

PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

30 January 2024 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Lury (Chair), Yeates (Vice-Chair), Bower, Elkins, Long, McAuliffe, Partridge, Tandy, Goodheart and Hamilton

Councillor Gunner was also in attendance for all the meeting.

568. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Harty, Huntley and Stainton.

569. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor McAuliffe declared a Personal Interest in respect of Agenda Item 10 as a member of Arundel Community Development Land Trust.

Councillor Elkins declared a Personal Interest in respect of Agenda Item 12 as a member of West Sussex County Council.

Councillor Tandy declared a personal interest in respect of Agenda Item 13 as a member of Littlehampton Parish Council.

570. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Planning Policy Committee held on 28 November 2023 were approved and signed by the Chair, subject to the following amendments:

- *Minute 422 – Urgent Items:* ‘...1 August 2024...’ should read ‘...1 August 2023...’
- *Minute 432 - Work Programme:* Remove from first sentence of second paragraph ‘...Local Plan document. The...’.

These would be signed after the meeting.

571. 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

There were no urgent items presented at the meeting.

572. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair confirmed there were no public questions submitted for the meeting.

573. COMMITTEE REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGETS 2024/25 - PLANNING POLICY

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The Chair invited the Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer to present the report to the Committee. The report recommended this Committee's General Fund Revenue Budget for 2024/25 to the Policy and Finance Committee on 8 February 2024, as part of the Council's overall revenue and capital budget. He referred to Appendix A that set out the budget proposals, equating to a total budget of £1,094million. The net budget increase of £188k from 2023-24 compared to 2024-25 was detailed in paragraph 4.4 of the report. He explained that the increase was mainly due to the reduction in Planning Fee Income to reflect the fall in volumes. He hoped that officers had been overcautious in their calculations following the Government having increased the level of Planning fees during December 2023.

The Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer said that whilst he expected that member may have questions on some elements of the budget, he explained that if any amendments were made to increase the total budget for the Committee, they would create additional financial pressure on the Council's revenue reserves.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Yeates and seconded by Councillor Tandy.

The Chair then invited questions and comments from members. A member sought clarification of any impact the savings of £107k identified at Paragraph 4.5 of the report, would have on the Planning Policy Service and how that workload was being managed. The Group Head of Planning explained that the Principal Planning Officer and Senior Planning Officer posts had been vacant for some time. He reminded members that the Committee had considered a report at its meeting held on 21 September 2023, concerning the recommencing of the Local Plan process, which included the commissioning of consultant support over a number of years. The sum of money required to fund consultants would outstrip the savings in the budget over a few years in the long term. In the short term the vacant posts in the Planning Policy Team would be filled by a consultant to assist the delivery of the Local Plan, so that the Team was not under resourced during this time. The Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer undertook to confirm the budget of £137k in respect of Professional Fees was allocated within Supplies and Services.

A non-member of the committee was allowed to comment and ask questions. Clarification was sought around the financial figures for the Local Plan update.

Continuing the discussion, assurance was sought that the proposed budget could be delivered without affecting service provision. The Director of Growth and Interim Chief Executive reminded the Committee that it had agreed to renew the Local Plan principally with support from consultants, for which a budget was in place within the Services and Supplies account. The Planning Policy Team was currently working around the two vacancies. However, during the renewal of the Local Plan the Team will have a commissioning role and will utilise the consultants to carry out a lot of the core work. He advised that whilst the increased workload would not fundamentally

have an impact on officers' current workload, they would need to look at the frequency certain reports were brought to the Committee.

The Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer undertook to provide the same breakdown of the Supplies and Services Revenue Budget for 2024-25 to Councillors' Elkins and Gunner, that had previously been provided to the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Committee in response to their own questions. He asked that members submit their questions in advance of the meeting so that he could answer them in a timely manner.

The Committee

RESOLVED that it

- (a) Agrees the 2024/25 Revenue Budget as illustrated in Appendix A of this report; and

RECOMMENDS TO POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE THAT

- (b) The Revenue Budget for this Committee be included in the overall General Fund Budget when the Policy and Finance Committee considers the overall budgets at its meeting on 8 February 2024.

