

LOCAL PLAN SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES

Of a Virtual meeting held on Thursday 2 July 2020 from 7pm to 9pm

Councillors present:

Chris Lloyd (Chair)
Matthew Bedford
Sarah Nelmes (substitute for Cllr Stephen
Giles-Medhurst)
Steve Drury
Reena Ranger
Alison Wall
Phil Williams
Stephen Cox

Also in attendance: Councillors Martin Trevett, Paula Hiscocks, David Sansom, Alex
Michaels, Debbie Morris and Jon Tankard

Officers Present: Geof Muggerridge, Director of Community and Environmental Services
Claire May, Head of Planning Policy and Projects, Marko Kalik, Senior
Planning Officer, Lauren McCullagh, Planning & Conservation Officer,
Sarah Haythorpe, Principal Committee Manager, Sherrie Ralton
Committee Manager

LPSC24/20 CHAIR OF THE MEETING

As the Chair of the meeting had given apologies the Clerk requested to the sub-committee a nomination to Chair the meeting.

Councillor Nelmes was nominated but could not Chair the meeting as was a substitute Member. Councillor Williams was nominated and agreed but was unable to take up the Chair due to connectivity issues at that time.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes then moved, seconded by Councillor Steve Drury, that Councillor Chris Lloyd Chair the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Chris Lloyd Chair the meeting.

COUNCILLOR CHRIS LLOYD IN THE CHAIR

LPSC25/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sara Bedford and Stephen Giles-Medhurst with Cllrs Sarah Nelmes as the Substitute Member.

LPSC26/20 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Local Plan Sub-Committee meeting held on 22 June 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair of the meeting.

LPSC27/20 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

A Member advised that additional wording to be considered for inclusion in the objectives of the Local Plan: Vision and Objectives, had been included by the Head of Planning Policy and Projects in consultation with Councillor Sara Bedford.

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

6. Local Plan – Housing Mix and Type
7. Local Plan – Parking Standards

So that progress of the local plan can be made.

LPSC28/20 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

None received.

LPSC29/20 PRESENTATION ON NATIONAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS FOR THE LOCAL PLAN AND SITE ASSESSMENT PROCESS

The Head of Planning Policy and Projects gave the presentation on National Policy Requirements for the Local Plan and Site Assessment Process.

Members raised the following points:

When would the standard method for calculating housing be available?

Where it stated that places protected from development such as areas of outstanding beauty the scale of development should be restricted, but small scale was allowable, what would be defined as small scale?

The Head of Planning Policy and Projects responded:

The Housing figures may be available September, but it would be up to the Government to publish. The information would be sent to the Local Plan Sub Committee once available. The NPPF states that the Local Authority has the power to decide what was considered large scale development an in Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), but it would up to Development Management to decide on the definition of small scale.

RESOLVED:

Noted the contents of the presentation.

LPSC30/20 LOCAL PLAN - HOUSING MIX AND TYPE

The report set out the issues which the new Local Plan would need to address in relation to housing mix and type, specialist and supported housing, self-build and custom housebuilding, and houses in multiple occupation. It also set out the policy wording to be contained within the new Local Plan.

Included in the report were the issues the new Local Plan would need to address in relation to housing mix and type, specialist and supported housing and housing in multiple occupation. It was important that new housing is provided across all sectors of the housing market to meet a wide variety of household needs, and add to the choice of housing available. New homes therefore need to comprise a mix of 10 years prices, sizes and types. Together with the other South West Herts Authorities the Council had undertaken a Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) and this is the main evidence base document that informs our housing needs.

The LHNA used modelling to produce a recommended housing mix for Three Rivers and this mix has been split into Market Housing, Affordable Homeownership and Affordable Homes for Rent, with a different mix for each group. When it comes to applying the housing mix each application should be considered on a case by case basis. This could come down to specific market conditions, or in the case of affordable house, the Council's housing register may indicate an alternative mix as appropriate. The Council would also need to consider the ageing population in the District and it is important that new developments include specific forms of housing for older people as well as specialist accommodation to meet other needs. The LHNA considered the needs of older people and people with disabilities and projected a significant increase in the population aged over 65 and over with an associated increase in levels of disability. As such, there is likely to be an increased requirement for specialist housing options in the future. These are referred to in this policy but also there are specific requirements set out in the Accessible and Adaptable Buildings policy that has been reported to a previous meeting of the LPSC.

The LHNA considered the need for bungalows, however the conclusion was that although they may be attractive to some older owner-occupiers, they are a form of low-density development that would go against other objectives in the Local Plan. Therefore, reference to bungalows has only been included in the supporting text and not in the Policy itself. Applications for bungalows would be considered on a case by case basis.

