

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

Meeting - 12 June 2014

Present: Mr Reed (Chairman)
Mr Bagge and Mr Samson

Also Present: Mrs Sullivan and Mrs Woolveridge

Apologies for absence: Mr D Dhillon, Mr Lidgate and The Earl of Stockton

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the PAG held on 13 March 2014 were received.

2. DUTY TO CO-OPERATE

In accordance with the commitment given by the Portfolio Holder at the meeting on 13 March 2014 the PAG received a report setting out the interactions that have taken place in relation to the “duty to cooperate”.

3. TOWNSCAPE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

The PAG considered a report setting out the outcome of an assessment of the townscape settlements in South Bucks carried out by consultancy firm Tibbalds.

The Townscape Character Assessment (TCA) outlines the ways in which each of the eleven main settlements in South Bucks have developed, the main points of their character and an indication of their potential for change. It goes on to identify 12 different character typologies such as “woodland roads”, “open plan suburban” and “park edge”. There are elements of many different typologies in each settlement. Each typology is analysed in detail and comments are set out about townscape, built form, hard and soft landscape and vegetation and boundary treatments. Two of the most important elements of each analysis include identification of threats to character and a series of recommendations. The report went on to show how such an analysis would be carried out in respect of woodland roads.

Although the Townscape Character Assessment (TCA) will not have undergone testing by local plan inspector, the PAG concurred that the quality of the TCA, together with its status as an independently produced report prepared by experts in the field, provided a very good context for making decisions.

The PAG therefore supported the proposal that the TCA should be adopted and used as Interim Planning Guidance (IPG). Whilst the IPG would not constitute a Supplementary Planning Document as part of the Local Development Framework, it would be a material consideration when determining planning applications.

Having received the advice of the PAG the Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to the Cabinet that the South Bucks Townscape Character Study Part 2, February 2014 prepared by Tibbalds on behalf of the Council be adopted as interim planning guidance

4. ACCOMMODATING THE NEEDS OF THE TRAVELLING COMMUNITY IN SOUTH BUCKS: FEED BACK ON ISSUES AND OPTIONS AND CALL FOR SITES PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The PAG considered a report setting out the results of the public consultation on the Issues and Options and Call for Sites Paper which is the first stage in the preparation of the Gypsy and Travellers Plan. The paper set out to provide an understanding of Gypsy and Traveller communities and the accommodation needs of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople in the ten year

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period from 2013 to 2023. The paper also explored a series of options of how the Council could accommodate the future growth of the Gypsy and Traveller population.

A total of 32 responses had been received amounting to 177 individual issues and the report identified the key issues raised in relation to the ten questions in the paper and the five sites submitted to the Council through the Call for Sites form.

The report went on to explain how the Council had worked closely with neighbouring authorities in accordance with the duty to cooperate and set out a timetable culminating in the Gypsies and Travellers Plan being adopted by the Council in December 2015.

In response to a question the Portfolio Holder agreed that it would be difficult to avoid providing sites in the Green Belt mindful that it represented 87% of the District and confirmed that discussions would continue with neighbouring authorities to encourage them to provide sites in their areas.

5. DEFINITION OF KEY SHOPPING AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PURPOSES

Following changes to permitted development rules which came into effect on 6 April 2014 allowing a change of use to residential from shops provided the shop was not larger than 150 sq. m, the PAG considered a report setting out a proposal that the following District and Local centres as defined in the Core Strategy and Proposals Map be categorised as “Key Shopping Areas” for the purpose of interpreting the new legislation:

- *District centres - Beaconsfield New Town and Gerrards Cross*
- *Local centres - Beaconsfield Old Town, Burnham, Farnham Common, Iver Village and Denham Green*

The report went on to explain why Neighbourhood Centres had been excluded from the interpretation pending the preparation of more guidance in the Development Management Local Plan.

The PAG noted that the change of use to residential through the Prior Approval process would be subject to close scrutiny in terms of the potential impact on the sustainability of the relevant shopping area.

After receiving the advice of the PAG which supported the proposal the Portfolio Holder **AGREED** to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that new definition for Shopping Areas be adopted for development management purposes

The meeting terminated at 6.42 pm