574. QUARTER 3 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT

The Chair invited the Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer to present the report to the Committee. He reported there had been little change to the Committee's Revenue and Capital budget since Quarter 2. The situation concerning Planning Fee Income had slightly improved resulting in a positive movement to the overall budget of £50k. It was noted that previous Planning Fee Income had been based on three years of higher planning fee income that had not continued into 2023-24, thus reflecting a local and national trend.

He advised that he would forward the breakdown of the Supplies and Services Revenue Budget for 2024-25, requested by Councillor Elkins and Councillor Gunner, to the whole Committee and would include details of the 2023-24 figures for comparison.

The Chair then invited questions and comments from members. The Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer responded to the questions asked. He explained it was too early to see what effect the Planning fee increases announced by Central Government at the beginning of December 2023 would have on the budget. Officers had already amended the budget to take into account the downturn in income. In future a more frequent medium financial forecast would be provided to members, which would include any updates to the planning fee forecast. He explained the variance in respect of Supplies and Services from what had been budgeted. The Supplies and Services and Employees budgets were both related and were used to offset each other when there had been staff vacancies, and agency staff were used to cover those vacancies.

The Committee noted the report.

575. ARUN AUTHORITY MONITORING REPORT (AMR)

The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager was invited by the Chair to present the report. The report updated members on Arun's Monitoring Report (AMR) which is updated for the monitoring year 2022-23. It was noted that the report was a retrospective report with the land statistics included, such as housing and commercial development, relating to the period 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. However, at the time of writing the report any contextual information was added if there was any research that had become available, and it would be made clear that the information received was out of the monitoring period.

He referred to paragraph 4.4. that set out the key headlines, in particular the changes made this year in the way the Five-Year Housing land Supply (FYHLS) was calculated. This was in relation to the age of the Adopted Arun Local Plan, which was more than five years' old, and the requirement for Local Planning authorities to use the standard housing methodology. Therefore, the Council's headline figure had increased from a 2.36, in the council's previous AMR to a 4.17 Five-Year Housing Land Supply. There would be a significant affect from the change in methodology that accounted for the increase in the FYHLS. There would though be some elements where the council's Housing performance has improved largely due to completions and delivery agreements. Another factor was the council was no longer required to include the Local Plan housing backlog in the calculation because the standard housing methodology included an affordable housing uplift based on how adverse the council's affordability index was. The Council was still monitored under the housing delivery test, which was currently oscillating between 60% and 65-66% so still need to add in a buffer of 20% into the housing supply calculations. A stepped increase in housing completions, with 931 reported during the reporting period, which was one of the highest numbers the council had achieved compared to other years.

The Chair then invited questions and comments from members. Members raised a number of points which were responded to by the Group Head of Planning. He drew attention to the 5-Year Housing Land Supply Table, at paragraph 4.46, which included a buffer of 20%, and therefore in realty a 5-year Housing Land Supply could be shown if the buffer was not applied. Housing delivery rates were expected to slow even further during 2025 and members were assured that officers were doing all they could to encourage the commencement of development following planning permission. The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager advised that, as regards to the Council's Duty to Cooperate, several meetings had taken place with Southern Water and the Environment Agency. The issues discussed were the Gypsy and Traveller Local Plan and issues surrounding water and flooding issues and a review of the Common Statement of Grounds last reviewed during 2017 by way of a waste water treatment catchment 'headroom' process. Southern Water review their catchment areas using the latest Arun housing numbers to work out the waste water headroom in terms of the impact on the three wastewater catchment areas in Arun figures. If development could not be supported by the current infrastructure there would need to be an increase in

investment and if that was not possible there would be a likely need to reallocate the housing figure elsewhere with the infrastructure. He confirmed that both headroom and treatment capacity were included in officers' discussions with Southern Water. A member stated the importance, in light of the recent floods, that as well as the waste water treatment works' headroom capacity, it was important to include the limitations of the network capacity in the discussions. The Planning Policy and Conservation Manager confirmed that both topics were part of the discussions and these discussions with Southern Water and the Environment Agency were welcomed by members.

