

PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

26 September 2024 at 6.00 pm

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

Councillor McDougall was also in attendance for all or part of the meeting.

235. MINUTE'S SILENCE

The Group Head of Planning informed the Committee of the sad news of the passing of Charlie Hardy a member of the Council's Planning Policy Team. He informed members that the Planning department's condolences had been passed to Charlie's family and that he was sure that the Committee would wish to do so as well.

All present then stood and observed one minute's silence in her memory.

236. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

237. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Elkins declared a Personal Interest in respect of Agenda Items 8 and 10 as a member of West Sussex County Council.

238. 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.

239. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Chair invited questions from a member of the public who had submitted their questions in advance of the meeting in accordance with the rules of the Council's Constitution.

The Chair confirmed that seven questions had been submitted from Ms Thompson and these were read out by the questioner and responded to by the Chair.

(A schedule of full questions asked, and the responses provided can be found on the meetings webpage [here](#)).

Planning Policy Committee - 26.09.24

240. BUDGET 2025/26 PROCESS

The Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer was invited by the Chair to present the report that set out the budget process for 2025/26. The report outlined the key service committee dates and explained the process was driven by the medium-term financial report to the Policy and Finance Committee on 24 October 2024. Briefings would be held with members throughout the budget process with dates to be confirmed.

The Chair then invited questions and comments from members. In response to a question concerning the increasing demands on service delivery referred to at paragraph 4.2 of the report, the Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer explained that the greatest challenge to the Council was the cost of providing homelessness provision. This provision would be a cost pressure for this year and next year due to the increasing demand, and measures were being taken to control these costs. A further pressure was uncertainty surrounding the Council's income levels being reduced following the Local Government Finance settlement for 2024/25, which had announced the discontinuation of the New Homes Bonus (NHB) and implied removal of the Minimum Funding Guarantee Grant (MFGG). He provided details of a Joint Finance officers briefing where local government finance experts had advised there had not been any national discussions on the Government's plans on the removal of the NHB and MFGG, which would not be known until the Local Government Finance settlement for 2025/26 was announced at the end of the year. If they were removed they were likely to be removed gradually.

A member welcomed member briefings during the process and asked that officers give members ample notice of them.

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

241. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 30 JUNE 2024

The Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer was invited by the Chair to present the report. He referred to the Quarter 1 2024/25 forecast at Table 1, paragraph 4.2, which set out a small underspend of £50k. Salary costs were forecast to underspend by £200k but would be largely offset by the recruitment of external professionals filling staff vacancies. Referring to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) income, the Council was able to recover some of its costs from CIL receipts with the forecast predicting an overachievement of £70k. Following the deletion of a number of staff posts in the 2024/25 budget the Council was on target to meet those savings.

The Chair then invited questions and comments from members. A question was asked whether the reduced number of applications being received would lead to less income being received by the Council. The Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer responded that the variation related to the cost recovery for CIL receipts. He referred to the substantial planning fee increases announced by the Government in December 2023 and advised that the Council had exercised caution in factoring any increase in income in the budget, as the effect on the number of planning applications

received as a result were not known. The effect on the current budget will be monitored throughout the year and any increase or reduction in the number of planning applications received will be factored in to the 2025/26 budget process.

The Interim Head of Planning Policy provided details of the comments received from Financial Services to the National Planning Policy Framework consultation, that noted that if the householder planning application fee was increased to £528 it could potentially generate a fee income of up to £150k additional income. It was too early to know what the implications would be as the new fees had not been ratified. The Group Head of Planning explained that staffing levels were managed according to the amount of planning income received.

The Committee noted the report.

242. DRAFT FINAL OUT-TURN - 2023/24

The Group Head of Finance and Section 151 Officer was invited by the Chair to present the report. He advised that the figures contained in the draft 2023/24 draft final outturn report were subject to external audit. He referred to an overspend of £251k, which was an improvement on the level predicted at Quarter 3, the details of which were set out in paragraph 1. Although Planning services income had underachieved by £377k the position had improved during Quarter 4 due to an overachievement following an increase in Community Infrastructure Levy receipts.

The Committee noted the report.

243. CIL INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT PLAN (IIP 2025-2027)

[Councillor Elkins re-declared his Personal Interest as a member of West Sussex County Council during discussion of this item]

The Interim Head of Planning Policy was invited by the Chair to present the report that provided an update to the Council's three-year Infrastructure Investment Plan 2025/27 (IIP). He drew attention to the Priority Shortlist that set out the recommended projects to be taken forward for funding allocations in the three-year period and the updated Baseline Longlist. A total of five projects had been identified to receive Community Infrastructure Levy payments from the strategic pot.

