

**Minutes of the Environment and Sustainability Committee
8 November 2022**

Present:

Councillor I.J. Beardsmore (Chairman)
Councillor R.J. Noble (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

M. Beecher	K.M. Grant	L. E. Nichols
J. Button	K. Howkins	O. Rybinski
A. Brar	V.J. Leighton	J.R. Sexton
N.J. Gething	S.C. Mooney	

Substitutions: Councillors C. Bateson (In place of T. Fidler)

Apologies: Councillors R.O. Barratt and T. Fidler

79/22 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2022 were agreed as an accurate record.

80/22 Disclosures of Interest

There were none.

81/22 Questions from members of the Public

There were two questions from members of the public. These were raised during the relevant agenda item.

82/22 Ward Issues

There were none.

83/22 Presentation on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure

Plan

The Committee received a presentation from Surrey County Council and Atkins Global on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP).

The presentation covered the objective and scope of the LCWIP, the types of infrastructure that could be installed with the plan, and maps of proposed and aspirational routes. The presentation also clarified how the project was funded and would be implemented over a ten year period. Once funding was secured, a feasibility exercise would be undertaken over an approximate ten month period before construction on the routes began.

The Committee expressed concern at the gaps in routes surrounding Staines, and the team explained that the Staines Development Framework would incorporate their own travel plans that would be linked with the LCWIP. The Strategic Planning Team had liaised with and would continue to communicate with the LCWIP team to ensure that appropriate routes were assigned. The Committee requested reassurance that Staines would be included in future funding and plans if there were delays in adopting the Staines Development Framework. The LCWIP team agreed that there would be no exclusion from funding and the Group Head of Regeneration and Growth would seek written reassurance.

The Committee also raised that Shepperton, Charlton Village, and Laleham did not appear in the immediate plans. It was clarified that the plans were not final and were subject to a phased approach, funding, and coordination with other departments within Surrey.

The Committee **resolved** to note the presentation on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan from Surrey County Council and Atkins Global.

84/22 Staines Development Framework

The Committee considered a report on the Staines Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document.

Two questions were received from members of the public in relation to this agenda item.

Question one from Peter Bower:

“In relation to Staines and the Staines Development Framework, how many of the 331 responses to the public consultation on the Local Plan came from residents or traders in Staines, how many of the 1,200 issues raised were from these residents or traders, and what proportion of these support what the Staines Development Framework and Local Plan intend for Staines?”

Response from the Chair:

“Officers advise me that the consultation portal does not require users to input a physical address or the nature of the respondent’s interest, such as a

resident or trader, as this information is not necessary for a formal consultation on a planning document. Some respondents have provided this information in the text of their response by stating that they live or work in Staines, for example, and all responses will be made publicly available once officers have finished their analysis and are ready to submit the Local Plan to the Secretary of State. However, any addresses provided will be redacted for data protection reasons. The Planning Inspector will not require this information either but will have access to all the representations for the Examination, plus those who have made comments were given the opportunity to request to speak at the public hearing sessions and can state their interest when doing so.”

Question two from Graeme Lock:

“In the Local Plan, and in relation to the Staines Development Framework, why has what might constitute an ‘exemption’ to the proposed zoning scheme for Staines been so loosely defined, and why is there no definition of who will decide what can be accepted as an ‘exemption’?”

Response from the Chair:

“This is a question relating to the Local Plan where the zoning and 'exemption' sit rather than the Staines Development Framework but I will answer it. Members of the Staines Development Task Group and the Local Plan Task Group met many times with officers and the consultants to discuss the issue of zoning in Staines and whether an exemption should be included, and if so, how this should be worded. It is important that the policy provides some flexibility to allow for the merits of a planning application to be considered in full when weighing against the potential harm of a development in the planning balance or we risk it being struck out altogether for not being sound. The recommendations of the task groups were then reported to this committee and to the full Council, where the documents were agreed on 26 April and 19 May respectively following much discussion. As I said, the zoning policy wording sits within the Local Plan and it will now be for the Planning Inspector to consider its soundness and effectiveness, including any exceptions to it and how they should be expressed. Officers advise me that many representations have been received on this issue so we expect it to be the subject of lively debate at the examination hearings. These include representations from those who oppose zoning in principle, even with the exception included. If the Local Plan is adopted with the policy intact, it will be for the Council as the Local Planning Authority to assess any planning applications that seek to rely on an exception to the policy, and the Planning Inspectorate in the event of an appeal.”

