



Horsham District Council

21st September 2011

To: Councillors:

John Bailey; Malcolm Curnock; Brian Donnelly; David Holmes; David Jenkins;
Elizabeth Kitchen; Gordon Lindsay; Sheila Matthews; Godfrey Newman;
Claire Vickers

Strategic Planning Advisory Group
27th September 2011, 5.30pm, Council Chamber

You are invited to attend the Strategic Planning Advisory Group meeting to consider the items set out below.

If you are unable to attend the meetings please advise Natasha Robinson by email or on (01403) 215398 so that your apologies may be recorded.

All Members of the Council are invited to attend these meetings; those wishing to speak may do so by prior agreement with the Cabinet Member for Living and Working Communities.

The purpose of this meeting will be for Members to be taken through the Councils draft response to the National Planning Policy Framework, published by the Government in July, as well as an update on the Statement of Community Involvement adoption, the Draft Interim Statement and the Horsham District Plan timetable. Members will be updated on the responses received in the consultation with Stakeholders on the Green Infrastructure Visioning consultation document as well as an update on other work being undertaken on the Local Development Framework/ Local Plan.

Ian Howard
Cabinet Member for Living and Working Communities

Strategic Planning Advisory Group – 5.30pm

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Notes of previous meeting: 26th July 2011 SPAG (attached)
3. Update on the position of the Draft Interim Statement and Statement of Community Involvement (oral update)
4. Horsham District Plan timetable (oral update)
5. National Planning Policy Framework Draft response and response to Local Planning Regulations consultation (oral presentation)
6. Response from the Green Infrastructure Stakeholder consultation (report attached)
7. Local Development Framework work update (oral update)
 - Localism Bill update
 - Horsham Town Plan
 - Settlement Sustainability work
 - Landscape Capacity work
 - Gypsies, Travellers & Travelling Showpeople Sites Assessment
 - S106 work with Parish Councils
8. Dates of Next Meetings:
8th November 2011
31st January 2012
13th March 2012
9. Any other items of business that the Cabinet Member for Living and Working Communities wishes to raise.

Strategic Planning Advisory Group
Notes from
14th June 2011, 5.30pm, Council Chamber

Attendees: John Bailey; Malcolm Curnock; Elizabeth Kitchen; Sheila Matthews; Godfrey Newman; Leonard Crosby; Francis Haigh; Adam Breacher; Kate Rowbottom; John Chidlow.

1) Apologies for Absence: Brian Donnelly; David Holmes; David Jenkins; Gordon Lindsay; Claire Vickers; Andrew Baldwin;

Due to the fact that this was only the second meeting after the May elections, Barbara Childs, Spatial Planning Manager briefly introduced Officers from the Strategic Planning Team who attended the meeting to present agenda items.

2) Notes of previous meetings: 14th June 2011 (attached to agenda)

Planning For Traveller Sites Consultation:

Barbara Childs informed the meeting that a response to the Government consultation was submitted in time for the July 6th deadline and that the event for potential sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling show people was well attended. The Consultants have now finished their sites work and their findings will be reported back to Members at the next SPAG in September.

Localism Bill:

A brief update on the progress of the Localism Bill through parliament was presented. The Bill passed through the committee stage in the House of Lords on the 20th of July, with the Report sittings starting on the 5th September. Following the report sittings in the House of Lords consideration of amendments will take place before Royal Assent., potentially by the end of the year, although Barbara did stress the difficulty in providing timings for this process.

3) Draft Interim Statement: (oral update)

The future of the Interim Statement was discussed at Cabinet on the 21st July and it was agreed that a recommendation be made to Council to abandon work on the Interim Statement and concentrate efforts on the progression of the Core Strategy Review. This decision was based on the review of comments received to consultation on the Draft Interim Statement, that the majority were for no planned growth in Billingshurst and Southwater, and the progress being made on the Localism Bill.

Cabinet agreed to recommend that work begin on the production of the Core Strategy Review to aim for a first draft for consultation in early 2012. This document to focus on housing requirements for the medium to long term whilst still considering short term supply, taking full account of the localism agenda.

Consultation on this document will ask the community their views on various levels of development and how it could be development delivered in the District.

Cllr Kitchen and Cllr Mathews wished to note their concern against the loss of the Interim Statement approach.

Concerns were raised over the time it would take to write the Core Strategy Review, but Members were reminded that it was only a review process therefore, minus the housing strategy, a large proportion of the existing plan would still be relevant.

Members raised the point that the localism agenda could evoke community conflict as communities request development adjacent to areas who do not wish to see more growth.

