

## THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee held on 7 November 2017 at 7.15pm 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 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 (Business) and Wyse (Personal).

### 2 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest.

### 3 Public Participation & Public Questions

Mr Castle spoke stating that he had served as a Town Councillor from his election in 1968 until 1974 when the hours he worked on the farm became too demanding for him to continue as a Councillor.

During his time as a Councillor the County Council reviewed the Area Development Plan giving consideration to new sites for housing, employment and construction of a ring road. Mr Castle felt that many decisions had been made for financial reasons that were no longer relevant and it was important that they did not influence new Neighbourhood Plan decisions. New sites, including the new Cattle Market should be considered according to the NPPF and good planning. Mr Castle highlighted decisions taken at the time that had influenced the location of industrial sites, the ring road and problems with the internal distributor road through the Lea Park Estate.

With regard to the proposed Thame Farmers Auction Mart site on Rycote Lane, Mr Castle said he had no objection to the site but it was in Great Haseley Parish. To ensure the uninterrupted continuation of the market for the benefit of farmers and the town, it was vitally important that whatever site was chosen, the freehold should be in the ownership of the Local Authority.

### 4 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 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 said there was not a lot to report. As stated previously by the Town Clerk, Daniel Palmer had left the District Council and two new staff had been recruited. Cllr Bretherton received the latest s106 report two days ago and had yet to go through it in detail. The first tranche of CIL payments amounting to £9,275.25 had been received last week. CIL payments were made in agreed stages linked to the progress of the

development and paid to SODC who then passed on payment due to towns and parishes at two points during the year.

The Town Clerk reported that an email had been received an hour before the meeting informing the Council that claimed s106 monies related to the Sports Facility Strategy would be received next week.

There were now four officers at the District Council the Town Council were dealing with, one responsible for CIL, two responsible for s106 monies and one keeping an eye on infrastructure spend. The Council needed to make sure all functioned in line with detail in the Neighbourhood Plan. The Town Clerk had gone through the s106 report which was detailed and accurate and the result of the good work carried out with Daniel Palmer.

The Town Clerk reported that as part of budget deliberations, the Budget Working Group had reviewed the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

With regard to the redevelopment of the Cricket Clubhouse Pavilion the Town Clerk drew Members attention to the decision made at the Community, Leisure and Recreation Meeting on 24 October 2017, to allocate a portion of the s106 Community Facilities monies to underwrite the project. The final decision would be taken at the Full Council meeting on 14 November 2017.

c) The Green Living Plan Working Group

Cllr Fickling reported that a meeting had taken place with members of the RSA, Cllrs Austin and Fickling and the Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer (NPCO) to discuss the way forward. Following discussion the RSA had gone away to think how best to cope with the amendments to the Green Living Plan.

The NPCO reported that everyone involved was still enthused with the Plan but that the timeline for delivery had changed. It was now hoped to go out to consultation in the summer of 2018. A terrific amount of work had been completed and the Council was very grateful to the RSA for what had been achieved to date. The Council had offered the RSA support and help with finding extra resources.

The aim was to have the final adopted Green Living Plan ready before revision of the Thame Neighbourhood Plan began.

d) The Town Centre Working Group

The Market Town Co-ordinator had provided a detailed report from which the Town Clerk highlighted four areas. The first meeting of the Town Centre Business Forum had taken place on 2 November 2017 at which around 15 businesses had been represented. The Global Treasure Trail App was ready to be trialled and the customer survey had been launched.

Unfortunately the District Council had taken the decision to withdraw £11k used to directly fund Market Town Co-ordinators in Wallingford, Henley and Thame. Funding which would now have to be found by the towns through the Precept. This was particularly frustrating given comments from the District Council on increases to the Precept by the towns over the last few years. It has been possible for the Town Council to budget for loss of £11k funding for 2018/19. However, the following year the loss of £11k would result in a direct increase in the Precept.

Members agreed that the Town Clerk write to express, in the strongest possible terms, the concerns of the Council at the decision to cut £11k of funding for the Market Town Co-ordinators.

e) Transport Plan Working Group

The Town Clerk reported that Cllr Stiles had given an update on the re-routing of the 280 / X8 at the Planning & Environment Committee meeting. A public meeting had taken place at the Cross Keys Public House on 30 October 2017 to discuss the re-routing of the 280 / X8 bus service along Park Street and Chinnor Road to serve the new housing developments on Wenman Road.