In terms of self-build and custom-build housing it was not considered necessary to include a percentage requirement for this type of housing. The Council's self-build and custom build register shows a low level of demand, and analysis in the LHNA suggests there is no undersupply expected. To make sure needs are met we will work with the developers of strategic sites to deliver self-build plots as well as the policy wording supporting this kind of development.

The LHNA also considered student housing, however there isn't a demand for this type of housing in the District.

The LHNA also considered the Build to Rent sector, again there is no specific requirement for this type of housing, however it should just be noted that the returns on this type of housing are longer term and this should be taken into consideration when viability assessments are produced alongside applications.

There is no specific requirement for houses in multiple occupation (HMOs). Planning permission is not always required for converting to HMOs but when there is a requirement for planning permission the wider balance of housing, living conditions, and provision of amenity space should be considered.

Some comments had been received prior to the meeting regarding the housing mix for affordable housing for rent. There was a high projected demand for 1 bedroom properties, however the LHNA does recognise there may be some room for flexibility due to a high turnover. It also recognised that the low

requirement for four bedroom properties could lead to long waiting lists due to low turnover. Having considered this, the figures could be adjusted to be more in line with the SW Herts average which would be:

- 35% for 1 beds, down from 40% in the policy
- 30% each for 2 or 3 beds,
- 5% for 4 beds.

This decision will be for the sub-committee to consider. Each application providing affordable housing would need to take consideration of the Council's Housing Register.

Members raised the following points:

Paragraph 2.12 of the report referred to the increased need for housing for older people aged 65 plus who are living longer. A lot of people aged 65 to 70 were fitter now and that an age grouping of 70 to 75 plus should be considered.

Older people want to downsize into 1 or 2 bedroom homes and have care provided in their own homes rather than moving into residential homes.

Paragraph 2.5 of the report, the increase in population decided in 2016. Would Brexit have an impact on the population in this area where there is a high proportion of people from Europe living and working?

Affordable Housing was mentioned in the plan but there did not appear to be any reference to Social Housing which may be more affordable.

Appendix 1 Item 3, stated all large-scale major housing proposals delivering 100 dwellings or more. How flexible was the 100 dwellings? This number may mean different things in different locations.

The suggested 35% for one bedrooms and 5% for four seemed low. There were issues around demand for one bedrooms and that they provide limited flexibilities. How agile to change was this figure?

Was the ageing population in the District as a result of young families being unable to afford homes in this area or were there no suitable sized homes for them?

Paragraph 2.12 referred to a projected increase in the older population leading to higher levels of disability. This issue was highlighted in the Parking Policy report and the fact that disabled provision was not going to be increased.

Paragraph 2.15 Self-Build stated that the need had been taken from the number of people on the register. A lot of people would like to self-build, how did the Council promote the self-build option?

In the Appendix the only options on Specialist and Support accommodation were for Rented or Leasehold. Why was there no option for Freehold?

Could priority be given to local people before people who want to move into the area?

The LHNA reveals different profiles in the size mix across the different tenures. Officer guidance was required as to how Social/Affordable Rented Housing was at 40% but 4 Bedroom Social/Affordable Rented Housing was only 2%. Of the 659 homes being built as part of the South Oxhey Homes Initiative is that where the 2% of 4 bedroom homes had been achieved?

The Senior Planning Officer clarified that the Social and Affordable rented properties were included in the same paragraph. With affordable rented properties of either type, the differentiation between them was taken into

consideration in the Affordable Housing Policy on the breakdown of who requires each type of affordable or social rent.

The Head of Planning Policy and Projects advised that the Council does not have any land to be given to the Self-Build Register and land for Self-Building is sold at market price.

The Senior Planning Officer advised with regard the 65 plus bracket, although it was appreciated people are fitter, there was still a need coming from that group so that was the approach taken by the Consultant.

Downsizing to 1 or 2 bedroom had been considered in the housing mix.

On the increase in population from 2016, Brexit may have an impact in the population in this area and this would appear in the next ONS figures. Only the figures we have can be used. The Local Plan is updated every 5 years. The Council is currently linked to the standard method of housing from the 2014 figures which may all change in September.

Flexibility with the 100 dwellings. This is minimum level, there may be some flexibility to make it lower but it would be looked at on a case by case basis.

The mix of affordable housing and 1 beds, the Council could not go any further than the suggested change in the summary. Each application would be considered on a case by case basis so if there was evidence for a different housing mix we could go away from the mix. An indicator could be what is on the Housing Register.

The Senior Planning Officer was unable to give an opinion on the ageing population question, it could be a mixture of the suggested reasons but there was a requirement to cover needs for everyone.

There was no option for Freehold within the Specialist and Support Accommodation as these particular types housing were specialist housing and run by providers who provide care within the facility so one would be unlikely to buy free hold within that situation. It does not stop you buying any type of property with freehold but it would not be classed as housing with extra care. These were support care living accommodations.

