

15 OCTOBER 2018

PLACE MAKING AND INNOVATION EXECUTIVE ADVISORY BOARD

15 October 2018

- * Councillor Nils Christiansen (Chairman)
- * Councillor Angela Goodwin (Vice-Chairman)

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| Councillor Alexandra Chesterfield | Councillor Dennis Paul |
| * Councillor David Elms | * Councillor Mike Piper |
| * Councillor Andrew Gomm | * Councillor David Quelch |
| * Councillor Jennifer Jordan | * Councillor Tony Rooth |
| * Councillor Julia McShane | * Councillor Jenny Wicks |

* Present

Councillors David Bilbé and Philip Brooker were also in attendance.

BEI12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Alexandra Chesterfield and Nikki Nelson-Smith.

BEI13 LOCAL CODE OF CONDUCT AND DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

BEI14 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Executive Advisory Board held on 10 September 2018 were confirmed as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

BEI15 TO REPORT ON THE FINDINGS OF THE PLANNING POLICY AND HOUSING DELIVERY BOARD SUB GROUP

The Planning Development Manager presented a report in respect of the findings of the Sub Group of the Planning Policy and Housing Delivery Board. The Sub Group was set up to drive forward some quick wins in relation to increasing the speed of housing delivery across the Borough. After several meetings and research, initiatives were agreed to focus on: reducing the amount of time permitted to build developments from three to two years by way of a standard condition; looking at re-using council properties for housing; removing/adjusting pre-commencement standard planning conditions; seeking viability assessments at the pre-application advice stage; modular housing training; establishing whether there were any issues likely to delay developments and understand better why some applications were not being implemented; encouraging early consultation by developers with residents and local Councillors for larger developments; asking the North Downs Housing Company to consider initiatives which could include modular housing; and analysing appeal decisions to identify recurring material themes that the Planning Inspectorate placed weight on in concluding that an appeal should be permitted.

The report invited the EAB to consider and comment on these initiatives to speed up housing delivery and to identify any further initiatives for consideration. The proposed adoption of the new Local Plan in early 2019 and past struggles to deliver a sufficient number of houses in the Borough were the reasons.

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The Planning Development Manager advised that he had recently attended a meeting of the Town and Country Planning Association which had considered the future of housing in England and identified the conversion of offices to dwellings as an issue.

Cllr Philip Brooker drew attention to a table in the report which provided a comparison between the number of housing completions per annum from 2015/16 pre-adoption of the Local Plan and the significantly higher anticipated housing supply trajectory for the five years following adoption. He advised that he had undertaken a piece of work to survey Council-owned land available for development which had identified potential sites for approximately 300 affordable dwellings. Other land would now be considered with the assistance of the Director of Community Services.

Arising from questions and discussion, the following points were made:

- The initiative to remove/adjust pre-commencement standard planning conditions largely consisted of re-wording so the conditions were no longer pre-commencement e.g. materials could be agreed following commencement.
- Groups of unused privately-owned garages could be considered for purchase and redevelopment in addition to Council-owned garage blocks and this would be looked into.
- The definition of affordable housing was changing and would be circulated to the EAB highlighting the distinctions between affordable and other types of housing.
- The Council was at risk of development driven by developers through planning applications and appeals as it currently lacked a five year housing supply.
- A more liberal interpretation of the National Planning Policy Framework concerning limited infilling was considered possible to increase housing delivery and also benefit smaller building companies which were not in position to develop larger sites.
- Although allocated development sites were preferable, the Local Plan was a guide and others could be added with brownfield sites being favoured over greenfield sites.
- A robust response to claims of lack of viability to construct affordable housing was sought. Consultants selected to undertake viability tests were the Council's choice.
- The construction industry's capacity to build on the scale of the housing trajectories was doubted and it was suggested that apprenticeships could be the way forward. Flooding the market may also be a concern for builders, although larger sites could be developed in phases in line with relevant planning conditions.

On behalf of the EAB, the Chairman thanked the Sub Group for its work and expressed support for the initiatives and the work being undertaken by Councillor Philip Brooker. The involvement of North Downs Housing was welcomed.

BEI16 STOKE PARK MASTERPLAN

The Parks and Landscape Manager gave a presentation in respect of the Masterplan for Stoke Park, which was one of the largest parks in Surrey and received 250,000 visits per annum improving Guildford as a place to live and work. The presentation outlined links with the Corporate Plan, the consultation and evidence base, key outcomes for development, strategy for delivery, proposed Masterplan brief, delivery and resources. It also posed three questions for the EAB to consider around the evidence base, the proposed brief as set out in Section 4 of the summary paper and the proposed strategy for delivery as set out in Section 5 of the paper.

