

THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee held on 29 January 2019 at 7.35pm in the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall

Present: Cllrs B Austin (Chairman), D Bretherton (Deputy Chairman), P Cowell, M Dyer, L Emery (Deputy Mayor), H Fickling, C Jones, P Lambert, A Midwinter (Town Mayor) 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 Cllr Dodds (Personal).

2 Declarations of Interest and Dispensations

There were no declarations of interest.

3 Public Participation & Public Questions

There were no applications to address the Committee.

There were no public questions put to the Committee.

4 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2018 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 – there had been no requirement for the group to meet.
- b) The Infrastructure Delivery Plan Working Group

The Town Clerk reported he had looked at the Government's Consultation on CIL, which included the removal of pooling restrictions. There was nothing that would impact Thame and on that basis recommended not to respond.

SODC had raised pooling concerns regarding the merging of s106 funds for three projects across six s106 agreements for the proposed A3G pitch. The District had been officially informed that Meadow View Park was the agreed location for the new A3G pitch.

An application for £11k contributions towards the GLP Co-ordinator had been submitted. This is not the £16K as shown in the budget as £5k is reserved specifically for Cuttle Brook. It was noted this will leave a £5k hole in terms of the budget. There had been complications persuading s106 officers to release the funding as they did not initially understand that the GLP Co-ordinator was a part of the NPCO role.

The Town Clerk had answered questions related to allotments from yet another new s106 officer.

The Town Clerk had received an email today, advising that SODC had received £260k affordable housing contribution from the Thames Valley Police site, Greyhound Lane. He had yet to check the detail in terms of whether the full £750k contribution will be delivered.

S106 officers were questioning the release of public arts funding towards the proposed wayfinding strategy which will inform the town's Public Art as it felt it did not fall within the remit of Public Art.

c) The Green Living Plan Working Group

The Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer (NPCO) reported the RSA group had led workshops with students on air pollution, green space, waste and recycling as part of the off timetable day at Lord Williams's School. This was well received by pupils and staff.

The Town Clerk reported that the District Council had responded to the Green Living Plan consultation in terms of air quality. It was interesting to note their point of view that in town centres increased tree planting and 20mph zones were not beneficial to improving air quality, although other benefits may accrue.

d) The Town Centre Working Group

The Market Town Co-ordinator's report was noted. Cllr Emery reported the Visitor Economy Working Group were working on increasing awareness of activities on offer in Thame, creating a new information pack for all the houses on the new developments by bringing the Town Guide in house.

e) Transport Plan Working Group

The Town Clerk reported that following the offer from Oxfordshire County Council of funding to improve / provide new bus shelters a list of suggestions had been compiled. The Town Clerk and the Information Centre Officer were due to meet shortly to prioritise the list.

The Town Clerk reported the request for signage for St Joseph's School had been escalated with some success. On the back of this the Market Town Co-ordinator had escalated the request for improved car park signage.

f) Community Facilities Working Group

The Town Clerk reported that students at Lord Williams's School had looked at what might be developed on the Cattle Market site as part of their 'off timetable morning'. Separately the Cattle Market Action Group had written to the Leader of the District Council regarding the lack of clarity in the draft Local Plan for the future of the Cattle Market site.

g) Burial Space Working Group – nothing further to report

6 South Oxfordshire District Local Plan

Following attendance by Cllr Dyer and the NPCO at the Briefing Event on 3 January 2019, work had commenced on the analysis of the Local Plan. Several key pieces of evidence have been renewed or expanded upon and alterations made to enable the Plan to be judged under the new National Planning Policy Framework guidance. Some main changes from the previous document include:

- An updated recognition of windfall permissions means the proposed housing allocation for Thame is now 363 homes.
- A minimum presumption for net housing density of 50 dwellings per hectare.
- An allowance will be made for windfall development of 100 per year across the District, reducing the need for absolute allocations.

- Thresholds and % requirements that change by geography, plus amended mixes for affordable housing, by type, including homes for social rent.

One of the Local Plan consultation events will take place on 5 February in Thame, with District Council officers staffing the community stall at the market and a manned exhibition within the Town Hall Chamber between the hours of 10am and 2pm. The Upper Chamber will remain open until 6pm for the public to view the display boards.

The Local Plan consultation closes at 5pm on 18 February 2019. Comments received must be processed, analysed and summarised for submission to Government by 31 March 2019 in order for the District to comply with the Oxfordshire Growth Deal.

RESOLVED that:

- i) *The Local Plan Consultation Team coordinate the official response from the Town Council to the District Council's second, Final Publication Local Plan.*

7 Thame Neighbourhood Plan Revision

Members noted that the NPCO had sent letters to each of Thame's neighbouring parishes inviting them to declare any matters of concern that might require notice within the Thame Neighbourhood Plan (TNP) review. In response the NPCO had been invited to attend Sydenham Parish Council meeting on 7 February 2019.

