

Minutes of the Sevenoaks Town Neighbourhood Development Plan Steering Committee
meeting held on the 29th February 2016, 6pm, Sevenoaks Town Council Offices

In attendance: Cllr Raikes (Chairman), Cllr Hogarth (Vice Chairman), Cllr Piper, Cllr Hunter, Cllr Canet, Cllr Walshe, Cllr Purves, Cllr Parry, Roger Walshe, Barry Vanns, Flora Hill, Geoff Brown, Glenn Ball, Sarah Williams, Graham Hill, John Bennett, Linda Larter, Hugh D'Alton

Apologies: Elizabeth Dolding, John Morrison, Roger Lee.

1. Declarations of Interest

None

2. Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on the 18th January 2016 were received and approved.

Cllr Piper noted that under 3.1.a there had been circa 250 submissions to Sevenoaks District Council during the call for sites, and that a preliminary list of all sites would be made public as part of the agenda for the Sevenoaks District Council Planning Advisory Committee Meeting on the 21st June 2016.

3. Design review panel

The Committee received and considered the report on proposals for a Design Review panel for Sevenoaks, introduced by Sarah Williams a local architect.

It was noted that the creation of panels was encouraged by the National Planning Policy Framework, and that they existed in all London Boroughs. Meetings had taken place with Sevenoaks District Council but it was not believed any progress had been made.

Concern was expressed at the possible difference in opinion between professionals sitting on the panels, and the views of local members and the electorate. It was noted that panels could be tailor made to include professionals with extensive local knowledge, and that the recommendations of the panel were not binding on the Local Planning Authority when an application was eventually submitted.

It was considered that the NDP could identify specific sites of importance, for which an additional level of architectural review prior to planning would be beneficial e.g. key gateway sites

Of the two options put forward, it was considered to be more sensible to attempt to adapt Design South East's offering for Sevenoaks, rather than the creation of an independent Sevenoaks panel.

It was **RESOLVED** that a representative of Design South East be invited to a future meeting to present on the benefits that come from involving a design panel in the pre application stage.

4. Site allocations

The Committee considered the following sites and made the following observations:

4.1 BT Telephone Exchange

It was noted that this was a key site within the Town Centre and could also be viewed from many different areas of Sevenoaks, the scale and height of any development would need to be carefully considered. It was suggested that the NDP include a policy that requires any future developer to have to produce 3d renders from various locations in Sevenoaks to be submitted as part of any planning application.

There should either be retail or employment space on the ground floor as it was noted that retail may not be viable due to the lack of footfall past the building.

There may be scope for parking on the lower levels to reduce the impact of residential development on the site.

Sevenoaks Town Council had identified the area as having the ability to provide cultural provision to include it within the proposed 'arts quarter' of the Town.

4.2 Secondary Shopping Areas

It was noted that the area around Sevenoaks Station was likely to change over the course of the plan, and could benefit from a small scale masterplanning exercise focused on the area.

4.3 Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve

It was noted that the committee hoped to promote the wildlife reserve, and improve access both to the site and within the site.

The site is currently owned by the Kent Wildlife Trust on a long lease, John Bennett the Chief Executive of the Trust addressed members of the Committee noting that while the Trust shared some of the aspirations it lacked resources to implement these. It is hoped that the NDP can act as a catalyst for future funding towards initiatives to improve access to the Reserve.

5. Northern Sevenoaks

It was noted that talks had taken place and were ongoing with Sevenoaks District Council on the possibility of conducting a masterplanning exercise to look at the future of development within Northern Sevenoaks.

6. Dates of future meetings

It was noted that following dates had been set for future Steering Committee meetings, and that all meetings would begin at 6pm and finish at 6:55pm. All of these meetings are open to the general public who are encouraged to attend.

- a. 11th April 2016

Meeting concluded at: 6:58pm