Whether priority could be given to local people would not be a decision made by the Council at the Local Plan Development stage this would be a decision for the provider running the establishment as this was not 'Affordable Housing', which the Council had control over.

Further Member points raised:

Why was there not a view on why there was an ageing population and whether that was due, in part, to young families being unable to afford to move in or whether there was inappropriate housing for them? This should be a key question in terms of the Local Plan.

It had been mentioned that HMOs don't always need planning permission. This does not accord with information from Planning Officers.

Following on from a previous question it was pointed out that 2% of 659 properties at South Oxhey was not the paucity of the 4 or 5 homes that had been allowed. How has it come about again that within the Social Affordable rented housing 40% is one bed?

The Senior Planning Officer said regarding the HMO, if building from scratch planning permission would be required but converting to an HMO does not

always require planning permission. This sometimes falls under Permitted Development Rights.

The basis for the 40% of Social Rent Housing was based on an analysis of past trends and population projections and the forecasting done through the model on the Housing Needs Assessment.

Further Member points raised:

All research was based on past trends but the first line of Appendix 1 read: to meet future housing needs. The past informs the future but may not be repeated so do we need to amend that to reflect what we expect in the future, in terms of ageing population, working from home and less commuting?

The Senior Planning Officer replied that the report had taken into consideration the ageing population, in terms of the changes from the current crisis, the plan could not be delayed to await the next set of statistics so this Local Plan had to be completed, and any new statistics would form the next Local Plan.

On being put to the Committee the recommendation was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being 7 for, 0 Against, 1 Abstention.

RECOMMENDED:

1. Noted the contents of this report and recommend to the Policy and Resources Committee the Draft Housing Mix Policy as set out in Appendix 1 is included in the Local Plan, and
2. That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Planning Policy & Projects and the Director of Communities and Environmental Services in consultation with the portfolio holder to make minor changes to all draft policies

LPSC30/20 LOCAL PLAN - PARKING STANDARDS

This report set out the issues which the new Local Plan will need to address in relation to parking and proposed policy wording to be contained within the new Local Plan. This policy does not relate to on street parking or parking at already existing developments

As stated at the last meeting there are high levels of car usage in Three Rivers. As such, demand for parking is an important issue, however parking management is also an important factor in helping influence travel demand and modes of travel. HCCs Local Transport Plan identifies the use of parking management as one of the methods in achieving a modal shift away from car usage. The policy sets out a requirement for parking provision to be in accordance with the parking standards set out in Appendix 2. These standards are based on those included in the existing Local Plan 2011 – 2026 and have been updated to include census data on vehicle ownership, as well as taking into consideration the latest national policies and guidance.

We have updated the parking zones into sustainability zones based on areas around stations. With Rickmansworth being the highest level of sustainability so the parking requirement would only be 80% of the standard, while the areas around the other stations would be at 90% of the standard. The rest of the District would be expected to deliver the full standard. That said, national policy has moved away from setting maximum standards and these updated standards can be seen more as a guideline. Each application would need to demonstrate why they may require to deviate away from the standards, if they do. The most significant change to the standard is regarding residential

dwellings. This has been updated using Census car ownership figures factoring in an increase to allow for visitor spaces and an increase in car ownership since the census was undertaken. A requirement for 20% of car parking spaces for major developments to be unallocated has also been added. This adds flexibility for use by visitors and differing levels of car ownership, thus making the most efficient use of space. A requirement for electric vehicle charging point provision has also been added to the standards. For residential development this means that 20% of spaces should provide active charging points with the remaining 80% set up for passive provision. Each individual house would be expected to have its own active charging point.

Comments received prior to the meeting on this report:

- The 80% and 90% sustainability zones do not go far enough in discouraging car use in highly sustainable areas. The parking requirements in these areas could be lowered if supported by the LPSC.
- Another consideration could be the radius around the stations. This had been set at 800m which is approximately a 10 minute walk, the radius could be increased to 1600m for the sustainability zones to allow for cycling to the station if supported by the LPSC.
- Potentially if the uptake of electric vehicles is to be encouraged the standards should be increased further in terms of electric vehicle charging points. This may affect viability and this policy will be included in the whole plan viability assessment. If supported by the Local Plan sub-committee the requirements could be increased subject to viability

Members raised the following points:

The downside to extending the distances is that it will end up covering more of the built up areas of the District. There are already concerns about the low level of parking provision.

The sub-committee were advised Councillor Martin Trevett, not a member of the sub-committee, had lost connection to the virtual meeting.

Paragraph 2.1 High levels of car ownership and usage in Three Rivers. There was an ageing population and although the Council aspire to have less car parking it was not thought the reality would be as such. Most Ward Councillors would have been contacted due to parking pressures and anti-social parking. It was unclear what was changing in order to consider lowering the parking standards.

Paragraph 2.8 stated the figures had been calculated using vehicle ownership statistics from 2011 although there had been many changes since then.

