan on guidance leading up to a Referendum. Cllr Dyer had agreed to provide support and guidance under strict guidelines.

The meeting concluded at 8.40pm

Signed .....  
Chairman, 26 September 2017