

WOKING BOROUGH COUNCIL

NOTES OF A MEETING OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING GROUP

HELD ON 4 JULY 2019 IN THE BOARD ROOM - CIVIC OFFICES

Present: Councillor Simon Ashall
Councillor Tahir Aziz
Councillor David Bittleston
Councillor John Bond
Councillor Graham Chrystie
Councillor Graham Cundy
Councillor Louise Morales

Ernest Amoako
Daniel Ashe
Gillian Bernadt
Stephanie Broadley
Roubeen Joghee
James Stansfield
Douglas J Spinks

Actions

1. Appointment of Chairman

Douglas Spinks, Deputy Chief Executive, invited nominations for Chairman of the Working Group. Two nominations were proposed and seconded. The six Members present voted, and were equally split, and accordingly it had not been possible to elect a Chairman for either the Municipal Year or the meeting. After a short delay the seventh member of the Working Group arrived and the meeting commenced.

Councillor Morales moved and Councillor Bond seconded the election of Councillor Chrystie as Chairman.

RESOLVED

That Councillor G Chrystie be elected Chairman of the Local Development Framework Working Group for the ensuing year.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

Councillor Chrystie moved and Councillor Bittleston seconded the appointment of Councillor Cundy as Vice-Chairman.

RESOLVED

That Councillor G Cundy be appointment Vice-Chairman of the Local Development Framework Working Group for the ensuing year.

3. **Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

4. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting for the Working Group held on 5 September 2018 were received.

5. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

Councillor Cundy queried on the whether a Decision Notice had been issued by the Secretary of State in regards to Ten Acre Farm. It was noted Members would be notified on the outcomes of the Decision Notice. The planning application was approved on 28 September 2018.

6. **Site Allocations DPD - To consider analysis of the representations with Officer recommendations and to seek support to submit the DPD to the Secretary of State**

Douglas Spinks was invited by the Chairman to give an overview of the Site Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) preparation process to date. Members were reminded that the Core Strategy agreed by the Secretary of State in 2012 commits the Council to prepare the Site Allocations DPD, including releasing Green Belt land to enable delivery of housing between 2022 and 2027. Woking Borough Council had adopted a Local Development Scheme (LDS) setting out timescales for the preparation of the DPD. A Regulation 18 consultation exercise had attracted a significant number of representations. This was followed by an additional consultation exercise proposing that the safeguarded Green Belt sites in the Regulation 18 version of the DPD be substituted with land to the east of Martyrs Lane. The Council then considered the version of the DPD that Officers were confident could be submitted to the Secretary of State and subject to some amendments approved it for Regulation 19 consultation. The DPD had thus taken a considerable amount of time to prepare, in an ever changing planning context.

It was reported that Officers had analysed the representations received from the Regulation 19 consultation, and although no significant changes were necessary, some minor modifications to the DPD had been proposed to enhance its quality and ensure it meets statutory and technical requirements. Officers are satisfied that having considered all the representations and proposing minor changes to the DPD, it represents a sound plan.

Members were further reminded that Council had already approved the DPD that it wishes to submit to the Secretary of State for Examination and how important it was that this process keeps moving onwards. The Working Group were invited to consider the content of the 'schedule of

proposed modifications' in detail. This schedule, along with the Regulation 19 version of the DPD and its supporting documents would be submitted to the Secretary of State for Examination following approval from a Council meeting to be held on July 25, 2019. The proposed changes would then be incorporated into the DPD after they have been approved by the Secretary of State. The Council was working towards submitting the DPD documents by the stipulated deadline. The Examination was expected to take place up to 9-12 weeks after submission however, this was in the gift of the Inspector, and Ernest would notify Councillors of the Examination date once it was known.

E. Amoako

Ernest provided a brief summary of the report before the Working Group. It was highlighted that Woking Borough Council has made a commitment which had been agreed by the Secretary of State to prepare the Site Allocations DPD to allocate specific sites to enable the delivery of the Core Strategy. This involved the release of Green Belt land to enable delivery of at least 550 net additional dwellings between 2022 and 2027. Last October, Council had approved the draft Site Allocations DPD including the Sustainability Appraisal Report, Habitats Regulations Assessment and the Proposals Map for Regulation 19 consultation. The consultation took place between 5 November and 17 December 2018. Analysis of the representations received with Officers' recommendations were reported in Appendix 1. Subject to the proposed modifications being supported, Officers are satisfied that the DPD is defensible, justified by evidence and can withstand scrutiny at Examination.

Following a query from the Chairman on the risks involved in delaying the process, Ernest confirmed that any procedure to change the commitment in the Core Strategy to identify land in the Green Belt would risk opening up the whole Core Strategy for review and subsequently expose the Council to pressure from Government to increase the Council's housing requirement from 292 dwellings to a minimum of 409 dwellings per year, using the Government's new standard formula. A higher housing requirement would likely lead to even more Green Belt land being identified for release over a very long time period. It was also confirmed that if any fundamental changes to the DPD were proposed at this stage, a further public consultation would be required delaying the process further. The focus should be on demonstrating to Government that the Council is serious about delivering the Core Strategy.

Ernest drew the Members' attention to a number of proposed modifications, including introducing an element of residential use within policy UA14 to ensure it conforms with the Core Strategy and the designation of the McLaren Campus as a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt as follows:

"Land at McLaren campus is designated as a Major Developed Site within the Green Belt for strategic employment use in accordance with the definition of Major Development Sites within the Green Belt as set

out in the Core Strategy. This designation will allow limited infilling and redevelopment without compromising the integrity of the Green Belt. The designation is for the sole use of McLaren Group Limited for McLaren operation. The suitability of any proposed development will be measured against the key requirements of the policy, the NPPF and the policies of the development plan for the area. The policy will take effect from the date of adoption of the DPD”.

