

AYLESFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Tuesday 23 October 2018

Commenced 8.10pm

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Preliminary discussion related to Aylesford Parish Council's response to the TMBC Draft Local Plan

MINUTES

Present: Cllrs Balcombe (in the Chair), Balcombe, Elvy, Mrs Gadd, Gledhill, Ludlow, Rillie, Wright

Others: Borough Councillors Sullivan and Walker

In attendance: Mr Harris, Clerk Mrs Collier, Deputy Clerk

Apologies: Cllrs Base, Ms Dorrington, Kennedy, Smith, Winnett

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1. Apologies noted and reasons accepted as follows:

Cllrs Base (personal), Ms Dorrington (personal), Kennedy (unwell), Smith (personal), Winnett (family commitment)

2. Declarations of Interests

Cllr Walker – TMBC Borough Councillor.

The Chairman noted that Borough Councillor (and Parish Councillor) Walker was in attendance this evening. It was agreed that Cllr Walker would remain in attendance at the meeting but would take no part in the discussions/decisions.

Cllr Sullivan – TMBC Borough Councillor

The Chairman stated that Borough Councillor Sullivan was attending the meeting this evening in order to report back to Members on the public meeting held in Eccles on Sunday 21 October to consider the Bushey Wood proposals in the DLP. Members agreed to BC Sullivan taking part in the discussion this evening.

There were no other declarations of interests additional to those contained in the Register of Members' Interests.

3. Preliminary discussion related to Aylesford Parish Council's response to TMBC Draft Local Plan (DLP). Deadline for responses Monday 19 November – 4pm.

The Clerk introduced the DLP to Members. A very lengthy and detailed document which he is in the process of reviewing. This document has been agreed by TMBC, is now available for public consultation and comment until 19 November and will then go before the Planning Inspector together with the comments received in January 2019. Following this the Planning Inspector will hold a Public Inquiry and his decision is not expected until March 2020.

There are two main areas for Aylesford Parish Council to consider and comment on: Bushey Wood, Eccles and Aylesford South.

Bushey Wood

The Chairman invited Borough Councillor Sullivan to report on the public meeting held in Eccles on 21 October 2018.

Cllr Sullivan thanked the Committee for the opportunity to speak to them. The meeting had been very well attended by the public. Also in attendance were all the Borough Councillors for the Ward and Eccles three Parish Councillors.

Initial comments were made by the public expressing concern that the local Borough Councillors had not voted against the DLP and that there had been some widely publicised voting irregularities. Cllr Sullivan advised that the TMBC Advisory Board had recommended the Plan to the Cabinet that whilst recognising these irregularities, the vote at the TMBC Council meeting was 39 in favour and 6 against which was a significant majority in the Council meeting whilst the Advisory Board was, as its name indicates, advisory and so the vote at Council was clear. If the DLP had not been agreed and therefore not met the deadline of reaching the Planning Inspector by January 2019, the percentage of housing increase required would have risen by a further 20%. Local Borough Councillors had therefore voted for the DLP in order to avoid this increase.

Members of the public voiced their concerns regarding the number of dwellings proposed, the lack of infrastructure in all public service areas ie. doctors, schools and particularly roads. They indicated that every slight incident on a local road or motorway results in traffic chaos. KCC anticipated use of the new Peters Village bridge was greatly under estimated and this is without Peters Village being yet fully occupied.

There was also reference to the lack of infrastructure detail in the LDP, the effect and loss of wildlife and open space, the potential loss of the Eccles Football Club and allotments. There is no guarantee they will be relocated.

The number of dwellings proposed will treble the size of Eccles. This is not conducive to village life and the reason that existing residents have chosen to live in Eccles.

Cllr Sullivan reported that a number of residents are interested in forming an Action Group which he has offered to Chair. He asked if the Parish Council would be willing to ask the Clerk to meet with the Action Group to advise and assist on how they should word and make their comments on the DLP. This was **agreed** and Cllr Sullivan will liaise with the Parish Office when he has the Group representative's details.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Sullivan for his input this evening.

The Clerk asked for guidance on how Members wished to respond to the Bushey Wood proposals.

Members considered the points to come out of the Eccles public meeting. The Clerk advised that sound arguments have to be made, linked back to planning policies, not just 'it's too many houses'.

It could be argued that trebling the size of Eccles village is contrary to the Policy LP5 in the Plan that states development should be proportional to the scale and character of the village.

The Committee wanted to see more details on the infrastructure in the Plan. They would wish to see infrastructure, particularly roads, improved to be able to cope with existing pressures as well as any future development.

They would wish to see the overall number of dwellings reduced to ensure the future of Eccles as a village but with that level of housing there had to be the provision of the necessary infrastructure.

Aylesford South (Hermitage Lane)

The Clerk stated that there is no formal legal requirement to retain a 'green belt' between Aylesford and Maidstone. However the Committee felt it was right to provide some form of green barrier between Aylesford and Maidstone running from the Aylesford South site through to the East Malling Research Centre.

Members expressed concerns re road access to Maidstone Hospital and air quality around the hospital.

Members expressed the views that other areas of the Borough have not been considered sufficiently for further development and that the loss of this site at Aylesford South could be accommodated at Kings Hill.

If development goes ahead it would need to be at the numbers that would allow some form of green barrier to be retained but also provide infrastructure improvements in order to cope not only with the dwellings proposed but also for the dwellings already agreed but not yet completed and those already existing infrastructure issues.

The Chairman thanked the Clerk for his explanation and Members for their input. The Clerk will begin drafting the APC response and report on this initially to the Planning Committee on 6th November, with the response being agreed at a meeting on 13 November in order to meet the deadline of 19 November.

There being no further business, meeting closed at 9.20pm.