Following public consultation on the Staines Development Framework, responses had evaluated and amendments suggested to the document. The Staines Development Task Group reviewed and agreed the amendments, and recommended them to the Committee.

Some members of the Committee expressed concern at the housing figures the Staines Development Framework and Local Plan were seeking to meet. The Strategic Planning Manager explained that the most recent

announcement from central government confirmed the housing numbers target and that changes to housing figures could affect green belt site release but would not affect development of Staines.

Some members of the Committee raised that the risk or financial implication sections of the report had not addressed the potential impact of zoning on the Council's developments as had been presented to members at other committees. The solicitor advised that the Environment and Sustainability Committee was considering the report in terms of planning policy and other considerations may have been presented to other committees depending on their remit. The solicitor suggested that he would circulate advice to members on the difference between the Council being a Local Planning Authority and the Council submitting planning applications for its own developments.

The Committee **resolved** to agree the final version of the Staines Development Framework Supplementary Planning Document (SDF).

85/22 Update to Local Development Scheme

The Committee considered a report to agree publication of the updated Local Development Scheme.

The timetable for preparing the new Local Plan had been updated to reflect current progress and anticipated timescales through preparation and adoption.

The Committee queried if there would be any issues regarding purdah if councillors wished to attend the public meetings with the planning inspectorate, and it was advised that advice would be provided from the Monitoring Officer to help clarify this with members. The Committee also suggested that a session on the Local Plan be included in induction for new members after the election in May 2023.

The Committee **resolved** to agree the publication of the updated Local Development Scheme.

86/22 Green Initiatives Fund - Climate Change SPD

The Committee considered a request for funding from the Green Initiatives Fund for an external contractor to produce a Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). A working group formed of a number of departments in the Council had compiled a brief that would help inform the SPD. Climate Change SPD's used by other local authorities had also been researched. Once completed, the SPD would be a supporting document for the existing Local Plan and future Local Plan.

The Committee noted that the supplementary planning document would provide more guidance and could more easily be amended than the Local Plan. The Committee queried the budget for the contractor and the Climate

Change Officer confirmed that the amount requested was based off costs charged for other local authorities.

The Committee **resolved** to approve funding of £30,000 from the Green Initiatives Fund for an external contractor to produce a Climate Change Supplementary Planning Document.

87/22 Updates from Task and Finish and/or Working Groups

The Committee received a verbal update on the work of the Staines Development Task Group and the Local Plan Task Group from the Strategic Planning Manager.

The Staines Development Task Group had completed their assigned task, and there were no further updates to provide.

The Local Plan Task Group had not met as officers were still analysing responses to the Local Plan consultation. The Strategic Planning Manager provided an update on responses received to the consultation, including the number and type of respondents, and general concerns raised in comments raised in respect of site allocations and policies. It was confirmed that all comments would be passed on to the planning inspector and would be made public when the plan was submitted.

The Committee requested that a list of councillors who had responded to the consultation be circulated.

It was proposed by Councillor Bateson and seconded by Councillor Noble and **resolved** to suspend Standing Orders so the meeting could continue until the close of business.

Councillor Noble provided a summary of items considered by the Climate Change Working Group as well as training that had taken place. Communications had also gone out to members of the public regarding riparian rights.

A member of the committee raised concern that some communications on riparian rights had been sent erroneously to residents living along the River Thames. The Group Head of Commissioning and Transformation advised this would be corrected.

The Committee **resolved** to note the updates on the Staines Development Task Group, the Local Plan Task Group, and the Climate Change Working Group.

88/22 Forward Plan

The Committee considered the forward plan for future Committee business.

The Committee requested that an update on flooding issues be provided at a future Committee meeting, either as part of the update on Climate Change Strategy or as a separate item.

The Committee **resolved** to note the Forward Plan for future Committee business.