



STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

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ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

24 October 2019

7.00 pm – 9.35 pm

Council Chamber, Ebley Mill, Stroud

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Minutes

Membership

Councillor Simon Pickering (Chair)	P	Councillor Nick Hurst	P
Councillor George James (Vice-Chair)	P	Councillor Haydn Jones	P
Councillor Chris Brine	P	Councillor Skeena Rathor	P
Councillor Paul Denney	P	Councillor Haydn Sutton	P
Councillor Jim Dewey	P	Councillor Jessica Tomblin	P
Councillor Trevor Hall	P	Councillor Tim Williams	P

P = Present A = Absent

Other Member(s) Present

Councillor Martin Baxendale	Councillor Steve Lydon
Councillor Miranda Clifton	Councillor Nigel Studdert-Kennedy
Councillor Gordon Craig	Councillor Brian Tipper
Councillor Colin Fryer	Councillor Ken Tucker
Councillor Lindsey Green	Councillor Tom Williams

Officers in Attendance

Chief Executive	Head of Planning Strategy
Interim Head of Legal Services & Monitoring Officer	The Housing Strategy and Community Infrastructure Manager
Principal Planning Officer	Democratic Services & Elections Manager
Head of Community Services	Democratic Services & Elections Officer
Senior Community Infrastructure Officer	

EC.025

APOLOGIES

There were none.

EC.026

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Having had a discussion with the Monitoring Officer, Councillor Jones, declared an interest in Agenda Item no. 6 and requested to make a statement before the Item was

discussed and would then leave the Meeting. (The Monitoring Officer granted Councillor Jones a dispensation to stay but not vote for the duration of this meeting).

Councillor Pickering, Chair of Environment Committee, stated that he worked for Ecotricity and that some of the land owned by this company was in the Local Plan. He had been advised by the Monitoring Officer that he did not need to declare an interest in this item.

EC.027 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED **That the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2019 are accepted as a correct record.**

EC.028 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Public questions were submitted. They were answered by Councillor Pickering. (Refer to the Council's webcast and [Agenda Item 4](#)).

EC.029 **COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) SPENDING ALLOCATIONS**

The Housing Strategy and Community Infrastructure Manager introduced the above report and gave a brief background to Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and the previous decisions which had been made at Committee. It was advised that some Strategic Delivery Agencies did not have any projects ready to deliver in the next financial year and they were therefore allowed to submit basic project information in the form of an expression of interest to help indicate what requests may be made in future years.

Councillor Hurst asked a question regarding the relationship between CIL and Section 106 Agreements. The Housing Strategy and Community Infrastructure Manager confirmed that sites would either have a CIL or a Section 106 Agreement, Section 106 Agreements were used on strategic development sites and CIL was used on non-strategic development sites.

Councillor Sutton further questioned the differences between Section 106 and CIL. The Housing Strategy and Community Infrastructure Manager advised that with regards CIL, the District Council retains 5% to reflect the cost of administering the scheme, a proportion of the fund is then given to the Parish for local infrastructure, this would be between 15%-25% depending on whether the Parish had a Neighbourhood Development Plan and the remaining fund is then available for strategic infrastructure projects.

Councillor Jones asked a question regarding the criteria used for approving bids and what strategic infrastructure we would be looking to fund. The Chair confirmed that the criteria on the Regulation 123 list was debated at the Committee previously and that the Committee would be able to revisit this if other priorities come forward.

Members debated the topic.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried unanimously.

RESOLVED To RECOMMEND to Strategy and Resources Committee that funding commitments are agreed according to the report.

EC.030 LOCAL PLAN REVIEW – DRAFT LOCAL PLAN FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Councillor Jones made a statement before leaving the Committee Meeting. He advised that he lived in Slimbridge Parish, close to one of the large allocations in the Draft Local Plan and had therefore been advised by the Monitoring Officer that he may need to declare an interest. He advised that he preferred a greater dispersal of development sites than the Officers had put forward in the Draft Local Plan, however was pleased that a Small Sites Policy had been included.

The Head of Planning Strategy introduced the above report and stated that the Plan looked to establish a vision and strategy for addressing the development needs of the District for the next 20 years. He advised that Appendix B set out the issues raised by communities and stakeholders and the Council response. He stated that some technical studies had been completed which had been included as background papers to the report and that further studies were to be completed over the next 6 months including full transport modelling and a sustainable transport strategy which would be published with the Plan for the start of the public consultation.

