

PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

21 September 2023 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Lury (Chair), Yeates (Vice-Chair), Elkins, Harty, Huntley, Kelly (substitute for Bower), Long, McAuliffe, Partridge, Tandy and Turner (substitute for Stainton)

Apologies: Councillors Bower and Mrs Stainton

253. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were made.

254. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2023 were approved by the Committee and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

255. ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA THAT THE CHAIR OF THE MEETING IS OF THE OPINION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

The Chair confirmed that there were no urgent items to consider at this meeting.

256. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair confirmed that no questions had been submitted for this meeting.

257. BUDGET 2024/25 PROCESS

The Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer was invited by the Chair to present the report and provided a summary of the Budget Process for 2024/25.

The Chair then invited questions and comments from members. Responding to a question, the Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer advised that, without knowing the exact cost, he could not give any guarantees, but he had confidence that there would be sufficient budget within the Council to deliver the Local Plan Review. The Council's reserves were relatively good, and the budget gap was being managed as part of the budget planning and medium-term financial forecast processes. With regards to the timeline for providing members with an update, further information would be available once the Council's Local Government Finance Settlement announced in December each year.

The Committee noted the Budget process for 2024/25 as outlined in the report.

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258. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 30 JUNE 2023

The Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer was invited by the Chair to present the report. The 2023/24 forecast revenue budget outturn as at Quarter 1 was currently on budget. He committed to include additional detail in future reports, which was welcomed by members.

The Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer, advised members that if they had any additional questions outside of the meeting they were welcome to contact him at any time.

A typo was corrected at paragraph 1.1 replacing 'apprise' with 'appraise'.

The Committee noted the report.

259. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2022-2026 - QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2023 TO 30 JUNE 2023

The Group Head of Planning was invited by the Chair to present the report. The report set out the performance of the Key Performance Indicator at Quarter 1 for the period 1 April 2023 to 30 June 2023.

The Chair then invited questions and comments from members.

A member asked if there were any low level actions associated with the KPI taking place behind the scenes by officers to improve performance of the number of homes completed. The Group Head of Planning replied that the Interim Housing Statement sat alongside the annual Housing Delivery Action Plan (HDAP) and looked at housing delivery performance and how any issues might be addressed to try to increase housing delivery. The HDAP would be considered by the Committee at its next meeting on 28 November 2023, along with details of proposed indicative measures in terms of the consideration of planning applications, especially speculative applications for housing.

A member raised the issue, previously discussed by the Committee, concerning the KPI and asked for the inclusion of the number of unimplemented planning permissions so as to provide a narrative that this was not within the Council's control. The Group Head of Planning replied that the Annual Monitoring report was considered by the Committee at the beginning of each year. It provided the detail concerning unimplemented planning permissions, the sites included in the land supply and those sites not included as they fell outside the five-year housing land supply. There were a number of reasons for the number of unimplemented permissions, which included outline planning permissions not having received final approval.

The Chair acknowledged that members shared the frustration with the five-year housing land supply measure being outside of the Council's control.

Members then noted the report update provided.

260. THE FUTURE OF PLANS AND PLAN-MAKING TECHNICAL CONSULTATION 2022/2023

The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager was invited by the Chair to present the report. He provided details of the Government's consultation, due to end on 18 October 2023 on plan-making reforms, which included a pilot scheme of 10 local authorities. The Council's Local Plan timetable would not allow the Local Plan to be submitted before the deadline for submission of 30 June 2025, as required under the current system. If this was the case, under the transitional arrangements, the Council would be required to prepare its Local Plan under the new system. He drew members' attention to the key issues set out at paragraphs 4.6-4.9. The Arun Local Plan was now over five years old and required updating. If the Council adopted the updated Plan but it was not submitted within the current system's timeframe it would become a front runner authority for the pilot under the new system commencing November 2024. Otherwise, the Council would incur a delay of 6-12 months before it could be included in the next wave of councils.

