

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE - 22 SEPTEMBER 2021

SUBMITTED TO THE COUNCIL MEETING – 22 SEPTEMBER 2021

(To be read in conjunction with the Agenda for the Meeting)

Present

Cllr Paul Follows (Chairman)	Cllr Nick Palmer
Cllr Peter Clark (Vice Chairman)	Cllr Anne-Marie Rosoman
Cllr Andy MacLeod	Cllr Liz Townsend
Cllr Kika Mirylees	Cllr Steve Williams

Apologies

Cllr Penny Marriott and Cllr Mark Merryweather

Also Present

Councillor Sally Dickson, Councillor Chris Howard, Councillor Jerry Hyman, Councillor Stephen Mulliner and Councillor John Ward

EXE 25/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Agenda item 2)

There were no declarations of interest raised under this heading.

PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

Unless specified under an individual item, there are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to the reports in Part I of these minutes.

EXE 26/21 WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN PART 2 - SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES (Agenda item 3)

Councillor Andy MacLeod, Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy, Services and Brightwells introduced the report which sought approval for a further focussed consultation on the housing site allocations in Haslemere, prior to submission to the Secretary of State. He thanked the officers involved for their work in producing the documents before the Executive for consideration and advised that a special meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee had taken place on 20th September to consider the proposals. There had been broad support for three of the four recommendations, which proposed minor amendments and delegations to officers for procedural matters. The focus of the debate had been on the proposed changes to the pre-submission version of the Local Plan Part 2 (LPP2) regarding the housing site allocations in Haslemere.

Councillor MacLeod advised that a change had been proposed to the site allocations in Haslemere following the consultation, to replace the Red Court site with a site at the Royal Junior School in Hindhead. The Red Court site was due to deliver 50 houses, whereas the Junior School site could deliver around 90 houses. Although there had been no overall consensus, some members of the Overview

and Scrutiny Committee had suggested including both sites, however the Executive were of the view that the Red Court site should not be included as it had been refused by the Western Planning Committee on 20th July. An appeal against the decision would be considered by a planning inspector at an inquiry on 16th December.

Councillor Mulliner spoke on the item, highlighting the need to separate sites from the applications relating to them as they were often of varying quality. He sought clarification from the Portfolio Holder on what would happen if more objections to the Royal School site were received than to the Red Court site. He expressed concern that if the Red Court site was allowed at appeal, that the other part of the site would be developed in addition to the Royal School site.

In response the Portfolio Holder advised that any site included in the LPP2 would need to be deliverable and the reason for choosing the site had not been because of the number of objections received. The Head of Planning advised that planning permission for the Red Court site had been refused on the grounds of the impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the Area of Great Landscape Value, which had brought the deliverability of the site into question. If the Council agreed to go out to a further consultation, all comments received would be assessed and officers would bring a recommendation back to Members for consideration.

Councillor Hyman spoke on the item, seeking clarification on whether the delegated authority being recommended could be granted and whether the appropriate assessments had been carried out in respect of protected habitats and expressed concern that the approach was unlawful.

In response, the Leader advised that the Council's Planning and Legal officers had confirmed that if a proposed plan was considered likely to have a significant effect on a protected habitats site then an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site, in view of the site's conservation objectives, must be undertaken. An appropriate assessment of the draft LPP2 had been carried out. This should be read in conjunction with the appropriate assessment of LPP1, which was found sound by the Local Plan inspector.

With regard to the effectiveness of SANGs, the Council had received external legal advice from Counsel in which he confirmed its approach was lawful. Counsel confirmed that the provision of SANG had become an orthodox response to forms of development which would otherwise cause an adverse effect on a protected site.

It was ultimately the examiner's responsibility to review the draft plan, including the appropriate assessment, and conclude whether it met the criteria for soundness. Alternatively, the examiner could recommend modifications be made in order to make the plan sound and therefore capable of adoption. However, Council officers were satisfied that the appropriate assessment was lawful and were confident that it will be accepted by the examiner.

In response to Councillor Hyman, Councillor MacLeod confirmed that the proposed delegated authority was procedural, to deal with any minor modifications, or on advice from the Local Plan examiner.

Councillor Clark asked whether Local Plan Policy DM18 would weaken the protection of the Farnham/Aldershot strategic gap; and whether policy DM18 would undermine any policies in the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan. In response, Councillor MacLeod advised that the new LPP2 policy defined the Farnham/Aldershot Strategic Gap, strategically important land that separated the two towns, in a more focussed way. Policy DM18 was intended to ensure there was specific control to prevent Farnham and Aldershot becoming joined. It did not weaken controls on development elsewhere in the area.