The Head of Planning Strategy confirmed that the Draft Local Plan identified moving towards becoming Carbon Neutral by 2030 as the number one priority issue for the Plan to address. The Plan established a vision for the future to live within our environmental limits and included a number of policies which looked to contribute to the achievement of a Carbon Neutral District, the Head of Planning Strategy drew the Committees' attention to Core Policy DCP1 on page 67 of 288.

Late Pages relating to recommendations by consultants Centre for Sustainable Energy who were producing a Renewable Energy Assessment of the District for the Council had been circulated to Committee prior to the meeting and hard copies were also available at the meeting. The Head of Planning Strategy asked the Committee to consider the late pages which included a revised renewable energy policy ES2 and a new policy relating to the heat supply for new developments.

The Head of Planning Strategy stated that the Local Housing Needs Assessment had confirmed the overall requirements for the Stroud District for the next 20 years which had been set by National Government, and that meeting the requirement of a 40% increase in house building would be challenging. He advised that the main changes to the Draft Local Plan since the Emerging Strategy were: the removal of sites at Minchinhampton; Dursley and Standish due to concerns regarding impact on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; further opportunities identified at Tier 3 settlements such as Frampton and Whitminster; new sites for employment growth at Javelin Park and Renishaw New Mills and the removal of some sites where there had been no evidence that they could be delivered in the future.

The Head of Planning Strategy also drew the Committees' attention to the assessment work carried out across Gloucestershire that looked at the options to meet Gloucester's unmet housing needs. This study, included as a background paper, identified sites within the Stroud District and Tewkesbury Borough that could help meet Gloucester's need. A site at Whaddon had been identified as having potential to

help address Gloucester's housing needs and would meet the Duty to Cooperate legal requirements, it had been safeguarded in the Draft Local Plan for that purpose.

Councillor Tim Williams asked about the smaller sites, self-build and single plots and how much public support these would need. The Head of Planning Strategy advised that there were a number of policies in the Plan that supported small scale development at lower tier settlements and there was a widening of the scope for rural exception sites. The small sites would require support from the Parish Council or a Neighbourhood Development Plan and would be capped so as not to exceed a 10% cumulative increase in the settlement's total dwellings.

Councillor Tim Williams also asked how housing would be kept affordable to help stop the younger demographic moving out of the District. The Head of Planning Strategy advised that if the proposed development, in a smaller rural area, was for more than 4 new dwellings then there would be a requirement to provide affordable housing which would be available as a first priority to people with a local connection.

Councillor Denney congratulated Officers for putting together a comprehensive piece of work and formulating the Draft Local Plan. He asked how the Government had set the house building target at 40% for the Stroud District. The Head of Planning Strategy advised that the Government had looked at housing projections and the relative affordability of existing houses, therefore Stroud which has had an increase in households and an increase in affordability issues had received a target which represents an increase of 40% on current Local Plan requirements. This figure could have been higher however the Government's approach includes a cap on any increase to limit it to 40%. He also stated that if the Local Plan was not submitted to the Planning Inspectorate by November 2020, we would have to accommodate more housing as the cap of 40% would no longer apply.

Councillor Hall questioned how we could ensure that developers keep to the 30% affordable housing rule. The Head of Planning Strategy thanked the Housing Strategy and Community Infrastructure Manager for her work on negotiating with developers for affordable housing. He also advised that larger sites would have a greater opportunity to ensure affordable housing levels are met and this is where the strategy focuses, rather than on smaller sites that may fall below the threshold to provide any affordable housing.

Councillor Tomblin asked whether Cam Parish Council's response to the emerging strategy had been acknowledged and considered in the Draft Local Plan. She asked how their concerns regarding the coalescence with Wisloe, Slimbridge, Cambridge and Gossington could be avoided as the M5 does not provide a suitable barrier between sites. The Head of Planning Strategy advised that they were acutely aware of the issues raised by Cam Parish Council and that although they had not responded to specific comments they would be addressing the broader points raised.

Councillor Dewey enquired as to how much pressure Stroud District Council was under to provide land to neighbouring authorities. The Head of Planning Strategy confirmed that we were under a Duty to Cooperate both to neighbours on our northern boundary and to our southern boundary. Gloucester City cannot meet its housing needs and could be approximately 6,200 houses short of meeting its needs within its own boundary. There is therefore a duty upon all adjoining authorities to identify how they can support Gloucester City. He advised that the latest study had identified 7 sites that have potential to provide housing that would help Gloucester City meet its

housing requirements, 4 of these sites were in the Stroud District. It was reiterated that the Duty to Cooperate is a legal requirement.