During further discussion a comment was made, as regards to the FYHLS, that the Council was limited in what could be done to improve the Supply, as it was at the behest of the housing developers who were underdelivering their housing developments.

The Group Head of Planning referred to one of the consultation proposals put forward by the Government regarding the NPPF, which was to remove the buffer from the FYHLS numbers but this did not happen. If that proposal had been implemented the Council would have a FYHLS today

A non-member of the committee was allowed to make comment and ask questions. Comment was made on the stepped trajectory based on promises made by developers to build out their development. He stressed the need for strong scrutiny of the development build out rates to take place when preparing the next Local Plan and made comment on the council's affordability ratio.

The meeting adjourned at 6.51pm due to a problem with the live Webcast and resumed at 6.59pm.

The Committee noted the Authority Monitoring Report for publishing.

576. ARUN BROWNFIELD LAND REGISTER

The Chair invited the Planning Policy & Conservation Manager to present the report to the Committee. The report updated the Committee on the annual update of the Arun's Brownfield Land Register 2023 (Part 1) that included all suitable brownfield sites that met the criteria in the regulations for residential development. It was noted that no new sites had been identified that met the criteria.

The Chair then invited questions and comments from members. Clarification was sought regarding paragraph 2.2 of Appendix 1, concerning Part 1 and Part 2 of the register and the exclusion of some sites. The Planning Policy & Conservation Manager explained that there were currently 17 sites on the Part 2 register as two sites had been removed from last year's figure (19) as the developments had been completed. Part 1 contained all the eligible sites and Part 2 would contain sites where the council wanted to give them planning permission in principle, subject to certain criteria. The Planning Policy & Conservation Manager advised that the 17 sites could be found listed in the Brownfield Land Register Document 2023 and undertook to check the status of the Arcade, the Regis Centre car park and London Road car park, Bognor Regis, and

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advise if any had been included in the list, outside of the meeting. He explained their inclusion would be depended on their suitability and availability. He responding to a question concerning NEWFG2 - Land Rear of Henty Arms, Ferring Lane, Ferring, listed on page 141 of the report and the part of the land used for allotments. It was explained that allotments would be excluded as they did not meet the Brownfield site criteria for previously developed land.

The Committee noted the 2023 Brownfield Land Register (Part 1).

577. REVISED NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK DECEMBER 2023

[Councillor McAuliffe declared a Personal Interest during discussion of this item as a member of Arundel Community Land Trust].

The Chair invited the Group Head of Planning to present the report to the Committee. He outlined the report that set out the proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework for Arun (NPPF). He explained that the amendments made to the (NPPF) were far removed from the original statements made by the Government and the consultation that took place, which was disappointing.

The Chair then invited questions and comments from members Clarification was sought regarding the 'advisory starting point' and the standard method for calculating housing need. The Group Head of Planning explained that a very high bar had been set and it would not be easy. It would be based on a combination of work done in respect of infrastructure, environmental and market issues, infrastructure issues regarding Southern Water, potential National Highway issues and the impact of any scale of housing development will have on environmental issues. Officers would carry out work on housing absorption and will make a case on these matters if there is the evidence to do so. A member said they had hoped to see the inclusion of energy efficiency in the NPPF, which would have strengthened the council's commitment to the Climate Change Emergency. As regards to Neighbourhood plans, a report would be brought to this Committee for consideration of the indicative figures. Recently adopted Neighbourhood plans, produced in good faith, would not be affected by the requirement to produce a new Plan with allocations for housing development.