Around 30-40 people attended along with two senior representatives from the bus company, Arriva and an officer from the County Council. The Officer from the County Council had made a public apology to the residents and Town Council for a failure to consult before the tender for the new route was issued. Arriva took note of the concerns raised by residents and it was felt would take a sensible approach to resolving the current problems.

The implementation of the new route had diverted some of the s106 monies and provided some of the service that a hopper bus may provide. The Council needed to consider the next steps with regard to provision of a hopper bus service and a meeting had been arranged for 17 November 2017.

The Town Clerk reported that correspondence had been received from the County Council with reference to the concerns raised on the lack of dropped kerbs between the new housing developments and the centre of town. The County Council had acknowledged the fact and requested a meeting to decide where the dropped kerbs should be installed.

The issue of lack of provision for long term parking in the town continues to be a frequent complaint to the Town Council. The Town Clerk reported that it was planned to raise awareness of the 'Park In My Drive' facility.

f) Community Facilities Working Group

A meeting with Leap Design had been arranged on 14 November 2017 to go through the points and decide on the next steps based on the old data as well as the new.

g) Burial Space Working Group

A meeting had taken place with representatives from CEG, Nexus, Curtin & Co and Taylor Wimpey at which it was expected to comment on the planning application for burial space on Site C before it was formally submitted to the District Council. However, the proposals were based on the requirements of the s106 agreement only and not on operational needs.

The Town Council advised that they work with a professional Cemetery Design Consultancy and that they contact the District Council to find out the name of their nominee. If this turns out to be the Town Council will the District Council provide the funds to operate the cemetery? A lot more work was required to ensure a high level facility was provided.

6 South Oxfordshire District Local Plan

The NPCO reported that following notice of the launch of the Local Plan Publication Version consultation on 11 October 2017 the original consultation deadline had been extended until 30 November 2017. This was in order to allow for consultees to properly consider evidence base documents that were late. These were advertised as being the Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (October 2017) and the Local Plan Policies Map.

Other recent evidence base documents, all published in October 2017, included the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (written text and schedule); the Evaluation of Transport Impacts Stage 2, Development Scenarios and Mitigation Testing; the Draft Final Water Cycle Study, Phases 1 and 2;

and the Heritage Impact Assessment.

Councillors Austin and Dyer and the NPCO had attended the briefing meeting on the Publication Plan delivered by John Cotton and the Head of Strategic Planning, Holly Jones on 11 October 2017. It was made clear that despite proposed changes to the method of calculating housing need for an area, the District would continue with their planned approach to provide housing to match desired economic growth.

A drop-in publicity event for the Publication Plan will be held in Thame Town Hall on Monday 13 November, 3pm – 7pm. This event had been organised and would be staffed by District planning officers.

The first meeting of the Local Plan Consultation Group (LPCT) to consider a response to the District Local Plan had taken place. From initial discussions it was felt there needed to be some element of balance in the housing allocations in the Local Plan. Information within the Settlement Strategy had not been updated despite the NPCO responding to the consultation to correct the information. Half of the housing allocation given to Thame is from Oxford's unmet need which would be better located closer to Oxford. The Local Plan continued with employment led housing provision and there was no recognition of the loss of employment space through Permitted Development Rights.

A second meeting of the LPCT would take place, in the meantime some Councillors had volunteered to read through some of the evidence based documents. The NPCO called for more volunteers as there was a large number of evidenced based documents to get through.

## **7 Vale of White Horse Local Plan**

Members noted that the Vale of White Horse Local Plan 2031 Part 2: Detailed Policies and Additional Sites – Publication Version was released for consultation on 11 October. The consultation ended on 22 November 2017. There were no plans for Thame Town Council to respond.

## **8 Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan**

It was noted that the latest version of the Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan (VALP) had been agreed by Aylesbury Vale District Council on 18 October 2017. The proposed submission plan was published for consultation on 2 November 2017. The consultation ended on 14 December 2017.

The NPCO reported that work on a response to the SODC Local Plan would take place first before work on the response to the VALP. It was noted that Haddenham was no longer identified as a strategic housing site but would still be allocated 1,000 homes, representing 50% growth. This would in turn impact on Thame and its infrastructure and it was noted that Oxfordshire County Council had a duty to co-operate.

As CIL was collected by the District Council, the Town Clerk had discussed with the District CIL officer what the process was for the County Council to apply CIL funding for infrastructure. The response from the District was that there was currently no process in place.

## **9 Planning for the Right Homes in the Right Places**

The NPCO reported that he had drafted a reply to the Government's proposed changes to both planning law and guidance which would be sent in time for the close of consultation on the 9 November 2017.

