

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for Planning and
Economic Development held on 4th June 2014
from 7:00 pm to 8:42 p.m.**

Present: Councillors: Tim Farmer (Chairman)*
Neville Walker (Vice-Chairman – in the Chair)

Stephen Barnett
Andrew Barrett-Miles
Edward Belsey
Phillip Coote*
Margaret Hersey

Catrin Ingham
Denis Jones*
Andrew Macnaughton
Peter Martin

Edward Matthews
Simon McMenemy
Robert Salisbury
Ian Simpson

*Absent

Also present: Councillors Norman Webster and Gary Marsh as Cabinet Members.

4. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

As the Chairman of the Committee, Councillor Farmer was absent from the meeting, it was proposed by Councillor Walker and agreed by the Committee that Councillor Matthews be appointed Vice-Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

RESOLVED

That Councillor Edward Matthews be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the duration of the meeting.

5. SUBSTITUTES AT MEETINGS OF COMMITTEE - COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 4

None.

6. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Coote and Farmer.

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Barnett declared a personal interest in agenda item 5, Timetable for the District Plan, as an employee of a utility company.

8. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 4th March and 7th May 2014 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

9. TIMETABLE FOR THE DISTRICT PLAN

The Committee received a report on the work which has been undertaken since the receipt of the Inspector's report and a proposed timetable for the preparation of the revised District Plan.

Claire Tester, the Head of Economic Promotion and Planning informed the Committee that, following the Inspector's findings the Council had not met the Duty to Cooperate in preparing the District Plan, Council had agreed in January to withdraw the Plan from examination.

New National Planning Practice guidance was published in March which means that the Plan and evidence base has to be reviewed to ensure that it complies with this guidance. The opportunity is also being taken to improve the presentation of the evidence to make it clearer for an Inspector to understand the needs and constraints of the area. This improved presentation of material is also important to be able to explain the Council's position better to its neighbours when undertaking the Duty to Cooperate work.

The Head of Economic Promotion and Planning proposed that, in order to guide this work over the summer, prior to the Plan being reported back to this Scrutiny Committee in September, the Member Policy Working Group be reconvened.

She informed the Committee that the proposed time table, set out in Appendix 1, Table 1 on page 15 of the report should be amended to read Council meeting on "28th January" rather than "15th January 2015".

In response to a question from a Member as to whether the charging schedule is still in Examination, the Head of Economic Promotion and Planning confirmed that technically it is, but advice is being taken as to whether it should be withdrawn.

In response to a further question from the Member as to whether the timetable is achievable, or if there are any issues which could pose a risk, the Head of Economic Promotion and Planning replied that it is achievable provided there are no unforeseen problems.

In response to a question from another Member regarding habitats, the Head of Economic Promotion and Planning confirmed that habitats is a very complex area and that the results need to be clear and transparent and shown in a structured way. She confirmed that the Habitats Regulations Assessment will need to be updated to reflect the content of the revised District Plan.

Another Member welcomed the work which had already been undertaken. He acknowledged that the District Plan will not come into force until 2016 and asked what protection the Council has in the interim with regard to development. Do Neighbourhood Plans give a degree of protection?

The Head of Economic Promotion and Planning confirmed that there is protection in local policies and emerging Neighbourhood Plans once they have been through all the changes. Once they are through the process and adopted they will carry weight. However, policies relating to housing supply (like built-up area boundaries) will only carry limited weight until it can be demonstrated that the Council has a five-year supply of housing land.

In response to a further question from the Member regarding housing need, the Head of Economic Promotion and Planning confirmed that the methodology for assessing this is set out in the National Planning Policy Guidance.

The Member asked what status the Housing Supply document will have when it has been updated. He asked whether this Committee will scrutinise this document when it is completed. The Head of Economic Promotion and Planning confirmed that it would not be scrutinised formally, as it is important that the document is independent of political

influence. However, Local Members and Town and Parish Councils will be given the opportunity to input factual information into the site assessments.

In response to a further question from the Member regarding Renewable Energy, the Head of Economic Promotion and Planning confirmed that a review and update would be undertaken and the results reported back to this Committee. She also confirmed, in response to a question from the Member about the review of the Retail Study, that it is now five years old and a lot has happened since 2009. She added that the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) expects policies on retail and employment floor space to be included in Local Plans, and this requires an up to date evidence base.

The Member said that he would support the re-constitution of the Working Group.

The Cabinet Member for Planning supported the update of the Retail Study and pointed to the difficulty of negotiating on the regeneration of the town centres without having an up to date factual base to rely on.