The Planning Policy and Conservation Manger responded to a question regarding the council's commitment to Community Led housing projects. The council will ensure that the Local Plan is in accordance with the NPPF and if the provision of Community Led housing was one of the routes to provide housing in a sustainable and affordable way, officers would look at the policies needed to be included in the Local Plan to facilitate that. The Director of Growth and Interim Chief Executive, provided details of the number of Community Land trusts within Arun, of which there were four. He was aware that a number of the trusts were in the process of taking schemes forward that the council would continue to support them as best it could.

The Chair read in full to the Committee, paragraph 4.2, bullet points 6 and 7 which outlined the main changes to the NPPF. Referring to bullet point 6, the lengthy pause in the Local Plan had not been beneficial, as it was not at an advanced stage. It

was disappointing that the requirement to demonstrate a 'buffer' to demonstrate over and above the 5-Year requirement, detailed at bullet point 7, had not been removed as expected.

The Committee noted the contents of the revised NPPF.

578. ARUN DISTRICT DESIGN GUIDE SPD UPDATE

The Chair advised the Committee that the recommendation in the report has been amended to specify a date that the Supplementary Design Guide is agreed (adopted) on 20 February 2024. The reason for this is that adoption must be after a period of four weeks from the date the Consultation Statement is made available. The Consultation statement was made available on Tuesday 23 January.

The recommendation had been amended to the following:

The Chair advised the Committee that the recommendation in the report has been amended to specify a date that the Supplementary Design Guide is agreed (adopted) on 20 February 2024. The reason for this is that adoption must be after a period of four weeks from the date the Consultation Statement is made available. The Consultation statement was made available on Tuesday 23 January.

The recommendation had been amended to the following:

That the Design Guide Update Supplementary Planning Document is agreed (adopted) **on the 20 February 2024.**

The Chair invited the Planning Policy & Conservation Manager to present the report to the Committee. Following the Committee's agreement to progress to the Public Participation stage of the Supplementary Design Guide update, the consultation period had run from 4 December 2023 to 12 January 2024. He reported that following assessment of the responses received only minor changes to the document had been necessary and therefore the Supplementary Design Statement was being recommended to the Committee for approval on 20 February 2024.

The amended recommendation was proposed by Councillor Tandy and seconded by Councillor Yeates.

The Chair invited questions or comment from Members. Discussion took place around cycling infrastructure provision at the Ford SDL and connectivity to the wider network .

- The Planning Policy & Conservation Manager confirmed that the SPD only applied to negotiating cycling infrastructure following the submission of a planning application, with the update relating to cycling provision in particular.
- Comment was made that whilst the infrastructure provision was welcomed, more should be done to extend the requirement to outside the red line planning application boundaries. More could be done by the

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council to fulfill its obligations or its Sustainability Policy TDM1. An example of where there was strong evidence of this was the Ford Airfield development, where despite its close proximity to Ford Railway Station there was no provision to provide a cycle route.

- The Planning Policy & Conservation Manager provided details of the Arun Active Travel Study published in 2022 that looked at existing strategic development and what was happening to link the sites up. Some of these requirements would require Section 106 agreement provision, but only for onsite, and so CIL provision would be required instead where offsite. A member commented that he was aware that currently none of the recommendations in the report had been delivered and said he would welcome some action.
- The Director of Growth and Interim Chief Executive, advised Councillor McAuliffe that he would provide further information regarding the Ford Airfield development and cycling, as the situation was broader than suggested, outside of the meeting.
- The Director of Growth and Interim Chief Executive, updated members on the situation regarding the creation of a footpath from Arundel along the River Arun to Littlehampton. The proposal had been part of round 2 of the Levelling Up Grant bid that included a range of cycling facilities but had been unsuccessful. This was disappointing, as it was considered it had been a good high quality bid that would have been good for Arundel and Littlehampton resident and those using Ford Railway Station.

The Committee

RESOLVED

That the Design Guide Update Supplementary Planning Document is agreed (adopted) on the 20 February 2024.

579. ARUN SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDY UPDATE

[Councillor Elkins declared a Personal Interest during discussion of this item as a member of West Sussex Council].

