

# Special High Wycombe Town Committee Minutes

Date: 26 March 2014

Time: 7.00 - 8.24 pm

**PRESENT:** Councillor A R Green  
(in the Chair)

Councillors M Hussain JP, K Ahmed, Z Ahmed, I Bates, R B Colomb, C A Ditta, R Farmer, M Hanif, A E Hill, M Hussain, M E Knight, Ms R Knight, Miss S Manir, S F Parker, B E Pearce and Ms J D Wassell

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs L M Clarke OBE, S Graham, Ms P L Lee and C Shafique MBE

## 48 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 March 2014 be agreed as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

## 49 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of Interest.

## 50 NEW LOCAL PLAN OPTIONS CONSULTATION

Mr Ian Manktelow (Team Leader Planning Policy) and Penelope Tollitt (Head of Planning & Sustainability), gave a detailed presentation on the objectives of the New Local Plan Options consultation, which detailed the key issues affecting the District and High Wycombe in particular, including proposals for housing and business development. The consultation was scheduled to conclude on 4 April 2014.

Members heard that the consultation was called The Big Challenge Plan, which aimed to achieve high quality and sustainability with new infrastructure, jobs and homes. It was reported that various consultation events had taken place across the District including meetings with Town and Parish Councils.

Mr Ian Manktelow (Team Leader Planning Policy) commented that job density had declined across the district as a whole since 2000. Mention was made of the aspiration to protect existing employment sites and to create further sites to address employment needs.

He informed the meeting that there were a range of big infrastructure issues including the strategic road infrastructure for the A4010, and options for major new business development including a potential new M40 junction and development beyond the Marlow by-pass.

Mrs Penelope Tollitt (Head of Planning & Sustainability) presented the national housing figures from 1919 to 2011, which indicated that nationally there was a shortage of house building in recent decades. The projected population and household growth in the Wycombe District from 2011 to 2031 was presented to the meeting and this showed that there would be a higher than expected population and a need to provide in the range of 500-700 homes across the District. The main options for housing development around High Wycombe were presented to the meeting including the five Reserve sites shown to be around High Wycombe and Bourne End.

Members attention was drawn to the constraints within the District with particular regard to the significant amount of designated Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Green Belt land, which could prevent development. It was also noted that areas to the south of the District were steep sided, which limited development. The Green Belt review focussing on the south east of the District would take place in the future but had not happened yet.

Mention was made of the duty to cooperate with other authorities to ensure effective and deliverable policies on strategic cross boundary issues.

Members asked various questions in relation to the proposals, and the following views were also expressed:

- That the town would become out of balance, as all of the Reserved sites are located to the east of High Wycombe.
- The volume of traffic on the London Road would increase and cause traffic problems for residents with the introduction of Junction 3A.
- That reducing the amount of development on Booker Air Park should be considered. The larger development option would limit the flying operations that could take place. Some interest was shown in the potential for a western "SLINK" road linking the Airpark to Handy Cross.
- The importance of infrastructure was highlighted, including getting the timing of infrastructure right relative to the timing of development. Concerns were expressed about congestion, particularly on London Road.
- There was discussion about how important it was to provide jobs or whether it mattered if the town became more of a dormitory town.
- It was also highlighted that we should learn from experience with recent developments in the town.

- That the District should be looked at as a whole in relation to the existing constraints of Green Belt and AONB to ensure the best area for housing development is chosen. In order to be completely open to all possibilities. Some members suggested thinking “out of the box” and being bolder.
- Innovative ideas to address the housing need be considered including eco houses and pods.
- Additional stations to access the Chiltern Railway line should be provided.
- Stokenchurch and Saunderton were mentioned as areas that could be considered for future development.

Various comments were made by other Members present including the importance of working with neighbouring authorities, ensuring the road infrastructure would be sufficient and emphasis was placed on safeguarding employment land.

Mrs Tollitt emphasised that the work was at an early stage and no decisions had been made. She encouraged all Members to submit their own views and comments as part of the consultation. She also commented that all the comments received would be included in the consultation feedback and concluded that national policy stated that major development should not be built within an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

The Chairman thanked the officers’ for their presentation and encouraged Members to respond to the consultation.

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Chairman

**The following officers were in attendance at the meeting:**

Miss C MacKenzie	Principal Democratic Services Officer
Mr I Hunt	Democratic Services Manager
Mr I Manktelow	Team Leader Planning Policy
Ms P Tollitt	Head of Planning & Sustainability