The policy which DM18 replaced did not add a layer of control over and above the normal countryside policies, which applied to areas even outside the Strategic Gap. In that respect, DM18 would strengthen controls within the Strategic Gap. In addition, there would still be the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan Policy FNP11, which sought to prevent coalescence of settlements around Farnham, including the area around Badshot Lea and Weybourne. The Neighbourhood Plan included Policy FNP11, which dealt more widely with the coalescence of settlements around Farnham, whereas LPP2 Policy DM18, when adopted, would deal specifically with the strategic gap separating Farnham from Aldershot.

In essence, the two policies were complementary. In the text accompanying Policy FNP11, the Neighbourhood Plan acknowledged that the emerging LPP2 defined the gap between Farnham and Aldershot as a Strategic Gap.

Councillor Dickson spoke on the item, referring to the consultation responses received on the alignment of LPP2 and the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan, and seeking clarification on the difference between the strategic gap in the LPP2 and the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan and expressing concern that developers would pick up on those differences. The Leader advised that the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan policies were there to prevent the coalescence of the parts of Farnham where there was a gap. The LPP2 did not refer to those parts as they had already been covered in the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan, and LPP2 addressed the wider strategic gap between the whole borough and Aldershot, and complemented rather than contradicted the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan. The answers to both the questions on the strategic gap would be published. The Head of Planning confirmed that the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan had full weight in planning terms.

Councillor MacLeod acknowledged the concerns around protecting the area in Badshot Lea and it was felt that the proposed LPP2 would not reduce that protection. LPP1 had committed to a more focussed strategic gap and LPP2 needed to be consistent with LPP1. The Leader emphasised that many of the issues arose from Government planning policy and the Council had to ensure that its policies were compliant with Government policy.

Councillor Hyman raised a point of order that his previous points had not been addressed. The Leader advised Councillor Hyman that he had already responded to his points and therefore he would proceed to the next speaker.

Councillor Townsend welcomed the report and the recommendations, addressing the objections raised and comments made at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and proposed a change to the wording of paragraph 41.1 of Annexe 3 as follows:

“There was a general level of support for Policy DM33 for the safeguarding of the Downs Link as a sustainable movement corridor. One respondent suggested that a future light railway connection between Dunsfold Park and Guildford Railway Station should be constructed alongside the former railway line, whilst retaining the existing pathway.”

The amendment was duly seconded by Councillor MacLeod and agreed by the Executive.

The Leader concluded by thanking the officers involved in bringing LPP2 to the Executive, which reflected residents views and proposed moving one site in Witley and replacing one site in Haslemere to a more appropriate site which had both the support of residents and the town council and it was

RESOLVED

That the Executive notes the comments and observations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and makes the following recommendations to full Council:

1) That Council agrees the changes to the Pre-submission version of LPP2, set out in the Addendum attached as Annexe 1 to this report concerning the proposed housing site allocations in Haslemere and that the Council undertakes a public consultation on the Addendum for a period of 6 weeks under Regulation 19 of the Local Planning Regulations.

2) The Council agrees that the schedule of other minor changes to the presubmission version of LPP2 that have not been the subject of public consultation, set out in Annexe 2 to this report, be submitted to the examination of LPP2.

3) The Head of Planning and Economic Development be authorised to formally request that the Local Plan Examination Inspector recommends further main modifications to LPP2, if the Inspector considers that they are necessary to make the plan sound and/or legally compliant.

4) The Head of Planning and Economic Development be authorised to make any other minor modifications to the Pre-Submission version of LPP2 with regard to factual updates and corrections before the Plan is submitted for its examination.

Reason: To enable the Executive to consider the comments of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and make recommendations to the subsequent meeting of the Council on the recommendation to modify and consult on the main modifications to the pre-submission version of LPP2 before the Council formally submits it to the Secretary of State for examination.

EXE 27/21 PARKING CHARGING STRATEGY REVIEW (Agenda item 4)

Councillor Nick Palmer, Portfolio Holder for Operational and Enforcement Services introduced the report which set out a review of the current parking-charging regime following the strategic review of car parking carried out in 2019/20 and

recommendations for the future charging strategy. He proposed the following minor amendments:

- That the 3 hour charge on Saturdays in Weydown Road be £3.20 and not £6.00 in order to offer a cheaper alternative to the station car park, as set out in Annexe C.
- To defer the proposed changes to the Station Lane Milford car park pending further discussion with ward and parish councillors and community representatives, in recognition of concerns raised by Milford Councillors.
- That the discount for electric vehicles be 50% and the discount for hybrid vehicles be 25%, to address the comments raised by the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee that electric and hybrid vehicles should not be treated the same due to hybrid vehicles use of fuel.