The Chair invited the Planning Policy & Conservation Manager to present the report to the Committee, advising that the Committee had deferred this item at its previous meeting held on 28 November 2023 to enable members to visit the site.

The Chair invited the Planning Policy & Conservation Manager to present the report to the Committee. He provided details of the approach taken in the study update to review other sites, as contingency sites, should preferred Option F not be deliverable for a secondary school. He clarified that Site 14 was still the same site as Option L and should state it was an existing site and not a new site. A letter has been received from Yapton Parish Council raising concerns about the siting of a secondary school at site Option F. The council was not at a consultation stage, at this point which was to refine

the number of sites down to a reasonable number. Consultation would happen if there was a need to take any of the sites forward as contingency

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor Tandy and seconded by Councillor Goodheart.

The Chair invited questions and comments from Members.

A non-member was allowed to make comment and ask questions. Opinion was expressed that Site 2 - Choller Farm, Barnham Lane, Barnham, was preferable due to being owned by West Sussex County Council, the Education Authority who should carry out their responsibility for school provision, for which the council should take a strong stance on.

Discussion took place surrounding the suitability of preferred Option F. Safety concerns were raised due to the site's close location to several railway crossings. Comment was made that the provision of a secondary school was not only for future need but was also for current need as there was already a shortage of school places. The location was not served well by transport infrastructure.

Further member discussion of Site 2 - Choller Farm, Barnham Lane, Barnham which members identified the site as a suitable alternative site, due to its sustainable location, and the advantages were discussed. The site was in the ownership of West Sussex County Council. It was served well by transport infrastructure with good train connections from Barnham, cycle route and footpaths.

At the conclusion of the discussion the Chair, and in light of the comments members had made in respect of Site 2 - Choller Farm, Barnham Lane, Barnham as a suitable site, suggested that recommendation iii. be amended to include this site so that it could be added to the list of possible alternative sites for secondary school provision.

The Director of Growth and Interim Chief Executive having listened to the debate, suggested that if the Committee were minded to add Site 2 - Choller Farm, Barnham Lane, Barnham, the simplest way to deal with that was for a member to propose an amendment to recommendation iii. He advised that if the amendment was accepted it would become the substantive and could take the recommendations on block if they wished.

Following the advice from the Director of Growth and Interim Chief Executive, the amendment to recommendation iii was then proposed by Councillor McAuliffe and seconded by Councillor Bower, the changes can be seen highlighted in ~~strikethrough~~ and **bold**.

- iii That the ~~four~~ **five** sites (Site 14 - Site to the South of Yapton; Site 5 – Land South of Yapton Road; Site 4 - Land North of Yapton Road and East of Blossom Way; ~~and~~ Site 3 - Land at Maypole and North End Road **and Site 2 – Choller Farm, Barnham Lane**) are sites with the most potential to be

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considered as alternative sites as a contingency to the preferred site, subject to undertaking further work; and

Following discussion on whether to take the recommendations on block in light of their views expressed during the debate surrounding the suitability of preferred Option F, members agreed to take a separate vote on the recommendations.

Following a vote the amendment to recommendation iii, as above, was declared CARRIED.

The Chair then moved to the substantive recommendations which were each taken in turn:

- i. That site Option F remains the council's preferred site for the delivery of a 10 FE Secondary School in the district;

Following a vote, it was declared NOT CARRIED

The Chair then moved a vote on recommendation ii, below, having taken procedural advice from the Director of Growth and Interim Chief Executive.

- ii. In the absence of an allocation of the preferred site Option F within the update of the Ford Neighbourhood Plan, the council's Local Development Scheme be updated to include preparation of a Secondary School Development Plan Document

Following a vote, it was declared NOT CARRIED

Following on from the previous amendment to recommendation iii, Director of Growth and Interim Chief Executive provided further advice on the wording of the recommendation in light of the decision to remove Option F as the council's preferred site.

It was suggested that amended recommendation iii, be re-worded to include 'that the four sites, plus Site 2, are sites to be considered for the secondary school within the District'.