One Member referred to the potential expansion of Gatwick Airport and the Cabinet Member for Planning said that he is mindful of the issues raised. The Head of Economic Promotion and Planning confirmed, that, if the second runway at Gatwick gets the go ahead, any impact will be towards the end of the plan period. She added that, when reviewing the text a reference to Gatwick Airport could be included, for instance indicating that the approval of a second runway would trigger a review of the Plan. The District Plan Project Manager indicated that this approach had been taken in the recently agreed Reigate and Barnstead Core Strategy.

In response to a question from a Member regarding the Council's current position regarding the Housing Supply document (SHLAA), the Head of Economic Promotion and Planning confirmed that locations need to be accessed. Joint working will be undertaken with Crawley and Horsham Councils where there are locations close to or which cross boundaries.

It was proposed by Councillor Barrett-Miles and seconded by Councillor Ingham that Members would be given the opportunity to input into the Housing Supply Document in an appropriate forum. This was agreed by the Committee.

As there were no further Members wishing to speak the Chairman took them to the recommendations which were agreed unanimously with the additional recommendation as mentioned above.

RESOLVED

That the Scrutiny Committee:-

- (1) notes the areas of further work that will be undertaken;
- (2) reconvenes the Members' Policy Working Group to consider the policies and text for inclusion in the revised District Plan;
- (3) recommends to Cabinet that the draft timetable for the preparation of the revised District Plan be agreed as part of the revised Local Development Scheme; and
- (4) agree that Ward Members be given the opportunity to provide evidence to inform the Housing Supply document before it is finalised.

10. DISTRICT PLAN: DUTY TO COOPERATE

The Committee received a report on a Duty to Cooperate Framework which supports the legal requirement to cooperate in the production of the revised District Plan.

The Head of Economic Promotion and Planning introduced the report and explained the work that has already been undertaken and continues to be done which has resulted in some agreed principles between authorities in West Sussex, the coast and East Surrey.

She referred to the appended Framework which sets out how it is intended to take these principles forward and identifies the strategic priorities to be discussed and the bodies to discuss these with. She added that it is hoped to sign individual Memoranda of Understanding with all the authorities prior to the resubmission of the District Plan.

One Member referred to the NPPF and the protection of areas of tranquillity. He said that there did not appear to be any identified in Mid Sussex. The Head of Economic Promotion and Planning confirmed that the CPRE Study on tranquillity did not identify any areas in Mid Sussex.

In response to a comment from a Member regarding the information relating to Crawley, the Head of Economic Promotion and Planning said that there were ongoing discussions with Crawley and Horsham about whether they wish to have separate or joint meetings and Memoranda of Understanding. The work undertaken will be reported back to Committee when completed.

The Head of Economic Promotion and Planning said that it is hoped to complete the Duty to Cooperate work and the draft Plan by September.

As there were no further questions the Chairman took Members to the recommendations which were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED

- (1) the preparation of the Duty to Cooperate Framework be endorsed; and
- (2) the work that Members and officers are undertaking in cooperating with the neighbouring and nearby local authorities be noted.

11. REPORT ON EAST GRINSTEAD TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION PROPOSALS BY FRONTIER ESTATES

The Chairman informed the Committee that information had recently come to light regarding this matter and proposed that consideration of this item be deferred. This was agreed by the Committee.

RESOLVED

That consideration of East Grinstead Town Centre Regeneration proposals by Frontier Estates be deferred.

12. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WORK PROGRAMME

Claire Tester, Head of Economic Promotion and Planning introduced the Committee's Work Programme for 2014/15.

She advised the Committee that the item on East Grinstead Town Centre would be reported to the special meeting on 9th July and the item on Victoria Park would be removed altogether.

The item on Gatwick Airport would be moved from the 2nd September meeting to 11th November and the description would be amended to read "to consider the Council's response to the Airport Commission's consultation on an additional runway". An item on Travellers Sites would also be added to 11th November meeting.

Items on the District Plan: Consultation Draft would be added to 2nd September meeting to allow Members to consider the proposed draft revised District Plan and an item on the District Plan: Publication Version be added to 20th January 2014 meeting to allow Members to consider the proposed publication version of the revised District Plan.

In response to a Member's question about the process to be followed for Members to suggest items for the work programme, the Chairman referred to the process agreed and minuted at the Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 4th March 2014.

RESOLVED

That the Work Programme be amended to include the changes, additions and deletions as above.

13. BEST WISHES

It was proposed by the Chairman and agreed by the Committee that their very best wishes be sent to Councillor Farmer as he is currently unwell.

Chairman.