Councillor Tomblin echoed her previous question and read an extract of Cam Parish Council's response which stated that there needed to be a significant green barrier between parishes and any new developments to ensure that the identity and individuality of each area is retained. The Head of Planning Strategy advised that the draft allocations in Cam and Wisloe both identified the need for strategic green infrastructure, strategic landscaping and that coalescence should be avoided.

Councillor Tomblin asked for reassurance that the problems at Box Road in Cam involving the railway station would be resolved before further development is approved in the area. The Head of Planning Strategy advised that further development could provide the opportunity to enhance and upgrade facilities in terms of the station, parking and access. It was advised that the Box Road development had arisen due to not having a Local Plan in place, and therefore adopting a Local Plan and identifying proper mitigation would be the best way forward. He stated that they would be looking at the options for the Wisloe and Cam sites for improving access to the station, improving facilities at the station and ensuring traffic movements are improved.

Councillor Hurst queried whether the Duty to Cooperate applies more to authorities who were members of the Joint Core Strategy. The Head of Planning Strategy advised that the Duty to Cooperate applies equally to all neighbouring authorities.

Councillor Brine asked why more information had not been included in the Draft Local Plan regarding the potential new railway station at Stonehouse on the Bristol line. The Head of Planning Strategy advised that they had been lobbying for recognition of the need for a new train station between Gloucester and South Gloucestershire and that the Local Plan does safeguard the land at Bristol Road, Stonehouse for a new railway station. He also advised that Gloucestershire County Council are compiling a Rail Investment Strategy and are working with Network Rail to look at the future timetable to identify opportunities for more local services. Once the results from this work are available the recommendations will be included in the Local Plan.

The Head of Planning Strategy answered Councillor Dewey's questions regarding the design of sites. He advised that there were a range of policies in the Draft Local Plan that prioritised walking and cycling.

Councillor Hurst asked a question regarding the use of Brownfield sites and the displacement of existing businesses that would be using existing low cost employment accommodation on Brownfield land. The Head of Planning Strategy advised that the Council needs to ensure that we have the right amount and mix of employment sites, and that the Draft Local Plan does include an additional 60 hectares of employment land to address future needs and to offset losses of existing sites to other uses.

Councillor Tomblin asked whether there were any plans for a railway station in the new Garden Village at Sharpness. The Head of Planning Strategy advised that the Draft Local Plan does refer specifically to a new railway station to serve the new Garden Village and the potential for this was being investigated.

Councillor Sutton questioned whether Brownfield sites are subject to VAT whereas Greenfield sites can claim the VAT back. The Head of Planning Strategy confirmed

that he would ask the Finance Team to provide a response to this question following the Committee Meeting.

The Chair advised that he would now allow questions from elected Members who did not sit on the Environment Committee and asked the Chair of the Planning Review Panel to provide his report.

The Chair of the Planning Review Panel, Councillor Studdert-Kennedy, summed up the findings of the Planning Review Panel. He began by thanking the Members and Officers past and present for their work on this and advised that they had come to a cross-party agreement. Councillor Studdert-Kennedy advised that there were some adjustments that the Planning Review Panel thought could be made to the draft site allocations. The amendments that the Planning Review Panel would like to see and concerns they had, were stated as follows:

- Site PS16 at Leonard Stanley – Reduction in the number of proposed dwellings
- Site PS17 at Stonehouse – This site could interfere with a possible future railway bridge
- Site PS20 at Stonehouse – Would like the whole site to be developed not just part of it
- Site PS24 at Cam – There was concern that development should allow for and follow the contours of the site.
- Site PS35 (incorrectly listed as Site PS34 on page 137 of 288) at Wanswell – Request for clarification regarding the use of the existing playing fields.
- Site G2 at Whaddon – Would like the site at Hardwicke to be considered as a potential allocation to potentially remove the need for any development at Wisloe. The site at Hardwicke and the site at Wisloe should be further explored.
- Clearer regulations are required with regards to small scale development outside, or where there are no, settlement boundaries.

Councillor Tipper asked whether CIL was taking money away from the communities that the development was happening in. The Head of Housing Strategy advised that CIL is providing additional funding and that prior to CIL small sites would not have produced any funding for infrastructure.

Councillor Craig stated that the West of England Joint Spatial Plan (JSP) had recently been rejected at examination and that their plan, similarly to ours, relied on strategic sites rather than dispersal. He asked whether the recent rejection for South Gloucestershire is a cause for concern of our Plan. The Head of Planning Strategy advised that the rejection of the JSP was not because of a concentrated growth strategy but because of the perceived inconsistent way sites had been assessed and selected and the justification used for releasing or not releasing Greenbelt land. He stated that the Council had used the same assessment approach for all of our sites and did not have any Greenbelt in the Stroud District and therefore we should not compare our Local Plan to the JSP.