Paragraph 2.9 stated the 1 bedroom dwellings decreased to 0.9, why was this not capped at 1? 4 bedroom dwellings had decreased from 3 to 2.5 spaces. The assumption should be that with more people within a property, more car units would be required.

Paragraph 2.13, passive provision for network cables, we would hope to have greener car ownership so would this put people off owning suitable vehicles?

The Senior Planning Officer advised that the 2011 figures were the latest as the data comes from the Census. In calculating the data an increase in car ownership since 2011 had been factored as well as a 20% increase for visitor

allowance so there was a significant increase already. It had led to a decrease since the previous Standards, which was part of the Council's needs to encourage a shift away from car usage in order to meet the Sustainability and Climate Change objectives.

The passive provision was easy to connect to. It provided the infrastructure to easily add charging points.

A Member referred to paragraph 2.5, zone 1 the area around the station and where the line was at Valley Road and The Drive was not a 10 minute walk to the station it was more like 15 to 20 minutes due to the steep hills.

Paragraph 2.11 Disabled spaces remain the same, but as the ageing population was increasing so blue badge disabled spaces needed to increase, particularly around the town.

Response by Senior Planning Officer:

The 800 meters was as the crow flies so there may be some variation in walking time.

The Head of Planning Policy and Projects advised that table pointed to parking in new developments but they could look at increasing blue badge disabled parking in both car parks and residential flats. She pointed out that most of the building would not be taking place in the town centre as there was nowhere left to build. The policy related to new developments.

A Member said lower standards should be supported provided a sustainable method of transport was put in.

The Senior Planning Officer said last week the Policy on Sustainable Transport was reviewed by the LPSC and all new development would be required to bring in links to sustainable transport and links and also to link in with the cycle strategy plan and the potential to subsidise bus routes. Therefore there would be the potential to move towards sustainable transport alongside the changes to the parking standards.

Members raised the following points:

A Member was not convinced that taking away parking spaces would not achieve reduced car usage so would not want to go beyond what was proposed in the recommendation.

Due to funding cuts on the bus routes there was no sustainable transport serving South Oxhey. There was a train station at Carpenders Park but there was no direct route from Watford to Rickmansworth.

The Head of Planning Policy and Projects suggested that as Members were not happy with what was proposed in the report, would it be considered acceptable to keep the amended Standards around the stations, as set out in the report and keep the standards as they currently are as set out in the current Local Plans.

Concern was raised with Appendix 1 Paragraph 1.11 stating these standards will be applied and could be adjusted upwards and downward.

The Senior Planning Officer said that was based on the National Planning Policy Framework that there were no longer maximum levels so they are a

starting point, but that there would have to be evidence to show why if they would want to go below the standard.

The Chair said that there were huge dilemmas and they were all aware of parking issues. The more parking spaces provided, the more green fields that would have to be built on.

The Chair proposed the suggested amended recommendation put forward by the Head of Planning Policy and Projects that:

- The Standard suggested within the 800 metres of each Station is accepted as set out in the report.
- The remaining areas, outside of the 800 metres, the parking standards revert back to those that are stated in the Plans.

The Head of Planning Policy and Projects confirmed that there would be concern about changing the 800 metre standard as that is the area of accessibility to transport so to change anything within the 800 metres to stations there may be some problems at examination.

It was advised that Councillor Stephen Drury had lost connection to the virtual meeting during the debate and ICT were trying to reconnect him. This was not achieved.

The Head of Planning Policy reiterated that if the sub-committee agree to revert back to the previous Parking Standards, it would result in more land being required for development within the Green Belt.

Councillor Chris Lloyd moved the second part of the amendment to the first part of the recommendation that the remaining areas **outside of the 800 metres** distance of each station revert back to the Standards that are stated in the current Plans.

On being put to the Committee the amendment to the first part of the recommendation was declared LOST, the voting being 2 For, Against 3 and 2 Abstentions.

Councillor Chris Lloyd moved the proposal that the standard within the 800 metres distance of each station is accepted as set out in the report.

On being put to the Committee the recommendation was declared CARRIED, the voting being 4 For, 2 Against and 1 Abstention.

Councillor Chris Lloyd moved the recommendations as set out in the report to include the recommendation on the reduced standard within 800 metres of Stations.

On being put to the Committee the recommendation was declared CARRIED the voting being 4 For, 1 Against and 2 Abstentions.

RECOMMEND:

- Note the contents of this report and recommend to the Policy and Resources Committee the Draft Parking Policy as set out in Appendix 1 is included in the Local Plan, and
- To include the option of the reduced standards within **800 metres** of each stations; and
- That delegated authority be granted to the Head of Planning Policy & Projects and the Director of Communities and Environmental Services in

consultation with the portfolio holder to make minor changes to all draft policies.

CHAIR