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Subject to approval at the next Planning Review Working Party meeting

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PLANNING REVIEW WORKING PARTY

11 February 2021 at 6.00 pm

Present: Councillors Stanley (Chairman), Mrs Cooper (Vice-Chairman, Bennett, Chapman, Coster, Lury, Roberts and Ms Thurston.

[Note: Councillor Chapman was absent from the meeting during consideration of the items set out in the following Minute – Minute 9 [Part].

7. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Councillors all declared their Personal Interests as set out below:

- Councillor Bennett as Chairman of the Development Control Committee;
- Councillor Mrs Cooper as a Rustington Parish Council Member
- Councillor Lury as Cabinet Member for Planning

8. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Working Party held on 8 December 2020 were approved as a correct record and it was agreed that these would be signed by the Chairman when it was possible.

9. CONSIDERATION OF RESIDENTS' NEEDS AND CONCERNS IN RESPECT OF PLANNING MATTERS

The Working Party received a report from the Chief Executive which confirmed that the Working Party needed to discuss measures that would ensure greater consideration of residents' needs and concerns in respect of planning matters (to include communication with the public) and to use the attached Appendix A (updated list of recommendations and improvements) to aid this discussion. As per Cabinet's request, the Working Party should also further consider Recommendation 58 'Embrace the opportunity to lead and deliver at strategic level rather than with the sub region'.

The Working Party noted that Appendix A had been updated since the version that was submitted to the Working Party on 8 December 2020 in line with Cabinet's Resolution of 14 December 2020 and had included any amendments which the Working Party agreed to. The suggested lines from Recommendation 52 had been removed from the table as agreed at Cabinet on 14 December 2020.

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Councillor Coster opened the discussion about how planning affected many residents directly and their opinion of the Council. The public needed confidence in the planning process. Issues to be debated should include the views of Parish Councils, dealing with Objectors and planning notices. Discussion followed and points raised included:

- How do we grow the knowledge of Councillors who were not on the Development Control Committee;
- More use should be made of the new application finder to enable residents to be better informed as soon as they contacted the Council about planning issues. The application finder had already been used over 7000 times in the first month of its release;
- There were good examples where planning had been community led and we should try to do more of this in the next Local Plan;
- Developers often did not involve the public in their proposals early enough and the Council needed to involve the public much more in its policy development, whilst acknowledging that this would be more resource intensive;
- Neighbourhood Plans do seem to involve communities in the development process but tended not to deal with controversial sites;
- It was important to reach out to the public proactively and continue to encourage officers to work with developers to get them on board to discuss matters with the public in a positive way, similar to the Advisory Groups;
- We need to engage better with Parishes to help them understand the planning process and meeting them more often would probably help;
- The CIL meetings and Advisory Groups had been positively received by Parishes;
- Online community consultation tools should be considered as they would help both the public and Parishes to understand the planning issues more easily. Thought needed to be given in looking at the opportunities to develop digital presence to include the wider community, especially younger members of the public;
- The need to work smarter and provide clear communications in everything we do on planning;
- The Chief Executive responded stating that resources for planning needed to be reviewed and this might lead to an increased revenue budget for planning.

Following discussion, the Working Party

RECOMMEND TO CABINET - That

- (1) the Council should influence developers to engage more constructively with Parish Councils and the public, utilising Arun District Councillors to help do this;
- (2) the Council should improve its communication, involvement and training of Parish Councillors.
- (3) Officers investigate the use of digital tools to improve public engagement;
- (4) Officers consider an online community guide to the planning system (possibly through short videos).
- (5) Cabinet to confirm that it understands that the previous four recommendations may result in resource implications (both people and financial).

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chief Executive explained that Officers were working on recommendations that directly related to Officers from the Planning Review and the intention was to bring together the Member Working Party Recommendations and the Officer Recommendations into one report. It was therefore agreed that to enable good coordination on Member and Officer Recommendations, the Working Party should be reconvened when this report was available.

It was also agreed that there would be a need to review the Planning Review on a regular basis, perhaps six monthly once the Recommendations were agreed.

Member training was discussed. The ongoing training for Members was a refresh and an update of the summer 2019 training and when completed should be sufficient for Members to sit on Development Control.

(The meeting concluded at 7.45 pm)

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