
EXTRAORDINARY POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**MINUTES**

Of an Extraordinary meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Monday 7 October 2019 between 7.30pm and 8.02pm

Councillors present:

Sara Bedford (Chairman) (Local Plan)
Matthew Bedford (Resources and Shared Services)
Sarah Nelmes (sub for Cllr Stephen Giles-Medhurst)
Stephen Cox
Steve Drury (Infrastructure and Planning Policy)
Marilyn Butler (sub for Cllr Alex Hayward)

Chris Lloyd (Vice-Chairman) (Leisure)
Andrew Scarth (Housing)
Reena Ranger
Roger Seabourne (Community Safety and Partnerships)
David Sansom
Phil Williams (Environmental Services and Sustainability)
Alison Wall

Officers Present: David Hill, Interim Chief Executive
Geof Muggerridge, Director of Community and Environmental Services
Claire May, Head of Planning Policy and Projects
Marko Kalik, Senior Planning Officer
Sarah Haythorpe, Principal Committee Manager
Jo Welton, Committee Manager

PR37/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Stephen Giles-Medhurst and Alex Hayward with the substitutes being Councillors Sarah Nelmes and Marilyn Butler.

PR38/19 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman ruled that the following items of business had not been available 5 clear working days before the meeting but were of sufficient urgency for the following reasons:

Item 4 - Update on the Local Plan

Item 5 - Local Development Scheme

To enable the Council to progress the work on the Local Plan.

Item 6 – Appendices 2 and 3

To enable the Council to approve the CPO

PR39/19 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None received.

PR40/19 UPDATE ON THE LOCAL PLAN

This report provided an update on the progress on the Local Plan and advised Members that there were a number of technical studies that needed to be completed before recommendations or decisions can be made about which land to allocate to meet the objectively assessed needs or the justification for a decision of not meeting the needs was made.

A Member referred to the recommendation at Point 8.1 where it asked that the Leader and Chief Executive write to the Secretary of State on the housing targets. The Member thought the Council had already written querying the use of the 2018 data rather than the 2014 data and wondered if we had received a reply. In addition, Bedmond Residents Association had sent a similar letter at the same time. The Chairman said there had been a number of exchanges with the Local MPs and the various Secretaries of State. The new Secretary of State had recently sent a reply to one of the letters. Unfortunately the replies said we might or we might not have the right numbers on the housing targets and we may or may not be using the correct methodology. This was what every Authority was being told. Officers deserved to have a set of figures which they could work to. We were currently working to the 2014 figures which were higher than the 2016 figures although at some point there would be 2018 figures. The Chairman said she was waiting to meet with the Minister. As Members could see there were not enough sites to meet the housing figures and were currently reaching about 40 to 50% of those targets.

A Member said if the Council was waiting for a meeting with the Secretary of State why can't that be added to the letter. The Chairman advised that it would almost certainly be added.

A Member referred to Paragraphs 2.11 and 2.12 of the report which talked about new settlements, an extension to an existing town or village and the need to identify suitable sustainable locations. Was there a specific size for a proposed settlement that we needed to get the required infrastructure, for example, schools, GPs, train stations, high street and commercial areas? The Head of Planning Policy and Projects said you would need a significant development to get any decent infrastructure with a minimum of 3,000 homes to get local shops or a primary school. For a health centre you would need to have 8,000 homes. In the Green Belt areas consideration would need to be made with regard to harm to the Green Belt. In terms of the size of the settlement it might not just be one settlement it may be more.

A Member said the Government had been provided details for strategic road networks. Considering some roads in the District were single lanes what would be the process to apply that strategic thinking to our road network. The Head of Planning Policy and Projects said any new settlement would require a master plan for the local infrastructure. A Member said in terms of the roads that would be a matter for the Highways Authority. It would be unlikely that a new station would be built and more likely a park and ride facility be provided for any new settlement.

A Member asked if it would ever be feasible that we would reach the housing targets and should we have factored that in at the beginning of the process. The Chairman said if you look at the number of sites we have against the possible dwellings we had in excess of what we needed but the problem was that you had to under take the technical evidence to see whether or not the sites met the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The NPPF was not necessarily

against development in the Green Belt but it was against it in certain circumstances. Each site had to be accessed and the Green Belt assessment looked at the sites and provided the evidence on whether they could be built on.

