

WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL

DRAFT NOTES OF A MEETING OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING GROUP

HELD ON 16 DECEMBER 2021 IN VIRTUAL MEETING

Present: Councillor Simon Ashall
Councillor Tahir Aziz
Councillor Will Forster
Councillor Adam Kirby
Councillor Louise Morales

Ernest Amoako
Daniel Ashe
Stephanie Broadley

Absent: Councillor Steve Dorsett
Councillor Gary Elson

Actions

5. Statement of Community Involvement

Ernest Amoako introduced the report and explained that the purpose of it was to outline the various responses and analysis to the consultation which took place between 27 September and 8 November 2021, to note the proposed revisions to the adopted SCI and to seek the Members approval to adopt the revised version of the SCI for it to be used as a framework for involving the local community in planning decisions.

The Chairman commented that there had been quite a few representations received on this. The Chairman had discussed this document with her fellow Ward Member, Councillor D Hughes, who had requested that Surrey Heartlands NHS Trust be added as a consultee for community involvement in the future. Ernest Amoako confirmed that they could be added to the list.

The Chairman made comment regarding the Planning Portal and suggested that it would be more accessible if it included plain text with hyperlinks rather than PDF documents. The Chairman thought that following the recommendations of the Planning Peer Review, it was likely that this would be looked at to ensure it was more user friendly. Ernest Amoako commented that Officers were awaiting the final report and once this was published there would be a series of actions/ recommendations and then there would be an action plan on how we would deliver that, which was likely to apply to the Council/planning service in general. With regards to Planning Policy, Ernest commented that Officers must continuously review the website to ensure that it was accessible and in a format that was well understood. The difficulty was that Planning was often heavily prescribed by legislation, but the Team was acutely aware of this and made themselves available to provide further explanation if needed.

The Chairman suggested that the Council used their social media channels to publicise links to planning policy documents every time they were updated. They should be published beyond our website as not everyone followed this, but they did check in on social media frequently. The Working Group supported this suggestion and it was hoped Officers could add this to the wording of the document

ACTION: E Amoako

Councillor Kirby commented that sometimes Planning Policy documents in full could be a little daunting and be intimidating to the average resident; possibly streamlining regarding the specific area that we were looking for feedback on.

Councillor S Ashall commented on the pre-application stage, on which the document talks about things being strongly encouraged but it did not say how we encourage that. Councillor Ashall also commented on the application stage and said that he thought the main thing people would care about was how they were made aware of applications and how they were able to make their views known. Councillor Ashall stated that he would like it to be made very clear in the document who the Council notified regarding applications and why this was the case. It was agreed that this would be raised with Thomas James, Development Manager to ensure that this was included.

ACTION: E Amoako

Following on from Councillor Ashall's comment, the Chairman commented that the whole of figure 6 should be added as plain text to our website (so that it was searchable) rather than buried in the planning policy. We need to make this as clear as possible to residents, so it was easier for them to feedback on applications. Ernest agreed to make sure this is done.

The Chairman requested for a planning Policy email contact to be added so that people could send in contacts/ organisations to be included on the consultation list. It was agreed that the existing 'Sign Up' to Planning Policy emails would be made more prominent on the front page.

ACTION: E Amoako

The Chairman made comments on the planning training provided to Members. It was hoped that following the Planning Peer Review feedback then further training would be suggested with regards to Planning Policy. It was suggested that planning training taking place twice yearly would be a good idea.

RECOMMEND that

- i. the various representations to the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) consultation together with Officers' responses and recommendations as set out in Appendix 1 be noted;
- ii. the revised Statement of Community Involvement included in Appendix 2 be adopted for the purposes of setting out how the Council wishes the local community to be involved and engaged when preparing key planning policy documents and determining of planning applications; and

- iii. the requirements of the Statement of Community Involvement should apply from the date of adoption, in this case 10 February 2022.