

## THAME TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Committee held on 12 March 2019 at 7.20pm in the Upper Chamber, Thame Town Hall

**Present:** Cllrs B Austin (Chairman), D Bretherton (Deputy Chairman), D Dodds, M Dyer, H Fickling, C Jones, 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 Cllrs Cowell (Personal), Emery (Personal) and Lambert (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 Committee.

There were no public questions put to the Committee.

### 4 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2019 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 s106 funds for the Green Living Plan had been received. Receipt of funds for the Cricket Club had been held up due to the legal agreement having to be prepared.

An application has been submitted for the forward spend of £5,225 towards the consultation on a future community facility on the cattle market site. The Town Clerk has been advised funds may not be released as it may be seen as revenue rather than capital funding.

An application for £12,054.10 has also been submitted for the forward spend towards the cost of converting the allotments at Priest End to burial space.

The Town Clerk has drafted the application for s106 funds for the Public Art Wayfinding Strategy. This maybe declined as it is revenue spend rather than capital.

- c) The Green Living Plan Working Group

Cllr Fickling reported she had met with Charles Boundy. The analysis of responses to the Green Living Plan consultation was going well and the group were thinking about the next steps. The group were also keen to pursue a footpath network along the Cuttle Brook.

The Neighbourhood Plan Continuity Officer (NPCO) reported following a call for volunteers, the RSA Group had recruited a person with website design skills. The NPCO was due to meet with the head of the RSA Group shortly.

d) The Town Centre Working Group

The Market Town Co-ordinator's (MTCO) report was noted. Cllr Midwinter expressed thanks to the MTCO and Community Project Support Officer for all their hard work with the Visitor Economy Working Group in producing the Thame flyer promoting Thame as a visitor destination.

e) Transport Plan Working Group

As Cllr Stiles reported at the Planning & Environment Committee meeting earlier this evening, the Town Council continued to push for a meeting with OCC to discuss a hopper bus for Thame.

The Town Clerk reported he was aware discussions were taking place at Oxfordshire County Council (OCC) at senior officer level and included the two County Councillors. The Town Clerk had offered to be present at the discussions but was informed the meeting was not Thame specific. The Town Clerk is awaiting the outcome of the discussions and will meet with one of the County Councillors on 29 March 2019.

The Town Clerk has had further discussions with Jack Creeber from OCC regarding parking enforcement. The view is that the Town Council will probably need to wait for decriminalisation before taking on parking enforcement and be prepared to put in an early application to SODC.

f) Community Facilities Working Group

The Town Clerk reported the latest response from the SODC Head of Property to the request for a meeting with the Town Council regarding the future of the Cattle Market site was that SODC were seeking clarity from Thame Farmers Mart.

g) Burial Space Working Group

The Town Clerk reported he was due to meet with Rev Alan Garratt of St Mary's church to discuss the new burial site at Site C, to understand how burials are managed at St Mary's and what help St Mary's might offer should Site C burial space come forward.

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

Members noted the consultation submission made by the NPCO following the Local Plan Consultation Team (LPCT) meeting on 15 February 2019.

It was noted that SODC have reported that 2000+ comments were received and that SODC aim to submit the plan for independent examination on 29 March 2019.

Members thanked the NPCO for all his hard work on the detailed consultation submission.

## **7 Thame Neighbourhood Plan Revision**

The NPCO reported he has had discussions with neighbouring parish councils in order to establish interests or concerns:

On 7 February the NPCO attended a meeting of Sydenham Parish Council and established the following concerns, raised by Sydenham Parish Councillors:

- Sydenham emphasised how reliant the Parish is on Thame as a service centre and complimented Thame's free parking regime and fair enforcement;
- There is concern that the Cattle Market will be developed for a use not in keeping with Thame's role. Sydenham expressed a preference for new retail facilities being centrally located in order to reduce travel;
- An ongoing concern is school capacity, especially at Lord Williams's, given recent and proposed housing growth. Nursery provision is inadequate with people forced to travel or resort to private childminders, if that can be afforded.

It was agreed that the NPCO would draft a Memorandum of Understanding stating that these were the issues that could be considered as land use matters between the two parish councils.

On 20 February the NPCO met with Great Haseley Parish Council and a member of SODC's Planning Policy Team to discuss including land around the proposed Cattle Market site on Rycote Lane within Thame's Neighbourhood Plan. The advice from the District's officer was that although the risk of further applications would not be entirely removed, it was best to bring the site into a comprehensive review via the Thame Neighbourhood Plan. Any future development proposals would then be better dealt with against the background of identified needs. Great Haseley Parish Council will discuss at their next Council meeting on 11 March 2019 the proposed extension of the Thame Neighbourhood Plan area boundary around the Cattle Market area.

The NPCO stated he had not heard back from all the neighbouring parishes and would send out a gentle reminder to those who had not responded.