The Chair then invited questions and comments from members. Responding to a question about Community Land auctions, the Group Head of Planning explained that their aim was to drive down prices to make land more affordable for development and advised that the Council should observe how they operate before considering if this was a suitable option. The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager undertook to seek clarification as to whether there would be any legal implications to the Council if any Supplementary Planning Documents were made extant. He confirmed that the Council would be charged for any advice received from the Planning Independent Specialists or Inspectorate.

A member commented that community engagement was key and that submitting consultations online was not easy for some residents. He then questioned if the Council had the capacity and the ability to move at the pace required and, if the Council did not, there would be the issue of possibly having to employ outside consultants to deliver in time. The Chair referred to the Statement of Community Involvement (SOCl), to be considered at agenda item 11, which he hoped would dispel some of the member's concerns about public consultation. The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager added that although the SOCl was a statutory document, there was no requirement to publicly consult on its content. However, the Council had taken the decision to undertake public consultation on its content. He agreed that staff resources were a key issue. A Project Initiation Document setting out the scoping of the plan and which would be subject to examination at the Gateway 1 stage where the Council's resources would be assessed. He referred to the Arun Local Plan Update considered at the June meeting of the Committee, which had included an appendix with details of a Statement of Works Contract proposal. This set out which projects may be required to be carried out by consultants on behalf of the Council due to staffing resource issues. He assured the Committee that staff resources would be assessed to ensure that the Arun Local Plan timetable could be delivered. Responding to a question concerning

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land prices and land banking, he advised that community land banking was not an effective tool.

The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager explained that steps were taken to minimise overspends, such as staggering when studies were carried out. Any overspends were a matter for the Policy and Finance Committee to consider. The Group Head of Planning added that in theory the new system should result in a more streamlined and efficient timetable with fewer costs to the Council. It was currently not known how far the Council would be expected to go as regards to the providing of evidence and data.

In response to comments made regarding the bidding process for the pilot, the Group Head of Planning explained that Councils would find out at the end of 2024 if they had been successful. The timescale would not allow time for a response to be reported to this Committee, but any decision whether to accept would not be taken by officers in isolation and members would be informed.

The recommendations were then proposed by Councillor Lury and seconded by Councillor Yeates.

The Committee

RESOLVED that

1. the Council bids to become a front runner authority for progressing the Local Plan update in November 2024 when new regulations are published;
2. a high-level response is submitted to the consultation as set out in sections 4.6 to 4.12.

## 261. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager was invited by the Chair to present the report. Following the lifting of the pause to the Local Plan process in June 2023, the Local Development Scheme that set out the updated timescales for the production of the Local Plan update required updating.

A correction was made to paragraph 3.4 of the draft Local Development Scheme to replace 'Arun Environment and Leisure Working Group' with 'Environment Committee'.

The recommendations were then proposed by Councillor Lury and seconded by Councillor Yeates.

## The Committee

### RESOLVED that

Authority be delegated to the Group Head of Planning, in consultation with the Chair of Planning Policy Committee, to undertake minor updating and drafting of any amendments required to the LDS prior to publication on the council's website.

### RECOMMENDATION TO FULL COUNCIL

That the draft Local Development Scheme September 2023 for the period 2023-2025 as amended (and set out in Background Paper 2) be adopted.

## 262. REVIEW OF THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Chair drew members' attention to the highlighted sections of the report at pages 67, 78, 83 and 85, to assist their understanding. The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager was then invited by the Chair to present the report. A number of minor changes had been made to the document concerning references to relevant legislation, clarification of how representations would be dealt with and guidance to respondents. The consultation period would run from 28 September 2023 to 26 October 2023 and any significant amendments proposed to the Statement of Community Involvement would be reported to this Committee.

The Chair then invited questions and comments from members. A member referred to the consultation methods at Table 3 and encouraged the use of social media, which he felt would reach the majority of people.

The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager confirmed that strap lines advising where someone could obtain assistance if the document was required in braille or a different language would be set out on the consultation page on the Council's website and undertook to ensure this information was included in the document itself.