Producing a Masterplan for Stoke Park to make it a vibrant community park and visitor destination was an objective in the Corporate Plan. The consultation had been completed with a representative sample of the Borough's residents, including both users and non-users, and clubs and stakeholders. In total 1,968 responses were received and analysed revealing that consultees had a very positive perception of the park. There had also been Green Flag assessment and feedback and officer input to strengthen the evidence base. Key outcomes for development, improvement and investment in

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play areas, catering and toilet facilities, parking provision, protection and enhancement of the park's heritage, protection of nature and the environment, enabling events, provision of sports pitches and facilities, and use and development of existing buildings. The strategy for delivery featured the Masterplan, wider parks strategies and day to day management. The proposed Masterplan brief covered the whole park and included catering, the play area, parking, heritage, hard infrastructure, nature and wildlife, and the park's assets. Delivery featured a programme of projects which would take up to 15 years to provide and require significant capital investment and funding. The process for delivery featured resources and governance, Masterplan procurement, production of the Masterplan, developing business cases, and commissioning and delivery. Additional officer and external technical resources were required. The additional officer resource would be a Stoke Park Project Officer overseen by a Project Board including councillors followed by the procurement of viable schemes. The provisional capital bid needed approval and options and business cases required further development as work proceeded.

Arising from questions and discussion, the following points arose:

- Stoke Park was visited by people living outside the Borough in addition to local residents.
- Although parking, which was concentrated at the western end of the Park, was an issue when the Park was in full use, it was felt that alternative options and locations should be explored before the parking capacity was increased as this would reduce the size of the Park. The location of any additional parking would need to be considered. The consultation responses indicated that 50 per cent of Park users travelled there by car and most of the rest on foot. It was felt that sustainable transport, in particular use of bicycles and trains instead of cars, should be encouraged.
- A community café featuring the history of the Park was welcomed and would be an attraction.
- Feedback from people with disabilities was that accessibility was not a strong feature of the Park and this was addressed in the Masterplan. The Guildford Access Group could assist in this area and the sensory garden and accessible play equipment could be improved.
- The Masterplan was sensitive to the desire to retain the green areas of the Park and use of the plant nursery area could be improved as an attraction.
- Officers were complimented on the thorough consultation exercise, responses from which indicated that the Royal Horticultural Society at Wisley was the most favoured alternative destination where there was plenty of parking and play facilities which were an attraction.
- It was felt that all existing facilities at the Park should be retained and the priorities of addressing the play area, catering and then the parking situation were supported.
- The budget for the Masterplan through to the delivery of some of the projects was £500,000. Work on any project found to be unviable would be discontinued and resources applied to another project. Concern was expressed that further details of the Masterplan would be required before agreeing to such a large spend.
- Although the level of cycling to access the Park was low, there were cycleways through the Park linking London Road, the Spectrum and tow path. Increased connectivity was sought.
- As the Park could facilitate a wide range of activities, it was possible that conflicting and competing preferences may arise.
- The Park was not financially self-supporting although income was derived from the hire of sports pitches and catering.
- The possible introduction of some allotments at the park was suggested.

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- There was scope to improve health and wellbeing through organised activities such as park runs.
- Historic memorabilia could be gathered to celebrate the Park's forthcoming 100 year anniversary of being in Council ownership.
- Consideration would need to be given to promoting and marketing the Park.

Having been thanked by the Lead Councillor for its useful comments, the Board expressed support for the Masterplan and a wish to be involved in the further stages of the Park's development.

BEI17 PROGRESS WITH ITEMS PREVIOUSLY CONSIDERED BY THE EAB

It was agreed that the format of this document be refreshed in order to facilitate the receipt of updates in respect of areas of interest such as the Guildford Museum development project and multi-use sports pitches.

Reference was made to the recent Council decision to establish a cross party task and finish group to review EABs. Councillors Mike Piper, Jenny Wicks and Tony Rooth expressed an interest in joining this Group.

BEI18 EAB WORK PROGRAMME

The E-Cluster item scheduled for the February meeting of the Board was welcomed and suggested were sought as to when the unscheduled items should be considered. It was agreed that the Future Plans and Progress on the Regeneration of Guildford town centre should be broadened to include retail.

The meeting finished at 9.00 pm

Signed

Chairman

Date