4. The Future Prosperity of Horsham Project – Draft Town Centre SPD (report attached to agenda)

Officers set out that as part of the overall background work to support the production of the Core Strategy Review and the Council's overarching drive to proactively maintain and build on the strengths of Horsham Town, the Council initiated the Future Prosperity of Horsham Project.

The project was devised by Horsham District Council in partnership with West Sussex County Council, to take a proactive approach to the future development of Horsham town in relation to access enhancements, retail/commercial development and leisure opportunities. The future growth will include the regeneration of key areas within the town to increase vitality and vibrancy. The project aims to strike an appropriate balance within the town centre by steering the future development of the town to maximise its economic potential whilst sustaining and enhancing its attractive and historic environment for the optimum benefit of residents and visitors alike. To assist with this aim, planning consultants Urban Practitioners were commissioned in June 2010, to start the project and produce a Town Framework Report to identify the existing strengths and areas for improvement within the town and formulate a vision and strategy for the future.

The Town Framework Report looks at three specific target areas across the town which were previously identified as strategically significant for improvement and development. The three areas are the town centre, the Hurst Road area including the rail goods yard and railway station and the Broadbridge Heath Quadrant. The Town Framework Report was published in February 2011 and is available to view on the Council's website at: www.horshamdistrictldf.info

The Horsham Town Plan seeks to build on Policy CP17 of the Core Strategy 'Vitality and Viability of Existing Centres' and will be published as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to form part of the LDF.

The Horsham Town Framework Report has been used as the basis to formulate a Draft Horsham Town Plan SPD which translates the report findings into planning guidance for future retail, commercial and leisure development specifically for Horsham town centre and the Hurst Road area. The Draft Horsham Town Plan SPD is the first of a series of documents that will be produced by the Council as part of the Future Prosperity of Horsham Project.

The aim of the guidance is to provide a planning structure for the town centre based on the Council's findings, aspirations, priorities for the area and to sustain and enhance the area for the future in the most effective way. The guidance will help to steer potential developers and will act as the Council's starting point for more detailed discussions and proposals that arise in the town over future years.

The Draft Horsham Town Plan SPD, and other subsequent SPD's, will enable the regeneration of key areas within Horsham town which will increase the vitality and vibrancy of the town. The key areas which have been identified for regeneration through the Draft Horsham Town Plan SPD are: Albion Way; The Quarter which consists of Piries Place, East Street and Denne Road; the Bishopric; and the Hurst Road area.

Members were asked to consider and make comments on the content of the Draft Horsham Town Plan SPD before it is reported to Cabinet on 22nd September and Council on the 19th October for approval for consultation.

It is anticipated that the Horsham Town Plan SPD will be considered and approved for adoption in spring 2012.

Cllr Kitchen wished to note her support for this work and welcomed the potential for hotel and/or conference facilities in the town.

It was questioned whether any thought had been given to parking in the town centre and Officers noted that the Horsham Station improvement programme would include additional parking spaces at the front of the station together with improvements to the bus/taxi and drop areas.

It was noted that conversations were ongoing with regards to the new Parkway station on the West of Bewbush development.

Cllr Newman would like to see an improvement to the area marking the approach into Horsham town by rail. He also noted the need for highway improvements works on the Causeway. Support was noted for the improvements to Bishopric.

5. Horsham Town Centre Office Reuse Draft SPD (report attached to agenda)

Officers gave an update to summarise the progress of the 'Office Reuse in Horsham Town' draft SPD and on the consultation undertaken by Communities and Local Government (CLG) on the 'Relaxation of planning rules for change of use from commercial to residential consultation'.

In August and September 2010 work began on a draft SPD exploring the relationship between employment and housing within Horsham Town. This document focused on empty and unused office space and built upon work previously completed as part of the SHLAA. A series of studies were undertaken to gain an understanding of the office market within Horsham Town and the surrounding area to establish the contribution this source could potentially make to the housing supply. Utilising these studies, the 'Office Reuse in Horsham Town' draft SPD sought to identify a series of criteria that would facilitate the reuse, through conversion or redevelopment, of redundant office space within Horsham Town to residential or mixed use schemes.

The draft SPD was under early preparation when the Government announced it would be consulting on relaxation of use classes. Therefore, the draft SPD has been postponed pending the outcome of the consultation by CLG.

The CLG published the 'Relaxation of planning rules for change of use from commercial to residential' for consultation between 8th April 2011 and 30 June 2011. The consultation sought views on the proposals to grant permitted development rights to changes of use from commercial to residential. Effectively allowing change of use from commercial (B use classes) to residential (C3 use class) without the need for planning applications.

