

**Minutes of a meeting of Scrutiny Committee for Housing, Planning  
and Economic Growth  
held on Wednesday, 19th January, 2022  
from 6.00 - 6.31 pm**

**Present:** N Walker (Chair)  
A Peacock (Vice-Chair)

R Bates	P Coote	G Marsh
M Belsey	R Eggleston	J Mockford
A Bennett	B Forbes	R Webb
P Brown	C Laband	

**Absent:** Councillors E Coe-Gunnell White and S Hatton

**Also Present:** Councillors P Chapman, R Clarke, R de Mierre, A Eves,  
I Gibson, S Hillier, J Knight, J Llewellyn-Burke, C Phillips,  
R Salisbury and N Webster

**Also Present  
as Cabinet  
Members:** Councillor J Ash-Edwards

**1 ROLL CALL AND VIRTUAL MEETING EXPLANATION.**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting. The Solicitor to the Council provided information on the reasons for the virtual meeting and took the roll call.

**2 TO NOTE SUBSTITUTES IN ACCORDANCE WITH COUNCIL PROCEDURE  
RULE 4 - SUBSTITUTES AT MEETINGS OF COMMITTEES ETC.**

Councillor Alison Bennett substituted for Councillor Hatton and Councillor Sweatman substituted for Councillor Coe-Gunnell White.

**3 TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.**

Apologies were received from Councillors Hatton and Coe-Gunnell White.

**4 TO RECEIVE DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS FROM MEMBERS IN RESPECT  
OF ANY MATTER ON THE AGENDA.**

None.

**5 TO CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE FOR HOUSING, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC GROWTH HELD ON  
20 JANUARY AND 28 APRIL 2021.**

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 20 January and 28 April 2021 were agreed as a correct record. These were electronically signed by the Chairman.

**6 TO CONSIDER ANY ITEMS THAT THE CHAIRMAN AGREES TO TAKE AS URGENT BUSINESS.**

None.

**7 DISTRICT PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATE.**

Judy Holmes, Assistant Chief Executive introduced the report. She reminded Members that the Council is obligated to review the District Plan by 2023 and that the review is a democratic and lengthy process, currently in the early stages. She highlighted that the Council has a duty to update the plan in order to avoid speculative and unplanned development, and the potential for the 5-year housing supply to be challenged by developers.

Sally Blomfield, Divisional Leader for Planning and Economy gave a high-level outline of the structure and content of the Draft District Plan Update, highlighting the significant changes and new policies.

The Chairman invited the Leader to speak.

The Leader thanked the officers for their detailed work on the District Plan Review. He advised it was beneficial for the document to be in public domain so it can be scrutinised. He requested a pause in the consideration of the proposals so that further work and lobbying can be undertaken due to the issues that impact on the Council's planning responsibilities. He advised that he is writing to the Secretary of State Michael Gove MP asking for the housing targets to be reset to reflect the environmental and infrastructure constraints of Mid Sussex. The levelling up White Paper is due shortly and he hopes the housing numbers for the South East will be reviewed. The Plan should maximise the number of brownfield and windfall sites, the unmet need from neighbouring authorities needs scrutiny, and the implications around the issue of water naturalness raised by Natural England needs further clarification. He concluded that it is essential to have a District Plan to prevent speculative development, it will ensure Mid Sussex is a good place to live but we must balance the number of new developments to provide the housing need whilst protecting the environment.

The Chairman advised that it would be sensible to defer the discussion on the review of the District Plan until additional work has been completed and the outcome of Government White Paper.

A Member raised a point of order with regard to the submission of an amendment to the recommendation. Tom Clark, Solicitor to the Council advised that no motion was currently under consideration. The Chairman invited the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Peacock to speak.

Councillor Peacock proposed a motion that the Committee agrees to defer the discussion of the District Plan Review so that further work and consideration can take place and the outcome of any change to Government policy can be known. This was seconded by Councillor Marsh.

Councillor Eggleston requested that the Members had an opportunity to review and consider the changes to the District Plan policies and evidence base. He proposed a motion, seconded by Councillor Alison Bennett that:

(A) That the Scrutiny Committee for Housing, Planning and Economic Growth (“the Committee”) establishes a working party to review: (i) the evidence for the proposed housing allocation in the Draft District Plan 2021-2038 (“the Plan”); (ii) the fundamental alterations to 10 major policies in the current District Plan and the addition of 6 new policies, and (iii) the appropriateness or otherwise of including the sites identified for development in the Plan, in whole or part and report its findings to the next appropriate meeting of the Committee with recommendations for adoption by the Committee and Council.

(B) That the Chief Executive writes to Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government setting out Mid Sussex District Council’s concern over the continued use of the “standard method” for calculating housing need and urging the Secretary of State to bring forward proposals to change the method so that it is more appropriate to the needs of the District.”

As the Leader had previously indicated his intention to write to the Secretary of State, discussion was held on the option to add paragraph A of Councillor Eggleston’s amendment to the motion proposed by the Vice-Chairman, therefore removing the need to have paragraph B above. Councillor Eggleston indicated agreement and the Chairman took the Committee to a vote on this proposal. The decision to amend the motion to add paragraph A above was approved with 8 in favour and 7 against.

Councillor Laband proposed a motion that the numbers of policies referred to in paragraph A of Councillor Eggleston’s amendment be removed. This was seconded by Councillor Mockford. Councillor Eggleston accepted the amendment to the current motion, however Vice-Chairman did not. The Chairman took the Committee to a vote on the Councillor Laband’s amendment. The amendment to the motion failed with 7 in favour and 8 against after the casting vote by the Chairman.

The Chairman took the Committee to a vote on the motion proposed by the Vice-Chairman as amended by Councillor Eggleston. The motion was approved with 9 in favour, 5 against.

## **RESOLVED**

That the Scrutiny Committee:

- (i) the Committee agrees to defer the discussion of the District Plan Review so that further work and consideration can take place and the outcome of change to any Government policy is known,
- (ii) the Committee establishes a working party to review: (i) the evidence for the proposed housing allocation in the Draft District Plan 2021-2038 (“the Plan”); (ii) the fundamental alterations to 10 major policies in the current District Plan and the addition of 6 new policies, and (iii) the appropriateness or otherwise of including the sites identified for development in the Plan, in whole or part and report its findings to the next appropriate meeting of the Committee with recommendations for adoption by the Committee and Council.

**8 SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR HOUSING, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC GROWTH  
- WORK PROGRAMME 2021/22.**

Tom Clark, Head of Regulatory Services introduced the Committee's Work Programme. He noted that currently there was no business scheduled for the next meeting and this would be updated as appropriate.

**RESOLVED**

The Committee noted the Committee's Work Programme as set out at paragraph 5 of the report.

**9 QUESTIONS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10.2 DUE NOTICE  
OF WHICH HAS BEEN GIVEN.**

None.

The meeting finished at 6.31 pm

Chairman