Details of the five projects for consideration were provided:

- Existing Littlehampton Waste Recycling Facility capped to actual receipts in Year 3 within the WSCC 70% pot;
- Existing project at Littlehampton Fire Station - Relocation or redevelopment (allocation Year 1 £50k; Year 2 £50k; Year 3 £0k and capped to actual receipts in Year 3 within WSCC 70% pot);
- Existing project for Route 8 Arundel to Ford Active Travel - allocation reduced to Year 1 £100k within ADC 20% pot – future funding subject to National Highways Designated Funds Review 2025; It was noted that officers will be giving further consideration to this allocation and whether it should

Planning Policy Committee - 26.09.24

continue to come out of the Arun District Council funding pot or if it was more appropriate to come out of the West Sussex County Council funding pot.

- Add existing project at Lion's Den Littlehampton – Play area improvements - £30k within ADC 20% pot;
- Add new project at Ferring Village Play Area – Play area improvements - £30k within ADC 20% pot.

It was noted that projects came forward ad hoc throughout the year and advised that officers will consider providing a more structured timetable of bidding rounds for each year.

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

The Chair invited the Committee to make comment and ask questions.

- The Interim Head of Planning Policy responding to member questions clarified the position concerning the project for Route 8 Arundel to Ford Active Travel, confirming that it was not the intention to ask West Sussex County Council for an additional contribution. The project had initially included the green link that had included links to Arun District Council's proposals for a leisure route in the same location. The Council had sought external funding for the route but as it had not been successful the project had been paused. The £100k of funding sought was for a further feasibility study for non-motorized users with consideration being given to whether it would be more appropriate for the funding to be ring fenced from the County Council 70% strategic pot or if the smaller Arun District pot would be more appropriate. National Highways had advised that funding for the travel route from Ford to Littlehampton was not available in its current Road Investment Strategy (RIS2). He referred to the number of road improvement schemes that had been cancelled and that it was hoped that the unspent funding would be put towards sustainable transport projects, but this would not be known until RIS3.
- The lack of an active transport route between Chichester and Pagham was highlighted. Members were reminded of the current consultation on proposals for a scheme between Chichester and Bognor Regis that included improving cycle links.
- A member referred to the length of time involved in the implementation of the Littlehampton Fire Station replacement project, which should be considered a priority. The Interim Head of Planning Policy advised that the County Council have approached officers to see if the funds could be released earlier if they were to bring the feasibility work forward.
- A member advised of the increased train timetable this year, affecting the Ford Road level crossing project on the Baseline longlist. The effects of the any additional level crossing closure times, due to the additional trains, should be taken into account as part of any feasibility studies concerning this project. The Interim Head of Planning Policy advised that this would be taken into account as the project progressed under future funding rounds.

- Concern was raised regarding the further erosion of the Green Link project, which would have provided leisure and commuter access from Arundel to Littlehampton. Although it was understood that the rising sea levels along the River Arun was an issue to obtaining external funding. The move to prioritising the provision of a more northerly route to the south of Ford linking to the A259 was welcomed. Will the allocated funds for additional feasibility be used to confirm the engineering constraints? Can the Council consider a more westerly route linking the cycle routes along the A259? The Interim Head of Planning Policy advised that following a meeting with partners on active travel routes his understanding was that the £100k earmarked for feasibility would look at detailed interventions in priority order. As regards to the provision of an alternative route, the Council could put forward suggestions for consideration under the future feasibility.
- Responding to a question concerning the length of time that Baseline Longlist projects took to be implemented, the Interim Head of Planning Policy provided details of the process and advised that projects would be brought forward once they had reached the stage where they were ready to be implemented.
- The Interim Head of Planning Policy confirmed that the Lion's Den, Littlehampton and the Ferring Village Green play area Priority Shortlist projects would provide new infrastructure improvements, as required by the CIL regulations, and not replacing like for like.
- Disappointment was expressed that following the Infrastructure Investment Plan 2025/27 update the NHS had not provided any updates on progress with their projects, especially as there was money available to improve the health of residents. Both the Interim Head of Planning Policy and Group Head of Planning had discussed the lack of progress and would be seeking a meeting with senior NHS officers with the intention of progressing their projects.
- It was suggested that the NHS could be asked to attend a meeting of the Planning Policy Committee to provide details of their future delivery plans for health care provision in the District.
- The Director of Growth responded to a comment about the lack of joined up infrastructure linking the cycle route projects in the District. He provided details of the Arun Active Travel Study (AATS), similar to a Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), that had assessed a range of cycling options. He explained that the Ford strategic allocation set out numerous requirements to upgrade cycle links from that development to Ford Railway Station and the River Arun. He explained that as the Ford housing development took place the funding would be available for cycling provision south of the Railway Station. Provision of a cycle link to Arundel from the Railway Station was an issue as there were no large developments in that area to fund it. In response a member advised they were aware that none of the proposals in the Study had been delivered and suggested that the AATS should be replaced by a LCWIP, as these were in line with national consensus and could result in more successful projects in the future. The cycling upgrades in place as part of the Ford development were not in line

Planning Policy Committee - 26.09.24

with cycle infrastructure design LTN1/20 or cycling infrastructure best practice and was a missed opportunity.