## **10 Section 106 Planning Obligations and CIL Regulation 123 List**

It was noted that the Town Clerk had sent notice of the Town Council's support for the District's

proposed revisions to their S106 Planning Obligations document and CIL Regulation 123 List.

#### **11 SODC Methodology Consultations**

Members noted that the NPCO had submitted a response to the consultation on the methodology used in the draft Local Plan and CIL Viability Assessment and also a response to the consultation on Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability methodology.

#### **12 South and Vale Joint Housing Delivery Strategy**

The NPCO reported that a response had been submitted to the consultation on the South and Vale Joint Housing Delivery Strategy. He also reported that it was frustrating that comments made by the South and Vale's own consultants had not been mentioned in the report.

#### **13 Thame Neighbourhood Plan Revision**

Members noted that the NPCO's work on a project plan for the first activity, defining the neighbourhood plan area, had been suspended given the recent responses needed to District, neighbouring authority and Government consultations.

However there had been further discussion with a planning focussed Councillor at Great Haseley Parish Council. Discussions were still at a very early stage.

The Budget Working Group had established an initial proposal for Neighbourhood Plan funding of £50k and £25k over the next two budget years, partially offset by the expected £15k Government Grant.

#### **14 P17/S1069/FUL – The Elms, 32 Upper High Street, Thame, OX9 2DN**

It was noted that a planning decision had been expected but, nothing had yet arrived.

#### **15 Health Hub / Hallam Land**

The Town Clerk reported that a further meeting had taken place with SP Broadway / Hallam Land on 11 October 2017 at which they gave an update on further discussions with GPs on the Health Hub. Hallam Land remained concerned with the lack of NHS co-ordination and would try and force a reaction from the CCGs and bolster support from the GPs for the site between Towersey and Kingsey Road.

#### **16 Cattle Market Site**

Members noted that no further communications had been received from SODC on the future of the Cattle Market site.

#### **17 Rycote Lane – Thame Farmers Auction Mart**

It was noted that a meeting had taken place on 3 October 2017 at which the Thame Farmers Auction Mart presented their proposals for the relocation of the Cattle Market.

An initial master plan was presented for the proposed site on Rycote Lane. The market will be set well back, to allow for vehicles to queue on-site and the hedgerow planted / transplanted. The buildings will be surrounded by pastures to allow for occasional overnight grazing by animals before / after sale. The buildings will follow the natural contours and slope away from the road. A large, multi-purpose hall will run the length of the building and will be available for specialist sales / event hire. A café and small kiosks will support the sale day customers, as will two sizeable retail units at the front of the building. The auctions will still only take place on two days a week and all

retail uses will be supportive of farming activities.

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

Cllr Austin reported that following a meeting of the Working Group a letter had been sent to the Head of Housing at the District Council to request a meeting to discuss the District's attitude to community led housing. A response was awaited.

Cllr Austin will attend the National Community Led Housing Conference in London on 27 November 2017 to gain a better understanding on current developments and government support.

## **19 Site Allocation Discussions**

Following the lifting of the moratorium it was noted that:

- a) A request had been received from Hunter Page to discuss a site in Moreton
- b) The Persimmon intensification request, although unlikely to succeed, now falls within this site allocation discussion category.
- c) There had been some correspondence on the outcomes of the Cala Homes meeting.

## **20 Letters to the Housing Minister**

Members noted the responses (and subsequent "clarifications") received from DCLG officers, in response to the letters to the Housing Minister, Alok Sharma MP on Permitted Development rights and the Written Ministerial Statement.

It was felt that as pioneers of Neighbourhood Planning, the Town Council had put two well-presented questions to the Housing Minister. The responses received did not address the questions put and were written in a way that the Town Council felt was an insult.

## **21 Neighbourhood Plan Support**

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

- a) The NPCO and Town Clerk had provided some support on the matter of the cancelled 120 bus service to Tetsworth Neighbourhood Plan Group. This was in order to assist them with a planning appeal. The advice was gratefully received.
- b) The NPCO and Councillor Dyer gave a well-received presentation to delegates at the NALC National Conference on 31 October 2017.

## **22 Oxford – Cambridge Expressway**

It was noted that various additional correspondence and information sharing had taken place with regard to the proposed Oxford to Cambridge Expressway, including a request to support an action group.

After some discussion it was agreed not to join any action group at present but wait for the publication of the National Infrastructure Report on 22 November 2017 and then consider the next steps.

The meeting concluded at 8.35pm

Signed .....  
Chairman, 19 December 2017