The above amendment to amend recommendation iii was proposed by Councillor McAuliffe and seconded by Councillor Yeates.

Following a vote the amendment to amended recommendation iii, as above, was declared CARRIED.

The Committee then voted on the substantive recommendation as follows:

The Committee

RESOLVED

- iii That the five sites (Site 14 - Site to the South of Yapton; Site 5 – Land South of Yapton Road; Site 4 - Land North of Yapton Road and East of Blossom Way; Site 3 - Land at Maypole and North End Road and Site 2 – Choller Farm, Barnham Lane) are sites to be considered for the secondary school within the District; and

Following a vote the recommendation was declared CARRIED.

Turning to recommendation iv, in light of the decision not to support preferred site (Site Option F), the Chair advised that officers had amended the wording of recommendation iv. as follows, the changes can be seen highlighted in ~~strike through~~ and **bold**:

- iv. ~~Should the preferred site (Site Option F) not proceed, f~~Following the further work and consultation with West Sussex County Council and landowners, officers, a report back to this Committee at a future meeting, will consider the alternative best performing site for the Secondary School, so that the formal legal process can continue.

The above amendment to amend recommendation iii was proposed by Councillor Bower and seconded by Councillor Long.

The Chair then moved to the vote the amended recommendation was declared CARRIED

The Committee

RESOLVED that

- iv. Following the further work and consultation with West Sussex County Council and landowners, officers, a report back to this Committee at a future meeting, will consider the alternative best performing site for the Secondary School, so that the formal legal process can continue.

580. NEW DEVELOPMENT IN ARUN RESIDENTS SURVEY (KINGLEY GATE, LITTLEHAMPTON)

[Councillor Bower left the meeting during discussion of this item and did not return].

[Councillor Tandy declared a personal interest in this item as a member of Littlehampton Parish Council]

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The Chair invited the Planning Policy & Conservation Manager to present the report to the Committee. The report set out the key findings of the survey completed by residents within the recently developed Kingley Gate scheme. Residents had expressed satisfaction with open space, cleanliness and refuse/recycling and dissatisfaction with local facilities including health service provision, activities for teenagers and traffic issues. The survey was carried out to provide evidence to support infrastructure requirements in future years.

The Chair invited questions and comments from Members and the following points were raised:

- Councillor Tandy advised that the development was in his Ward. He appreciated that officers had carried out the useful exercise. However, he did see a disconnect with what he had heard from residents on the ground to the results in the survey. He was of the opinion that people are more likely to reply to a survey if they had negative issues to raise and that a number of residents he had spoken to had not replied as they had nothing to say. One issue that residents had raised was the length of time it had taken for the shop to open
- The latest position was requested on the Littlehampton bus service funded by Section 106 monies and the need for bus services to match with the locations of new housing developments.
- A non-member was allowed to address the Committee. He advised he had personal knowledge of the development. He agreed with the point made about the timing of the provision of the shop. He sensed that residents felt detached, as a community, from Littlehampton due to the lack of transport links. It was important to learn from this study so that improvements can be made to future developments.
- The Director of Growth and Interim Chief Executive confirmed that the surveys contained valuable information. The intention was to carry out two or three more resident surveys to get a full picture of the issues they were experiencing.. It was a continual learning process adding to the rich amount of information enabling the Council to make better, more informed decisions.

The Committee noted the report.

581. Q3 PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR THE KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (KPI'S) WHICH FORM PART OF THE COUNCIL'S VISION 2022-2026.

The Group Head of Planning was invited by the Chair to present the report who provided information on the current status of the Committee's Indicator CP36 Number of New Homes Completed at Quarter 3.

The Committee noted the report.

582. WORK PROGRAMME

Subject to approval at the next Planning Policy Committee meeting

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The Committee noted the Work Programme.

Before closing the meeting, the Chair expressed his thanks to the Committee for the way they worked together to get the best results for the District.

(The meeting concluded at 8.28 pm)