Ernest explained that whilst the policy didn't take the site out of the Green Belt, it would help establish the in-principle use of the site and relieve McLaren of the burden of justifying acceptable use under very special circumstances. Councillor Chrystie felt that this proposal would enable McLaren to respond more effectively to the changing dynamics of the market. Since the Working Group meeting, Officers have added a 'reasoned justification' to the policy on the McLaren Campus to be consistent with all the other proposals in the DPD. This is an editorial amendment to ensure consistency. The amendment is included in the Schedule of modifications.

Members were then invited by the Chairman to comment on the proposed modifications.

Councillor Bond queried the need for sites to be released from the Green Belt given the high housing figures projected for delivery in the urban area, as set out in the SHLAA. With roughly 4,500 dwellings coming forward in the Town Centre he felt that an Inspector would not require the release of so much Green Belt land. Douglas clarified that due to risk of non-implementation, the Council still needed to plan sensibly and allocate and safeguard sites in the Green Belt for long-term delivery to ensure the permanence of the Green Belt boundary to 2040. The housing figures would be scrutinised in detail at the Examination and Councillor Bond would have an opportunity to raise his concerns directly with the Inspector. Councillor Bond indicated that he would speak at the Examination, where he would also raise concerns around noise and air pollution, and traffic generation.

Councillor Aziz queried whether the McLaren allocation included any land to the east of Martyrs Lane. Ernest confirmed that it did not, and directed Councillor Aziz to the map of the site at Appendix C of the Schedule of proposed modifications (Appendix 2 of the Working Group papers). Councillor Chrystie asked for clarification about the aggregates yard and the Poole Road site. Ernest confirmed that the principle of allocating the land at the aggregates yard remained the same, but it was proposed that some of the key requirements be modified in response to the representations. Councillor Chrystie then referred to the planning application at Poole Road Industrial Estate, he was not aware of a residential element. Ernest clarified that the modifications were proposed to achieve conformity with policy CS15 of the Core Strategy and were not related to the planning history of the site.

Councillor Cundy asked Officers to check whether, following planning

consent development at Broadoaks had commenced. If construction had started, Officers should amend the wording of modification reference 56 accordingly. Councillor Cundy also requested an amendment to a key requirement of the McLaren Campus allocation, proposed modification reference 57. Instead of "Early engagement with the Council's Drainage and Flood Risk Engineer will be helpful", the requirement should read "Early engagement with the Council's Drainage and Flood Risk Engineer will be required". Officers have checked and the pre-commencement conditions to the Broadoaks planning approval have not been discharged. In this regard, there has not been any material commencement of the development. Officers will monitor the situation and make the necessary update if the situation changes.

Councillor Morales welcomed modification reference 22 on wastewater capacity and the approach in retaining undeveloped buffer zones alongside watercourses. However, she requested that modification 33 should read "retain a football stadium at this location" rather than "the football stadium". Councillor Morales went on to argue that indicative densities on site GB7 should be increased to maximise the benefits of releasing Green Belt land for housing. The example of Gresham Mill was given, where higher densities were made possible through good design. Whilst Ernest did not discourage higher densities where appropriate, he explained that to remain consistent the policy should continue to refer to the density range given in policy CS10 of the Core Strategy. Councillor Morales argued that an indicative density should therefore be inserted for policy UA44. Douglas Spinks reminded Members that the Council had opted to remove the figure altogether.

Councillor Ashall welcomed the proposed modification which would result in an up-to-date aerial photo of site GB7. Upon asking for clarification about the extent of site GB9 (in relation to proposed modification reference 50), Ernest directed him to the map in Appendix B of the Schedule of proposed modifications.

Following discussions, the Working Group were requested to consider the following recommendations:

The Working Group is requested recommend to Council that:

- i. the various responses to the Regulation 19 consultation on the Site Allocations DPD and its supporting Sustainability Appraisal report, Habitats Regulations Assessment and the Proposals Map together with Officers' response and recommendations as set out in Appendix 1 be noted;
- ii. the list of Submission Documents in paragraph 2.5 be approved to be sent to the Secretary of State for Examination;
- iii. the proposed schedule of modifications to the draft Site Allocations DPD in Appendix 2 be approved to be

sent to the Secretary of State for consideration;

- iv. authority be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, to approve any minor changes to the Site Allocations DPD and the other Submission Documents to reflect new information, including national guidance before they are sent to the Secretary of State. This will also include overseeing the presentation of the documents;
- v. authority be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning to agree changes that might be proposed by the Inspector during the Examination process; and
- vi. authority be delegated to the Deputy Chief Executive to ensure the preparation and participation of the Council at the Independent Examination of the Site Allocations DPD.

RESOLVED

That the recommendations were agreed by Members of the Working Group, subject to minor amendments being made to the Schedule of modifications as discussed.

A vote of thanks was expressed to Ernest and the Planning Policy team for their extensive work carried out in producing the DPD document.

Douglas prompted Members on the confidentiality of the DPD documentation which had been restricted to Members of the Working Group, pending presentation to Council.

7. Any Other Business

No matters were raised under Any Other Business.

8. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that a meeting would be called as and when it was needed.

Actions

The meeting commenced at 4.00 pm
and ended at 5.25 pm