The overarching aims of the consultation document are similar to the draft SPD; encouraging economic growth by bring redundant commercial premises back into use and at the same time helping to tackle the need for more housing. Whilst these ambitions are similar, within the Council's response concern was raised to ensure sufficient safeguards are incorporated to make sure key employment areas are protected. The primary issue is the ability to preserve key areas of employment, whilst targeting areas and sites suitable for change of use to residential or mixed use.

The 'Office Reuse in Horsham Town' draft SPD is currently on hold as the CLG consultation supersedes the aims of the SPD. Current work is focused on monitoring the national position and awaiting the formal outcome of the consultation process. Once the outcome is known, the position regarding the draft SPD can be reviewed and, if still proceeding, amended if required.

A point was raised that if a company were to put in an application for a change of use from office development to residential, they could potentially get permission. Offices noted that whilst this is the case, the Government consultation document does apply safeguards that the Council could use. It

was also noted that the document is still in draft form, therefore a planning application would still be required at the present time.

It was noted that Century House should be contacted about the removal of their 'Office Space to let' sign, as it gives out the wrong impression of the vibrancy of the town. When such signs are not recovered once floorspace has been filled.

6. Green Infrastructure Stakeholder Visioning Document (report attached to agenda)

Officers set out that in order to meet a number of its functions, this Council is looking to produce a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the District. This process will map, plan and identify a coherent network of green spaces across the District and identify mechanisms to ensure its delivery.

Preliminary work on the Green Infrastructure strategy began in late 2010. Research was undertaken into current best practice, and preliminary mapping work was also undertaken, for example collating data on the location of flood plains, protected habitats, ancient woodland, allotments, play spaces and key rights of way within the District.

Initial results from the research and data collection process were considered and used to develop the draft Green Infrastructure Strategy Visioning Document which identifies strengths and weaknesses in the existing green infrastructure network throughout the Horsham District.

It was recognised that for the Green Infrastructure Strategy to be successful it needs to be produced in collaboration with a wide range of partners, both internal and external. The document has already been circulated to a number of officers within the Council, including the Leisure Team and Landscape Architect, although the Landscape Architects comments still need to be incorporated.

It was agreed to consult members of West Sussex Green Infrastructure Partnership during August and September 2011. The results of this consultation process will be reported back to Members at the next SPAG meeting on 23rd September.

It is anticipated that a Green Infrastructure Geographical Information System (GIS) tool and Draft Final Green Infrastructure Report be completed by the end of 2011.

Members questioned the likelihood of this document restricting the provision of green space by demonstrating that Horsham has an overprovision. Catherine Howe responded stating that studies show Horsham is actually deficient in organised green space in many areas, therefore the opposite is likely to happen.

Members questioned how the Green Infrastructure Strategy would link in with larger strategic plans for the area. Officers explained that the plan will identify where there are shortages of provision meaning green infrastructure will be provided in the areas that need it most, rather than on an ad hoc basis.

Cllr Mathews noted her support for the project.

Cllr Curnock would like the document to address the balance of Green Infrastructure provision in areas who have lost open spaces in the past due to over development.

7. Community Infrastructure Levy update (report attached to agenda)

Members were presented with a further update and reminder about CIL and how it links with the Core Strategy Review.

Currently the timetable is reliant upon some of the background evidence base work being undertaken for the Core Strategy Review. This work is ongoing and the next period of consultation will begin to provide greater certainty regarding future development in the District. With CIL reliant upon the Core Strategy Review evidence and timetable, a comprehensive CIL programme including details on the preliminary draft charging schedule, will emerge as the Core Strategy Review progresses. The anticipated final date for adoption of CIL is prior to April 2014, as this is when (or upon the adoption of CIL) planning obligations can no longer be used as the basis for a tariff to fund infrastructure.

The Department for Communities and Local Government is anticipating carrying out further consultation on CIL over the summer (2011) and, therefore, details regarding the adoption and implementation of CIL could alter. The situation will be continually monitored and any changes within the legislation or guidance will need to be incorporated into the approach taken by Horsham District Council and will be reported to Members.