- The Group Head of Planning undertook to provide details of the latest position concerning the Ford Road Level Crossing project and the provision of a railway crossing road bridge and details of who was responsible for the Route 12: Active travel route (safe cycling) Aldwick Region cycling route project, outside of the meeting.

The Committee

RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL that

The Arun Infrastructure Investment Plan (for the period 2025-2027) be agreed by Full Council before publication on the Council's website.

244. INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT (IFS) 2023/2024

The Interim Head of Planning Policy was invited by the Chair to present the report which updated the Committee on the Council's annual Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS). He explained that West Sussex County Council and neighbourhood bodies will carry out their own Infrastructure Statement in terms of their Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Section 105 receipts. The number of CIL demand notices issued, of £4.5m, was significantly higher than the previous year. The increase in CIL receipts when compared with the previous year (£2.1m compared with £800k) and S106 receipts (£12.m compared with £2.5m) and what the money has been spent on were highlighted. The number of new affordable dwellings provided under S106 has increased from 395 to 607 this year.

The recommendations were then proposed by Councillor Partridge and seconded by Councillor Tandy.

The Committee

RESOLVED that

The Arun Infrastructure Funding Statement 2023/24 be noted and published on the Arun District Council website, in accordance with Regulation 121A of the Community Infrastructure Regulations 2010 (as amended).

245. ARUN SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDY UPDATE

[Councillor Elkins re-declared his Personal Interest as a member of West Sussex County Council during discussion of this item]

The Interim Head of Planning Policy was invited by the Chair to present the report. The report provided an update on the progress officers have made with landowner engagement concerning the potential site options for an Arun Secondary

School. He referred to paragraph 4.5 that provided details of each landowner's response, which was either that the landowner did not want their site to be considered or no response was received. It did not necessarily mean that the necessary work on potential sites could not progress, as they all met the necessary criteria for a new secondary school. It was noted that the Council had Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) powers should it wish to allocate a site or if a planning application was received for a site. Paragraph 4.9 set out the further detailed investigative work to be commissioned to identify a suitable site. He referred to the decision made by the Committee at its meeting held on 30 January 2024 not to support Site Option F as a preferred site. However, officers suggested that members may wish to re-consider and agree to include this site alongside the five sites to be progressed under the further Site Constraints Study. The results of the feasibility work will be reported to the Committee. If further sites did come forward they would also be considered. Following the further detailed work to be undertaken by the Council in consultation with West Sussex County Council a final preferred site will be brought to the Committee for consideration.

The recommendations were then proposed by Councillor Bower and seconded by Councillor Partridge.

The Chair invited the Committee to make comment and ask questions:

- The Interim Head of Planning Policy clarified that the location of Site Option F was in Ford. He reminded members that West Sussex County Council had been in discussions with the landowner of this site but no land deal had been agreed as yet.
- A member asked if Academy Trusts had been approached concerning the sponsorship of a new school in Arun. The Group Head of Planning replied that West Sussex County Council would expect the site identification process to have taken place in the first instance, which was an important stage of the process, before they will discuss proposals with the school providers.
- Responding to a question regarding the use of a CPO, the Group Head of Planning explained that this process would only be used by the Council to acquire land for a suitable site only if all other avenues had failed. Before starting the process in the first instance some certainty would be required in the form of a school site allocation or a planning permission coming forward.
- A comment was made that it was disappointing to see West Sussex County Council, who were landowners and had the responsibility for delivering secondary schools, were not putting any site proposals forward in Arun. Given the known insufficient availability of secondary school placements in Arun, could the Council address this in its housing number constraints assessment would this be a viable option to include within the housing number targets to work towards a reduction? The Group Head of Planning explained that although this constraint was proving difficult it was not insurmountable. The Council would have to prove that there was no prospect of a scheme coming forward.
- A member urged for a secondary school to be found in Arun otherwise the Council would be doing a disservice to those pupils who had to travel to schools elsewhere.

Planning Policy Committee - 26.09.24

- In response to a comment made regarding the lack of infrastructure being built following strategic development, the Group Head of Planning advised that the details for the provision for a new school were set out in the Council's Infrastructure Funding Statement. All strategic allocations made financial contributions towards a new secondary school which would build up until enough funds were received to provide a new secondary school.
- A further comment was made concerning the impact on pupils if a new secondary school site was not delivered and the need to move the process forward following the delays in finding a suitable site.

