

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY - SERVICES - 13 DECEMBER 2021

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

Present

Cllr Kevin Deanus (Chairman)
Cllr Carole Cockburn
Cllr Christine Baker
Cllr Martin D'Arcy

Cllr Jenny Else
Cllr Mary Foryszewski
Cllr Ruth Reed
Cllr Philip Townsend

Apologies

Cllr Michaela Wicks

Also Present via Zoom

Councillor Peter Marriott, Councillor Sally Dickson, Councillor Paul Follows, Councillor Andy MacLeod, Councillor Kika Mirylees and Councillor Liz Townsend

19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS (Agenda item 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Sally Dickson, Peter Marriott and Michaela Wicks.

Cllrs Dickson and Marriott joined the meeting via zoom as did Cllrs A Macleod, P Follows, L Townsend, R Seaborne and Kika Mirylees.

20 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS (Agenda item 2)

There were no declarations of interest submitted prior to the meeting, however Cllr Ruth Reed advised of a non-pecuniary interest during item 5 as she was on the board of the AONB which was an area of concern for the committee regarding one of the proposed sites in LPP2.

21 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC (Agenda item 3)

A question had been submitted by a member of the public

Mike Baudry, Haslemere

“The Council is aware of Haslemere Town Council’s representations that it supports the allocation of the Royal School within LPP2 but only on the basis of a ‘limit of development of 90 units only, being on land on which there were **previously constructed buildings or hardstanding**.’ The Leader confirmed at the Full Council meeting on 22nd September 2021 that he had responded to and would continue to listen to the community of Haslemere, as represented by HTC and its Neighbourhood Plan. It is concerning that the Officer’s report on LPP2 accompanying this evening’s meeting does not propose any amendments to the Royal School allocation in reflection of the requirements of the Town Council. The Town Council are clear that no development over the playing fields and green spaces of the site, being wholly within the AONB, must be permitted. Please can Members amend the description of the Royal School allocation to reflect the Town Council’s position.

Further Haslemere Vision has also now stated that the numbers proposed at the Royal School site seem high.”

Cllr Andy Macleod provided the following response:

“Waverley is aware that that Town Council has commented on the Addendum to LPP2 that they feel the dwellings proposed in the housing allocation for the Royal Junior School should be accommodated within the existing built-up area of the site and also that Haslemere Vision have stated that the numbers seem high. However, both the Town Council and Haslemere Vision are clear in their general support for the allocation of this site for housing. Whilst it is in the AONB, the site is classed as previously-developed land, it already has a number of buildings and areas of hardstanding on it, and is visually very well screened. The evidence that the Council has gathered concludes that there is a low to medium sensitivity to development in landscape terms. Taking these matters into account, Waverley considers that the number of dwellings proposed for the site in Local Plan Part 2 is appropriate and there is no need to change the allocation. It is recognised that it will not be possible to design an acceptable scheme for this number of units that is solely contained within the footprint of the existing buildings and hard surfaced areas. However, the Council is confident that the character of the site, its size and degree of natural screening are such that a well-designed scheme for the quantum of development as proposed in the Addendum to LPP2 can be accommodated without having an adverse impact on the countryside and AONB.”

22 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS (Agenda item 4)

There were no questions for members submitted for this meeting.

23 LPP2 (Agenda item 5)

Graham Parrott, Planning Policy Manager, outlined the report circulated with the agenda and highlighted the addendum to the pre-submission version of Local Plan Part 2.

It was explained that section 5.1 set out the main changes that were consulted on and section 6.1 outlined the key issues responded to.

Cllr Jerry Hyman had registered to speak and raised concern regarding the lack of a legal appropriate assessment and the update from Natural England on current bird numbers which had still to be submitted. He felt we could not submit LPP2 without this appropriate assessment. Zac Ellwood, Head of Planning and Economic Development assured members that an adequate appropriate assessment had been carried out.

Matt Ellis, Team Leader (Local Plans and Planning Policy) advised that Habitats regulations had been carried out on all pre submission sites and further were carried out on the modified sites.

Members discussed their reservations on the viability of the Royal School site in Haslemere and the impact on the AONB. It was felt the site was at odds with the Haslemere Neighbourhood Plan and was not sustainable due to the lack of mains drainage. Concern was also raised regarding the distance from the town centre.

The Chairman asked what percentage of the Royal School site was currently developed and was advised this would be clarified prior to tomorrow's meeting.

Graham Parrott advised that Natural England felt that SANG mitigation needed to be decided on a case-by-case basis as there was no 'Thames basin' solution.

Concern was also raised by members that the scrutiny of this document was taking place less than 24 hours prior to it being discussed at full Council. Apologies were given at this situation and it was explained that this was no ideal but in order to get the paper agreed before the end of the year this was necessary.

Members asked if Haslemere Town Council still supported the plan despite the change of site allocation? It was highlighted that page 263 of the agenda advised that they did but that this would be clarified prior to full Council.

The Committee were reminded that the LPP2 document was about a number of sites and not just one and it was imperative we had a LPP2 to protect the area from bad developments.

Officers were asked to consider the lack of policies to protect equestrian land from development and to review this in future updates.

The Committee RESOLVED:

1. That the Head of Planning and Economic Development will provide an estimate of what proportion of the Royal School site is currently covered by buildings and hard standing in time for Executive on the 14th December 2021?
3. That the Head of Planning and Economic Development will confirm in time for Executive on the 14th December 2021, whether, in light of Mr Baudry's question, Haslemere Town Council are content with the characterisation of their views in the report.
4. To recommend that at a later date the Executive should consider developing an equestrian policy to protect the unique quality of Waverley's rural settlements
5. To recommend that the Executive and Council have due regard to the following questions when debating the recommendations in section 2 of the report:
 - a) *Whether an appropriate assessment is required in order to comply with habitats regulations?*
 - b) *Whether the likelihood that future development at Royal School will exceed the footprint of existing buildings and hard surfaces at the site would threaten the setting of the neighbouring countryside?*
 - c) *Whether the Red Court site being nearer the settlement boundary and being more walkable from Haslemere makes it a more appropriate site than the Royal School? Do these factors impinge on Waverley's commitment to sustainability?*
 - d) *Whether the Executive and the Full Council can have confidence that the Royal School (including its playing fields) will be able to relocate to the Farnham Road and make the site available within the plan period?*
 - e) *Whether the cost of providing sewage infrastructure at the Royal School raises viability concerns which might impact on its deliverability?*

- f) Whether the Council has a duty to co-operate with East Hampshire District and Grayshott Parish Councils regarding the Royal School site?*
- g) Whether either, both or neither the Royal School and Red Court sites should be treated as brownfield and/or previously developed sites?*
- h) Whether the requirement identified by Acorn Consultants to provide a SANG to mitigate the impact of development at the Royal School adversely impacts the deliverability of that site?*
- i) Whether screening is an adequate response to the potential loss of green space on the Royal School site?*
- j) Whether allocating the Royal School sets an unwelcome precedent about building in AONB?*
- k) Whether a given course of action will delay adoption of LPP2 as a whole and, therefore, reduce the Council's control over development within the Borough?*

24 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC (Agenda item 6)

There were no items to discuss in exempt session so the chairman closed the meeting.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 pm and concluded at 9.02 pm

Chairman