The NPCO had prepared a briefing note for Great Haseley Parish Council and attended their Council meeting on 14 January 2019. The NPCO recommended the Thame NP area be extended around the boundary of the approved Cattle Market site in Rycote Lane. The NPCO has agreed to meet with representatives of Great Haseley and the District's neighbourhood planning officers to discuss the benefits or potential pitfalls in such a joint working arrangement.

The NPCO reported that the joint Call for Sites for the TNP review and the Thame Community Land Trust had been delayed following publication of the District's Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (SHEELA), and the need to understand revised site references in that document.

It was noted that the NPCO will prepare a paper explaining the evidence base document requirements for the TNP review for the Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee.

The NPCO reported that a student had started work experience with the Town Council and had started looking at the District's Leisure Strategy and what impact it may have when responding to planning applications related to leisure in Thame.

8 Oxfordshire Growth Board

It was noted the Growth Board had held a day helping form the vision for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (the JSSP). Invited were representatives from planning, government bodies, business and representing environmental and technology issues. This event was used to help launch the new website for the Plan, and promote the first consultation events which can be found at www.oxfordshireplan.org.

Members noted the allocation of £8m towards the Thame / Haddenham cycleway as shared by e-mail and mentioned at the Planning & Highways Committee in late November 2018.

9 Oxford – Cambridge Expressway

It was considered that a change in legislation will be required in order for the Oxford – Cambridge Expressway to be integrated within Local Plan documents. The Expressway is being taken forward

as a Nationally Significant Infrastructure Project, for which there would be no need for a Strategic Environmental Assessment.

In order to be aligned with sound opportunities for housing and employment growth a spatial plan will be required, which by law must be subject to a SEA. This may yet impact on the preparation of the proposed JSSP.

There is no known timeframe for this change nor is it yet clear what form that legislation would take. The existing timeframe for the route preparation by Highways England continues regardless.

10 Joint Statutory Spatial Plan (JSSP), known as the Oxfordshire Plan 2050

The NPCO reported that the first draft of the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 had been published. The draft will be taken to the Cabinet meetings of the District, County and City Councils to seek approval to proceed to formal public consultation.

The NPCO response to the Growth Board's consultation on their Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was noted. The SCI describes who will be engaged throughout the preparation of the Joint Strategic Spatial Plan for Oxfordshire, as well as how and when.

It was agreed that the NPCO will review and respond to the Growth Board's proposed scoping report. The public consultation runs from 7 January to 18 February 2019.

RESOLVED that:

- i) ***The NPCO reviews and responds on behalf of the Town Council to the Growth Board's proposed scoping report.***

11 Affordable Housing / Community Land Trust (CLT)

Cllr Austin reported that clarification had been sought from solicitors regarding the rules for legal formation of the CLT. The Legal Team Working Group are due to meet on Thursday to consider the information ready for presentation and approval at the next CLT Steering Group meeting on 13 February.

Work had started on an application to Homes England for Community Housing Fund (CHF) revenue funding for a proposed development of 15 affordable homes. If successful this will provide 90% of the funding required to get the project to planning permission. The CLT will need to fund the remaining 10%. Any funding from CHF must be spent by March 2020. Unfortunately one of the sites identified for the Thame CLT will not meet this deadline but other sites were being investigated. There was an urgent need for a Call for Sites for the CLT.

Cllr Austin was very impressed by the support and encouragement received from Homes England. This was in stark contrast to the lack of response from SODC following the meeting in October. The CLT needed a response from SODC regarding the commuted s106 funds for affordable housing specifically for Thame.

12 Housing Needs Analysis

The NPCO reported that he and Cllr Dyer had met with representatives from Henley Town Council to exchange ideas and best practice regarding Neighbourhood Plans. Henley have been advised not to carry out a Housing Needs Analysis as it might highlight a greater need.

It was becoming clear that the Town Council will need to fund the Housing Needs Analysis required as part of the review of the Neighbourhood Plan and the CLT.

13 Lord Williams's Lower School Site

It was noted there will be a presentation of the draft Design Brief for the Lower School site to the Full Council meeting on Tuesday 26 February 2019.

14 Government consultation: Supporting the high street and increasing delivery of new homes

Members noted the NPCO and Market Town Co-ordinator's response to the Government's latest proposals to remove the need for most planning applications in the high street. If permitted this would introduce the ability to change the use of a shop to many other uses without planning permission.

Other proposals included changing the permitted regime further to allow for upward extensions of homes across much of England's towns and cities including proposals to permit existing flats or apartments to be extended upwards, too.

Members congratulated Officers for the excellent response to the consultation. The NPCO has been asked to forward the Town Council's response to John Howell, MP and the Head of Planning and Head of Economic Development at the District Council.

15 Other items to Note

The items were duly noted.

The Town Clerk reported that the Town Council had been approached by Rectory Homes, Curtin & Co, Stofords and Bloor to meet to discuss future site development opportunities. Even though the Call for Sites had not happened yet, discussions were continuing to take place.

The meeting concluded at 8.19pm

Signed
Chairman, 12 March 2019