The NPCO reported that following unforeseen delays, the Call for Sites exercise for the Thame Neighbourhood Plan review was launched yesterday. Given the District Council's stance on GDPR the call has had to be generalised to cover almost any proposal.

It was further reported that an assessment of evidence other than housing and employment has shown that some matters will require further work or review:

- Demographics, due to inward migration in Thame and the surrounding area;
- Landscape impact, given the partial coverage of the District's assessment;
- Townscape assessment to better inform density and design;
- Accessibility, given the new development and open space that has and is taking place;
- A Thame land availability assessment, given the condition of the District's Strategic Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment.

The NPCO and Town Clerk will endeavour to provide a revised time line for the TNP revision by the next NPCC meeting on 21 May 2019, to reflect the effect of continued external impacts. This will include discussions with the Chairman and may necessitate a meeting of the Co-ordination Working Group.

## **8 Oxfordshire Growth Board / Oxfordshire Plan 2050**

Members noted that the Statement of Community Involvement, which Thame Town Council contributed to, was reported to Oxford City Council's Scrutiny Committee on 21 January 2019. There were 37 other respondees. The document has been changed to reflect some of the comments made by the Town Council, namely:

- There is a much greater emphasis on seeking the views of individuals and other bodies, outside the narrow requirements of legislation;
- The aim of the document is to now detail how the Oxfordshire authorities will inform, involve and consult "interested parties", rather than stakeholders;

- A two-way relationship between neighbourhood plans and local plans is now shown, diagrammatically;
- The outline of who will be consulted with at each stage of the Plan's formation has been amended to include the general public and other interested bodies.
- Other changes made include additional text discussing the need to tailor consultation to the stage the plan is at and that residents will be encouraged to register on the consultation database for the Oxfordshire Plan 2050. Finally, the appendix containing the list of specific and general consultees has been reworded to reflect the generalized bodies and organisations who will need to be kept informed. This should ensure more, rather than fewer, agencies are involved.

It was noted that various Officers / Councillors attended the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 (JSSP) consultation event at Thame Leisure Centre on 18 February 2019. Also the consultation period on the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report has been extended to 25 March 2019; the NPCO will prepare a response as necessary, as previously agreed.

**RESOLVED that:**

- i) The responsibility for the formation of the Thame Town Council response to consultation on the Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Vision and Objectives by 25 March 2019 be delegated to the NPCO.***
- ii) The responsibility for the formation of the Thame Town Council response to Oxfordshire Plan 2050 Call for Ideas by 12 April 2019 be delegated to the NPCO.***

**9 Affordable Housing / Community Land Trust (CLT)**

Cllr Austin reported the Thame Community Land Trust (TCLT) had received confirmation of its legal formation from the Financial Conduct Authority, this was a considerable milestone in the TCLT's journey. A press release has been issued.

An application for funding has been submitted to the Community Housing Fund (CHF) for 90% of the cost of getting to planning application stage on a site, estimated to be £132k. The TCLT is required to find the remaining 10% of funds.

The Call for Sites mentioned earlier in connection with the Thame Neighbourhood Plan Revision includes a plea for sites for the TCLT. The Steering Group is hopeful a site will be identified by the end of June. The possible 'gifted site' will not be available within the time frame to qualify for the current round of CHF funding. It is not known at this stage whether there will be further Government funding beyond March 2020. Cllr Austin met with John Howell, MP to express concerns regarding CHF funding deadlines.

Both the National CLT network and Homes England have been very supportive. The help and attitude of the contact at Homes England had been exemplary.

Cllr Austin had received a positive response from the Affordable Housing Team Leader at SODC to his letter of 1 February 2019. There were still some areas to investigate, however, Mr May did confirm that the monies secured through s106 agreements related to affordable housing not delivered on site or part delivered is pooled and available to spend across the District not automatically allocated to Thame. Mr May went on to say '*SODC will always endeavour to spend the monies in the area from which they were derived and would anticipate the capital costs associated with a TCLT development would be a strong candidate for the receipt of funding from these monies, subject to the usual approvals*'.

Positive discussions had been held with a volunteer architect.

Members expressed thanks to Cllr Austin for all his hard work in getting the TCLT to this stage. In turn Cllr Austin said it had been a team effort and expressed thanks to the members of Steering Group.

## **10 Housing Needs Analysis**

The NPCO reported there had been no further progress on a Housing Needs Analysis due to other more pressing work constraints.

Cllr Austin reported the application to the CHF included a sum to undertake a Housing Needs Analysis for the TCLT.

## **11 Other Items to Note**

The items for information were noted. There was further discussion on the proposed health campus.

The Town Clerk added the Town Council had been notified today that the planning application, P17/S4441/O for industrial development at Land north of Rycote Lane will be considered by the District Planning Committee next Wednesday 20 March 2019. The planning officer is recommending approval. The Town Clerk has circulated the information to all Councillors and next steps will be progressed via email.

The meeting concluded at 8.00pm

Signed .....  
Chairman, 21 May 2019