

TENTERDEN TOWN COUNCIL



MINUTES OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE HELD AT TENTERDEN TOWN HALL ON 14th AUGUST 2017

Councillors Present: M. Carter, H. Edwards, Miss N. Gooch, R. Isworth, R. Lusty (Chairman), K. Mulholland & J. Nelson.

Officers Present: Town Clerk Mr. P. Burgess.

Others Present: Cllrs. Mrs. S. Ferguson and A. Sugden (not members of this committee). Cllrs. P. Clokie & J. Link (of ABC) and 3 members of the public.

6658 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE.** Cllrs. Mrs. J. Curteis & Dr. Lovelidge.

6659 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

6660 **MEMBERS' QUESTIONS.**

6661 **ABC LOCAL PLAN TO 2030 – TENTERDEN TOWN COUNCIL RESPONSE.**

Cllr. Carter stated that the reason for requesting the meeting was that the Local Plan needed to be on a robust footing to protect Tenterden from additional ad-hoc development. The housing trajectory in the draft Local Plan made various assumptions – in particular, that Tent1B would be fully built out with 225 units (more than originally envisaged) by 2023 – but those assumptions might be unreliable; if they proved to be false, the Local Plan would not be robust, resulting in unplanned development taking place as it increases the likelihood of appeals, as in the case of the site at the rear of Tilden Gill, which had never been allocated for development.

The Town Council had previously been asked by ABC to choose between two prospective sites for large-scale development - the land to the rear of Westwell Court and the land between Appledore and Woodchurch Roads (the Wates site). The Town council had selected the latter as the most suitable site, but neither was included in the current draft of the Local Plan; it seemed odd that, so recently, the borough council had thought it necessary to identify another site for housing development allocation, but now was not proposing either. Cllr Lusty pointed out that the Local Plan was borough-wide, and a failure to develop an allocated site in Tenterden did not necessarily mean that another site would be required in Tenterden; it could be elsewhere in the borough.

Cllr. Clokie agreed that if any of the developments in the current Local Plan failed to deliver, the shortfall could be met anywhere within the borough and not necessarily within Tenterden. He emphasised that the borough council wanted all development to be "absorbable": no community should have imposed on it a level of development that it could not absorb. He also stated that ABC had sufficient housing to meet the government's rolling 5-year housing land supply plan (5YHLSP) with a 20% buffer. He felt the Wates site should come in the next phase of development but accepted that site – or another site in Tenterden – could come in under review if sites such as Tent1b did not meet development

targets. He was, however, confident that targets were achievable without inclusion of the Wates site and Cllr Lusty re-iterated that the targets were borough-wide and not Tenterden-centric.

Councillors generally expressed concern regarding the proposed increase in number of houses on the Tent1b development (from the planned maximum of 175 units to 225 units) as this was contrary to the findings of consultations and workshops held with the residents, which advised that the housing density should be reduced as the site was built out towards the boundary with the countryside. That development had been specifically intended to be low-density. Cllr Clokie suggested that instead of the additional housing a low-cost workers car park could be included in the development or Section 106 funding from the development could be used to fund additional (decked) parking closer to town.

Cllr. Clokie assured the meeting that it had been judicially decided (contrary to the applicant's arguments in the Tilden Gill appeal) that existing planning policies stand until replaced: they do not simply expire or become out-of-date and unenforceable.

Concern was also expressed over the merit of the Pope House Farm development: although this falls within High Halden Parish, the would-be residents would inevitably see Tenterden and St Michaels as their local community, increasing traffic and imposing further burdens on the infrastructure there. Cllr. Carter expressed a clear preference for the Wates development, particularly as it would satisfy the town's long-standing requirement for sports pitches whilst allowing the Town Council to spend its land sale windfall budget elsewhere, and would make the housing provision more robust.

The desire to improve the High Street layout to smooth traffic flow while not worsening the pedestrian environment was expressed.

It was **AGREED** that the following response would be made to the Local Plan consultation:

- (a) Tent1b should return to the original allocation of 175 houses
- (b) A low-cost workers car park could be included on that development provided measures were introduced near the town centre to deter worker parking in residential areas.
- (c) Include the Wates development in the Local Plan conditional on the sports pitches and facilities proposed by the Sports Review group being provided at the outset of the development; this would compensate for not increasing the density of the proposed Tent1B development, probably render the Pope House Farm site unnecessary and add more provision overall to make the Local Plan more robust.
- (d) The council was not in favour of the Pope House Farm development. However, this decision should remain with High Halden Parish; it was hoped that allocating the Wates site would make this development unnecessary.
- (e) Section 106 payments from the developers should provide for:
 - (i) additional GP and healthcare facilities;
 - (ii) increased primary school capacity;

- (iii) High Street improvements to streamline traffic flow without letting through traffic dominate the use of the High Street as a local facility;
- (iv) extra provision for parking near the High Street, by introducing decking in one or more existing car parks;
- (v) improved sports facilities if the Wates development (item c above) does not go ahead and, ideally, a country park facility (which Wates have said could be incorporated in their proposed development).

It was also agreed that the town council should seek confirmation from the borough planning officers of the extent to which, if an allocated site in Tenterden was not developed in the planned timeframe, alternative provision would be required in Tenterden rather than elsewhere in the borough, bearing in mind the principle that all development should be "absorbable" by the community where it is located.

6662 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS.** None.

The meeting opened at 7.00pm and closed at 8.45 pm

The foregoing Minutes and Report were confirmed and signed at a meeting of the Planning Committee on the 29th Day of August 2017.

Chairman _____ (29.08.2017)