The Committee

RESOLVED

- i. That the Council will progress a further detailed Site Constraints Study at a cost of circa £30K to include the five sites agreed by Planning Policy Committee of 30 January 2024 (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) plus Site F from the 2019 Study (land adjacent to the Ford Allocation). Additional sites will be added to this list if alternative opportunities emerge before the report is complete.
- ii. That following the further detailed work and consultation with West Sussex County Council, officers are to report back to this Committee at a future meeting, with the final preferred site for the Secondary School, so that formal legal processes can be commenced by a Council.

246. LOCAL PLAN UPDATE DIRECTION OF TRAVEL - CONSULTATION RESPONSE

The Interim Head of Planning Policy was invited by the Chair to present the report. He provided details of the public consultation on the Direction of Travel (DoT) document that had taken place following approval by the Committee. The consultation set out a vision and objectives, and asked respondents if they considered that the Council was considering the correct issues in the DoT. A good response had been received with 73 respondents, of which there were 299 specific comments. The comments received mainly related to three key areas: providing homes in the right places, climate change and the need to deliver infrastructure to support growth. The results of the consultation will be used to develop the next stage of the Local Plan for which evidence and preparatory work has already commenced. During the process, there will be extensive engagement with members via direct consultation and through the committee process. The detailed responses to the consultation were available on the Council's website for viewing.

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

The Chair invited the Committee to make comment and ask questions.

Councillor Lury referred to the Special Planning Policy Committee held on 18 September 2024 and the Committee's agreement to send a letter to the regarding the proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). He advised that the letter, signed by the Group Leaders, had been sent and advised that the letter had been copied to the four Arun MPs and to the press. He thanked the Group Head of Planning for his assistance and the Group Leaders for supporting the letter.

In response to a comment made that due to the proposed changes to the NPPF the DoT document should be reviewed due to the unknowns that the new planning system will bring and whether or not the Council should continue to prepare a new Local Plan. The Group Head of Planning advised that both this Committee and the Council was committed to continue preparing a new Local Plan under the current planning system, as the changes to the new system were not yet known and was progressing its evidence-based work in the meantime.

The Committee

RESOLVED

- i. That the summary of the consultation responses is noted and that the consultation responses do not cause any issues which prevents officers from progressing onto the next stages of the Local Plan Update, and
- ii. That the contents of the consultation comments will be used, where relevant, to inform the next stage of Local Plan evidence base work.

247. THE THREE HARBOURS STRATEGY 2024-2028

The Interim Head of Planning Policy was invited by the Chair to present the report. He explained that the Council had recently become aware of the Three Harbours Partnership and its draft Strategy for 2024-2028 at a late stage. Notwithstanding this, officers have assessed the Strategy in terms of water quality, diversity and carbon capture that were broadly in line with the Council's climate change emergency and its ambitions in terms of carbon reduction and improvements to the environment. Officers had assessed the Council's involvement and were of the opinion that the best way forward would be for the District Council to become a signatory to the Partnership to include member involvement. He drew attention to paragraph 4.6 that set out the 10 key inputs envisaged by 2028 in the high-level plan.

The recommendations were then proposed by Councillor Huntley and seconded by Councillor McAuliffe.

The Chair invited questions and comments from members. Comment was made that although the opportunity to become a member of the Partnership was belated it was welcomed due to the significant importance of the three harbours.

Planning Policy Committee - 26.09.24

A member expressed the view that a member representative should be appointed to represent the Council on the Chichester Harbour Conservancy if there was not already a member appointed to this outside body.

The Director of Growth clarified that the Three Harbours Partnership and Sussex Bay Project were two distinct projects although there was synergy between them. Officers were working with the Sussex Bay Project and at the same time, albeit belatedly, the Council was getting involved with the work of the Three Harbours partnership. The Interim Head of Planning Policy added that the Partnership's proposed integrated recovery plan would map all its projects. The engagement strategy proposed working groups and a standing citizens' assembly providing greater involvement and collaboration. Officers undertook to provide Councillor Goodheart with further information surrounding citizens' assemblies.

Members welcomed the opportunity to join the Three Harbours partnership and become a formal signatory to the Strategy.

The Committee

RESOLVED that the Committee

- i. Consider the Final Draft of the Three Harbours Strategy document (2024-2028); and
- ii. Agree that Arun District Council should join the Three Harbours partnership and become a formal signatory to the Strategy.

248. WORK PROGRAMME

The Interim Head of Planning Policy advised that since the publication of the agenda a number of updates had been made to the work programme. He undertook to circulate the latest version to the Committee following the meeting.

The Committee noted the work programme for 2024/25.

(The meeting concluded at 8.01 pm)