Councillor Rathor asked how the Draft Local Plan sits within the climate emergency, and were there any plans for energy and water resilience. The Head of Planning Strategy advised that the Draft Local Plan now prioritised achieving Carbon Neutral 2030 through a series of detailed policies. He also confirmed that they had consulted numerous stakeholders including the Centre for Sustainable Energy and had included

a number of policies that addressed water, energy and biodiversity resilience within the Draft Local Plan. He advised that we would welcome further comments and suggestions during the consultation period.

Councillor Clifton asked for Officers to give every consideration to finding an alternative access route to Cam and Dursley Railway Station due to the problems along Box Road. She stated that site developers are already looking at sites and drawing up plans for a larger number of dwellings that were proposed in the Draft Local Plan, she asked if we would be able to keep to the lower numbers proposed in the Draft Local Plan. The Head of Planning Strategy advised that Officers would ensure that sites would not be overdeveloped and that they would work with the promoters to encourage them to provide masterplans that are in accordance with policies, however if there were any technical reasons as to why the site capacities could be increased then this would be brought back before Members next year.

The Committee entered debate.

Councillor Hurst put forward two amendments: he proposed the removal of permitted development rights from the Small Sites Policies under an Article 4 notice; and proposed that the site at Hardwicke be included as an allocation and properly considered within the consultation period.

The Head of Planning Strategy advised that the removal of permitted development rights could be carried out by condition which would be an easier and a less time consuming approach than using an Article 4 notice. The Chair confirmed that this would therefore not be included as an amendment.

Councillor Hurst reiterated his amendment and confirmed the wording as follows “Land South of Hardwicke (Site G1 in the Emerging Strategy document) may have potential to contribute towards future housing needs and so will be included within the Draft Local Plan at this stage for the purposes of public consultation. The final list of sites will be determined when the Local Plan is considered by Council in July 2020”. Councillor Tomblin seconded this amendment.

The Head of Planning Strategy advised that an Officer recommendation and response regarding this site had been set out in Appendix B and although this amendment did not reflect Officer advice, confirmed that it would allow the Council further time to consider this site and to carry out further technical work. The Chair asked whether the inclusion of this site may be considered as an inconsistent application of our strategy by an Inspector. The Head of Planning Strategy advised that the draft Local Plan is still at the informal consultation stage and changes to both strategy and sites for allocation could still be explored.

Councillor Hurst advised that he was aware of the Duty to Cooperate issues with the site and that he believed that the site would be brought forward for development at some point either for Stroud’s or Gloucester’s housing needs and therefore should still be included within the plan for consideration.

On being put to the vote there were 11 votes for the amendment and 0 votes against with 1 abstention.

Councillor Brine advised that he supported the approval of the Draft Local Plan for the purposes of public consultation and advised that when the results came through he

would like to see Members offered the opportunity to look at it in more detail at workshops.

Councillor Rathor advised that she wanted the Local Plan to go further in terms of environmentalism and that aiming for Carbon Neutral was not enough.

Councillor Denney wanted to make it clear that as District Councillors they have no choice in the number of dwellings that need to be built in the Stroud District and that the figure of 40% had been decided by the Government. He advised that they cannot build on the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, steep hillsides, valleys, rivers or the floodplain and therefore are left with a narrow strip of land that follows the M5 as the only appropriate place in which housing can be built. He also reiterated that without a Local Plan in place developers would be able to build far more houses and therefore he would be voting for the Draft Local Plan to go out for consultation.

Councillor James stated that he would be supporting the Draft Local Plan, he advised that people within the Stroud District need housing and that the Local Plan is a good solution to this.

The Chair thanked Officers and in particular the former Director of Development Services who had worked on the Draft Local Plan. He stated that they were highly constrained by Government policy as to what they could do and how many new houses they needed to build. He stated that the Draft Local Plan was very ambitious in how it was addressing Climate Change.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried unanimously

- RESOLVED**
- 1. To approve the content of the Draft Local Plan (Appendix A) for the purposes of public consultation commencing November 2019 subject to the above amendment.**
 - 2. To delegate to the Head of Planning Strategy the authority to make minor map, textual and formatting changes to the draft document for public consultation.**

EC.031 **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

There were none.

The meeting ended at 9.35 pm.

Chair