There was some confusion over the difference between the implementation of CIL, the change in the s106 regulations and the introduction of the New Homes Bonus. Officers provided clarification on this stating that there are three separate systems. CIL is a new planning charge that local authorities can choose to charge on developments in their area. The new CIL Regulations have made reforms to the current s106 system, meaning payments need to meet the three tests presented in the Regulations in order to secure these payments. S106's are still in place and will continue to be, however if and when authorities bring in CIL the use of S106's will reduce. The New Homes Bonus is being promoted by the Government as a 'carrot' being offered to local communities for accepting new development. It would however replace grants currently received, such as the Housing Planning Delivery Grant, and therefore is not 'new' money.

Members raised the point that if a CIL rate needed to be capped so as to avoid making the development unviable, then the expectations of local

communities would need to be managed as the amount of CIL monies received would not be sufficient to meet the needs of all infrastructure requirements. Officers clarified that post 2014 a proportion of CIL monies received would go back to communities and they would prioritise the projects they wished to see delivered.

7) Local Development Framework (oral update)

Gatwick Diamond Work: An oral summary of the work being undertaken to prepare a Local Strategy Statement for the Gatwick Diamond. The document will be accompanied by a 'Memorandum of Understanding' between the 8 planning authorities in the Gatwick Diamond in respect of strategic planning issues.

The Local Strategy Statement will appreciate that there will never be total agreement on all issues between the contributing authorities, but it will note areas where an agreement can be reached. It will pool together relevant evidence base information authorities already have ensuring communication between the Gatwick Diamond authorities. This work will inform decision making process.

The Draft Local Strategy Statement will be presented in two parts, the first is scene setting describing where the Gatwick Diamond is, and the existing policy position and the second will look towards the longer term. The Local Strategy Statement will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Work on preparation of the Core Strategy Review will take this document into account.

The Draft Local Strategy Statement and Memorandum of Understanding will be presented to Cabinet on the 22nd September and Council in October.

Members were concerned that the document may result in all development being located in the north of the Horsham District due to the fact that the whole of Horsham is not within the Gatwick Diamond. Officers explained that there would be a strategic plan for the entire district and that this Local Strategy Statement would only make up part of the evidence base for the Core Strategy.

LDF Timetable: The Strategic Planning Team are continuing to gather the evidence base to support the Core Strategy Review and more information on the proposed timetable should be available for the next SPAG meeting.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF):

Members were provided with an oral summary of the recently released draft National Planning Policy Framework.

The document advises local authorities to use the presumption in favour of sustainable development as a starting point in the preparation of all local

plans. However if there are concerns from a Birds or Habitats Regulations perspective, that these should also be a serious consideration.

The NPPF gives power to local communities to ask for more development than set out in Local Plans. It sets out a number of Core Principles which local planning authorities should consider in their plan led approach but advises that this approach should be to say 'yes' to development, unless it can be demonstrated that the development is against the core principles listed in the document.

The document advises that early engagement will be the key to delivering new quality homes. The approach is to widen opportunities for home ownership and 'Local Plans' should deliver housing on a 6-10 and 11-15 year plan whilst maintaining a 5 year housing land supply with at least 20% flexibility.

Under the new guidance there will still be a need to produce a proposals map, allocate and protect land and provide environmental enhancements where necessary. However less guidance is given than in the previous Planning Policy Statement/ Planning Policy Guidance documents. This is something Officers will be commenting on in their response Picking up on the areas supported in the document as well as those we have concerns regarding.

The RTPI have provided an initial response to the draft document and the general feeling from this is that they feel there has been a missed opportunity to secure balanced housing growth across England. They feel that the document does not have a clear enough vision and there is concern that economic growth will be set to trump local environmental needs. There is also concern that the use of generic policies in all authorities' development plans will be a retrogressive step.

Members suggested that the reduction in the number of pages of the new NPPF in relation to the existing suite of documents should actually be seen as a positive move. Officers explained that whilst a lot of the wording in the existing documents was scene setting that could easily be removed, a number of the PPS's/PPG's provide detailed guidance on issues such as noise, which if removed would make it difficult for DC Officers as well as other Officers such as those in Environmental Health in their day to day work in the District.

Members were asked to provide any comments on the draft document by the 19th September 2011.

Local Planning Regulations: Members were informed of the release of this document on the 15th July 2011. The document relates to the Localism Bill highlighting the changes that would be made to the current regulations if the Bill (in its current state) were to be given Royal Assent. Members were advised that the Council has an opportunity to comment before the 7th October deadline.

Members Seminar: Members were advised that there will be an additional meeting on the 13th September which will be a Seminar on Strategic Planning. The session will enable Officers to talk more generally about what Strategic Planning is and what the implications of the NPPF will be. An invitation to this event will be sent out at the beginning of next week.