The Group Head of Planning reassured a member that planning application site notices were generally placed on the site or as close as possible. In response to concern expressed that pre-applications were not made publicly available, the Group Head of Planning explained that developers of larger sites were encouraged to undertake consultation at an early stage of their proposals. However, if pre-application documents were made public, this could dissuade planning applications coming forward. The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager added that applicants of pre-applications were encouraged to consult with the community and parish councils at this early stage.

The recommendations were then proposed by Councillor Lury and seconded by Councillor Yeates.

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## The Committee

### RESOLVED that

1. Approve the draft Statement of Community Involvement for a four-week period of public consultation from 28 September closing 26 October 2023;
2. Delegate authority to the Group Head of Planning in consultation with the Chair of Planning Policy Committee to make any minor or factual drafting changes to the SCI and should no material changes be needed, refer the SCI to Full Council for approval;
3. Report the SCI back to this Committee in the event that material changes are needed, before referral to Full Council for approval.

### 263. INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT (IFS) 2022/2023

The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager was invited by the Chair to present the report. The report provided details of the income received from S106 planning obligation contributions and CIL income and spend. He referred to the summary totals at paragraph 3.7 of the report, which showed income had doubled with the trajectory for the delivery of projects from CIL income improving year on year.

The Chair commented that it was good to hear that S106 and CIL income was increasing. The Chair then invited questions and comments from members.

A member was advised by the Group Head of Planning that any suggestions relating to specific projects concerning parks and spaces within the member's Ward could be directed to him, outside of the meeting.

The amount of CIL received to support secondary education and how much West Sussex County Council (WSSCC) had received to date was asked. The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager advised that the funding was mainly received from Section 106 contributions and the strategic allocations. However, there were other CIL liable developments that also had an impact and could contribute towards the same infrastructure. WSSCC received 70% of CIL contributions and set out as part of their investment priorities details of the projects they intended to fund through CIL. He referred to a member's question to officers asked outside of the meeting where a response was still outstanding and explained that the Council's Section 106 Officer was waiting to receive the requested information from WSSCC. However, was able to advise that he Council had received £900,000 with potentially another £4 million anticipated through agreements. The Group Head of Planning clarified that contributions towards secondary school transportation were not classed as infrastructure and therefore not delivered through CIL. The delivery of the secondary school was an infrastructure matter to be delivered from Section 106 strategic allocations as well as through CIL monies received by WSSCC. The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager undertook to provide the Committee with a copy of the WSSCC Spending Statement when available.

The Chair welcomed a suggestion that officers should monitor instances when affordable housing development had been lost and asked for this information to be reported to a future meeting of the Committee. The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager advised he would include details of these lost schemes in the Authority Monitoring report.

Responding to a question concerning Community Land Trusts (CLT), the Group Head of Planning advised that he was aware of a local CLT struggling to get off the ground due to viability issues. However, officers could investigate any opportunities to see if it was appropriate for a CLT to take over the development of land from developers where there were viability issues. The Chair suggested that the situation should be monitored and, if necessary, a letter could be sent to the Government to express the Committee's concern about any viability issues.

A member queried the contribution of £5,000 towards transport and travel, at paragraph 7.4 of the Infrastructure Funding Statement, which he considered was a small amount and the lack of projects coming forward from parish councils. The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager undertook to provide an answer to confirm if this amount included cycling, walking and mobility allocations, as well as any reasons for this this seemingly small amount, outside of the meeting.

The recommendations were then proposed by Councillor Lury and seconded by Councillor Yeates.

The Committee

RESOLVED

that the Arun Infrastructure Funding Statement 2022/23 be published on the Arun District Council website in accordance with Regulation 121A of the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 (as amended).

264. OUTSIDE BODIES

The Committee received a report from Councillor McAuliffe giving an update on the South Downs National Park Authority.

265. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the work programme for 2023/24.

(The meeting concluded at 7.35 pm)