Councillor Palmer addressed some of the consultation responses received which had not been raised at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and advised that the registration process for RingGo was simple and required no extra effort on the part of users. There had been a misunderstanding that there was a minimum charge of 50p for RingGo, however this was not the case. There was a flat fee of 10p and optional text message notifications which cost 20p each. He corrected the statement he had made at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and clarified that RingGo was in fact available at all car parks. 31 of the 78 car parks also had the facility to swipe a debit or credit card and this option would be added as machines were scheduled for refurbishment.

The discounts proposed for electric and hybrid vehicles were not proposed to be permanent as at some point all cars would be electric and a discount would no longer be appropriate. However it was intended to be an incentive to move towards climate friendly vehicles sooner rather than later. It was also not considered to be appropriate for the Council to offer free electric vehicle charging points. Appropriate signage would be installed for users of electric vehicles regarding the charges. A question had been raised over whether the Council should be subsidising those who are able to afford expensive electric vehicles, however it was felt that this was an opportunity to take action to reduce the climate emergency, particularly as the Government had determined that no new fossil fuel cars would be sold after 2030.

Councillor Ward spoke on the item and asked whether reductions in payments for key workers would be considered. In response, Councillor Palmer advised that this would be considered in more detail and come back to the Executive for consideration at a later stage as appropriate, in recognition of the role key workers play and their ability to pay parking charges in some locations.

The Leader thanked Councillors Gale and Baker for raising the issues in Milford, which would be dealt with through the amendment proposed by Councillor Palmer.

Councillor Mulliner spoke on the item, objecting to the proposal to give discounts to electric vehicles as the Council needed the income from the parking charges. He also encouraged consideration of the installation of rapid charging in car parks.

In response the Leader felt that the proposed discount would make a difference, particularly to those like Godalming Town Council who had recently purchased an

electric vehicle. Councillor Williams echoed the comments and supported the greater incentivisation for electric than hybrid vehicles.

Councillor Hyman spoke on the item, expressing concern that residents should not be given an increase greater than the rate of inflation every year and that poorer residents would have to walk further to park in an affordable car park and encouraged the Executive to consider not implementing a discount for electric vehicles until the costs of extending to all were known.

The Leader concluded the debate and asked for a seconder for Councillor Palmer's amendments, which were duly seconded by Councillor Townsend which were agreed by the Executive and it was

RESOLVED

That the Executive note the report and recommend to Council that

- I. the proposed strategic tariff structure set out in Annexe C be approved.**
- II. That in view of further information coming forward the proposed increases in charges at Station Lane Milford car park be deferred pending further discussion with ward and parish councillors and community representatives.**
- III. That the proposed discounts for Ultra Low Emission and Electric Vehicles be as follows:**
 - a. Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles will attract a 25% discount on the standard parking charge only if the payment is made using the Ringo payment method.**
 - b. Electric Vehicles will attract a 50% discount on the standard parking charge only if the payment is made using the Ringo payment method.**
- IV. Acknowledge the need to review the tariff structure on an annual basis to assess.**
 - a. general patterns of use across car parks to assess whether the charging strategy has achieved its desired objectives and whether the tariff structures need to be modified**
 - b. patterns of use in the Brightwell's Yard car park and any changes required to charging regimes, (e.g., Evening and Sunday charges?)**
 - c. the uptake of discounted charges for Ultra Low Emission (ULEV) and Zero Emission (ZEV) vehicles, its impact on income levels and whether the level of discount needs to change.**

Reason: To ensure Waverley Borough Council's (WBC) car parks.

- meet the conflicting demands of different users,
- maximise parking availability and meet consumer requirements in each of the four main settlements,
- prioritise the needs of local residents and businesses over the demand stemming from commuters,
- improve access to services and support for local economic vitality and vibrancy of town centres

- contribute to the Carbon Neutrality Action Plan by encouraging a switch to low or zero emission vehicles and modal shift to more sustainable forms of transport; and

To ensure that income from parking charges is maintained at a level that ensures adequate off-street parking provision to deliver the above and contributes to the Medium-Term Financial Plan to ensure the full range of services to protect and enhance the environment in the borough can be supported.

PART II - MATTERS OF REPORT

There were no matters falling within this category.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm and concluded at 7.00 pm

Chairman