8) Dates of Next Meeting:

13th September 2011 (Seminar on Strategic Planning)

27th September 2011

8th November 2011

31st January 2012

13th March 2012

Noted

9) Any other items of business that the Cabinet Member for Strategic Planning wishes to raise

None

Strategic Planning Advisory Group

27th September 2011

Agenda Item 6

Draft Green Infrastructure Strategy: Visioning Document Update

1.1 At the last meeting on the 26th July, officers presented the Green Infrastructure Visioning Document which is the first stage in the preparation of a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Horsham District. This document will map, plan and identify a coherent network of green spaces across the District and mechanisms to ensure its delivery. It will assist the Council across many functions, including leisure services and will inform the production of an Open Space Strategy. It will also form part of the evidence base feeding into the review of the Horsham District Core Strategy, inform development decisions on locations of development and the nature of green open space provision within new and existing developments.

1.2 In order for the Green Infrastructure Strategy to be successful it needs to be produced in collaboration with a wide range of both internal and external partners. Internal Officers were asked to provide comments on the draft report prior to the SPAG meeting on the 26th July. These comments were incorporated into a second revision of the draft report which was circulated amongst external stakeholders on the 16th August 2011. External consultees included members of the West Sussex Green Infrastructure Partnership, the Sussex Wildlife Trust, South Downs National Park and other countryside user groups such as Sustrans and the British Horse Society.

1.3 The external stakeholders were given a five week period of consultation to comment on the document and encourage their involvement in the Green Infrastructure Strategy formulation. Specifically they were asked to provide answers to the following questions;

1. Do you agree with the draft vision and approach that the Council is suggesting that it takes in developing a Green Infrastructure Strategy for the District?
2. Are there any other key benefits of Green Infrastructure that you consider should be highlighted in the document?

3. What further information do you consider should be incorporated into the existing assessment of Green Infrastructure in the District? (They were also asked to make this information available to the Council where possible).
4. Do you agree with the initial Green Infrastructure Strengths and Weaknesses identified in Chapter 4? What further strengths and weaknesses should we include?
5. Do you agree with the opportunities presented in Chapter 4 of this visioning document? Are there any further opportunities and areas for joint working that should be identified?

Summary of Consultation

1.4 Five responses were received during the consultation period from the British Horse Society, Sport England, Natural England and Crawley Borough Council. Cllr David Holmes also recommended that the document should make note of the value of the Riverside Walk.

1.5 From the responses received stakeholders were supportive of the document with Natural England commending the Council on 'a well written document that clearly demonstrates the many benefits of green infrastructure'. Only minor amendments were suggested such as changing the name of 'Long Distance Footpaths' to 'Long Distance Recreational Routes', considering safe road crossings on the Public Rights of Way Network and noting that ecosystems also provide food, water, materials and carbon sequestration which all have indirect economic benefits. Sport England also recommended use of their 'Active Places Power' database to help audit the Districts sports provision.

1.6 The following additional Geographical Information System layers were also recommended for inclusion on the Green Infrastructure Characterisation Maps;

- Public Rights of Way network (bridleways, cycle routes, footpaths and waterways);
- Landscape Character Assessment;
- Local Nature Reserves;
- PPG 17 assessment typologies;
- Listed buildings/local list/ Scheduled Ancient Monuments;
- Conservation Areas;

- Historic Parks and Gardens;
- Historic Characterisation (land use);
- Flood Risk Zones;
- Indices of Multiple Deprivation;
- Strategic views;
- Locally valued green spaces/ Important road verges

1.7 It was also recommended that The Countryside Access Forum for West Sussex (CAFWS) be included in all future consultations as they are in the process of reviewing the WSCC Rights of Way Improvement Plan and may be able to identify suitable projects to take forward subject to funding.

1.8 These comments will be used to update the existing green infrastructure evidence base and feed into the next stage of the preparation of the Green Infrastructure Strategy. The comments will also be used to further refine the Green Infrastructure Characterisation Maps to identify areas of strengths and deficiencies in Green Infrastructure provision. Following this analysis, stakeholders will be contacted again to begin work on the identification of opportunity areas where green infrastructure could be enhanced. It is anticipated that this work will take place over the autumn, in collaboration with a range of Council Officers, Members and key stakeholders such as Members of the West Sussex Green Infrastructure Partnership. Collaboration with neighbouring authorities is also significantly important to enable cross boundary green linkages.

1.9 It is anticipated that a Green Infrastructure Geographical Information System tool and Draft Final Green Infrastructure Report be completed by the end of 2011.