A Member said some of the sites which had come forward for the last local plan had been deemed unsuitable due to flooding, tree protection or something specific to the site. Since there had been no material change there was not going to be anything different now. If we write to the Secretary of State requesting a reduced housing target would that evidence be included to show why the targets were not deliverable and giving details of what was. The Head of Planning and Projects said that the number of sites considered and rejected as part of the last Local Plan were few and when potential sites went out for consultation they only provided an indicative capacity for the site and were not looking at any constraints on the site. It was just to get an idea of the dwelling capacity before any evidence came through.

A Member referred to Appendix 1 and asked which of the studies had or had not been completed. The Head of Planning and Projects said the Committee were not going to be voting on the evidence based studies tonight or making any decisions on any sites. Details were just being provided for information purposes only. If the studies had not been completed they had the word "draft" after the study.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chairman the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

- The Council should continue to urgently progress work on the Local Plan
- The Council proceed with the Duty to cooperate requirements and completion of Statements of Common Grounds
- Officers undertake the necessary work to determine whether there are any potential locations within the District that could accommodate a new settlement or settlements: and
- The Leader and Chief Executive write to the Secretary of State to request the housing target be reduced to a level more appropriate to the District using more up-to-date population and living data than currently stipulated by the Government, and taking into account the constraints of the undeveloped land in the District.

PR41/19 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

This report seeks Member's approval of a revised Local Development Scheme (LDS).

The Council were required to update the scheme on an annual basis and it was last updated in October 2018. Officers had reviewed the Local Development Scheme timeline with information that was known now. It may be that the Scheme is reviewed again depending on the outcome of the evidence based studies that are to be undertaken as part of the Local Plan. For the time being it was required that the publication of the draft Local Plan be delayed to May or June next year. It was noted that the Council have to publish the scheme on the Council's website with the timeline.

A Member asked if the local elections would impact on the publication of the draft Local Plan. The Head of Planning Policy and Projects said it's about the timing

of the studies that need completing and the policies which still needed to be reviewed. The LDS can be reviewed at any time so there would be an opportunity to bring it forward but it was unlikely. The Council would, though, not run a major consultation during the purdah period.

In response to a question on Neighbourhood Plans (NP), the Head of Planning Policy and Projects said once a NP had gone through to referendum and the Council made the plan, it then became part of the development plan for the area and was included in the LDS.

In response to a question of the draft policies the Head of Planning Policy and Projects said that any policies that had been to the Local Plan sub-committee were still draft policies and had not been agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee and could therefore be changed at any time depending on Government advice.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chairman the voting being unanimous.

RECOMMEND:

That the Policy & Resources Committee recommend the Local Development Scheme as set out in Appendix 1.

PR42/19 PROPOSED DELEGATION OF COMPULSORY PURCHASE POWERS TO WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL IN RESPECT OF LAND AT WATFORD BUSINESS PARK FALLING WITHIN THE ADMINISTRATIVE AREA OF THE COUNCIL

The Policy and Resources Committee was asked to recommend to Council to delegate its powers of compulsory acquisition under Section 226 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA) to Watford Borough Council ("WBC") using Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 in respect of part of the Watford Business Park within the Council's administrative area. The areas required to be purchased as part of the CPO were areas 6, 7 and 17 on the site plan.

A Member asked if WBC had shared any details with the Council on what they intend to do with the land. The Director of Community and Environmental Services said the Council had not received a formal plan but it would require planning permission. The Council would be consulted at that time but the ambition was to bring the business park up to a similar standard as the Croxley Business Park

A Member asked if it was normal for any kind of payment to be made in this situation. The Director of Community and Environmental Services said it was the Council's costs which would be covered as set out in the report and we would not seek any additional payment above this as part of the co-operation between the two Councils.

A Member said there was a unit on site 17 and wondered if we received business rates and would this form part of our costs. The Chairman said there would be business rates payable however this was a very small part of the site and clearly any improvements carried out would be to our benefit. There would be no financial implications from the CPO.

A Member asked if WBC could share their ideas with us as obviously there was going to be a financial implication and it would be in our interest. The Director of Community and Environmental Services said that he was sure we would be consulted when there was a plan but at the moment they needed to acquire the

land. It was not worth them carrying out any detailed design until the purchase had been agreed but he would be happy to share any information with Members when received.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chairman the voting being unanimous.

RECOMMEND:

To recommend to Council to delegate its powers of compulsory acquisition under Section 226 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA) to Watford Borough Council using section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972 in order to acquire the 3 plots of land (6, 7 and 17) shown on the plan attached at the Appendix

That the Council enters into an Agency agreement with WBC in the terms attached and that the final version of the Agency Agreement be agreed by the Solicitor to the Council in consultation with the Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services.

CHAIRMAN