

## TWYFORD PARISH COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning and Amenities Committee held via Zoom on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> October 2020 at 7:30pm.

**Present:** Mrs B Ditcham (Chair), Mr C Wickenden (Vice-Chair), Mr R Abeywardana, Mr M Alder, Mrs L Ashley, Mr M Bray, Mrs A Evans, Mr J Jarvis, Mrs L Jarvis & Mr R Mantel.

**Minutes:** Lynn Povey (Assistant Clerk).

1. **Public Questions** – None.
2. **Apologies** – Mrs S Wisdom.
3. **Declaration of interest in items on the agenda** – None.
4. **Dispensations** – None.
5. **Action points.**
  - 5.1 White Paper – Planning for the Future (15.09.20). Deadline for comments to the consultation is the 15/10/20 for NALC and the 29/10/20 for GOV.UK.
    - Discussion of the consultation. Comments that Councillors and members of the public wish to be noted must be received by Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> October. Please direct any comments to [assistant.clerk@twyfordparishcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:assistant.clerk@twyfordparishcouncil.gov.uk)

The Committee agreed for Mrs B Ditcham & Mr C Wickenden to submit the following comments (made in bold) via GOV.uk & NALC on behalf of Twyford Parish Council and in response to the 'White Paper – Planning for the future' consultation and asked the Assistant Clerk to promote this consultation via the Twyford Parish Council website and social media pages:

### TPC RESPONSES to:-

White Paper: Planning for the Future

#### Pillar One – Planning for development

##### Page 23

Questions 1. What three words do you associate most with the planning system in England?

**Complex, Non-holistic, Thorough.**

2. Do you get involved with planning decisions in your local area? [Yes / No]

**Yes.**

2(a). If no, why not? [Don't know how to / It takes too long / It's too complicated / I don't care / Other – please specify]

**N/A.**

3. Our proposals will make it much easier to access plans and contribute your views to planning decisions. How would you like to find out about plans and planning proposals in the future? [Social media / Online news / Newspaper / By post / Other:

**All the above. For example, public enquiries should be streamed and screened on a dedicated TV channel.**

4. What are your top three priorities for planning in your local area? [Building homes for young people / building homes for the homeless / Protection of green spaces / The environment, biodiversity and action on climate change / Increasing the affordability of housing / The design of new homes and places / Supporting the high street / Supporting the local economy / More or better local infrastructure / Protection of existing heritage buildings or areas / Other – please specify]

**The environment, biodiversity and action on climate change / Increasing the affordability of housing / More or better local infrastructure.**

##### Page 25

Question 5. Do you agree that Local Plans should be simplified in line with our proposals? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**No. This will encourage speculative proposals that are aimed at increasing the land bank rather than providing houses. There needs to be strict control of the build out of developments to ensure that developers fulfil their commitments as well as ensuring sustainable and well-designed developments.**

Page 26

Question 6. Do you agree with our proposals for streamlining the development management content of Local Plans, and setting out general development management policies nationally? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**No. Local Plans must reflect local requirements as not one size fits all national policies.**

Page 27

Questions 7(a). Do you agree with our proposals to replace existing legal and policy tests for Local Plans with a consolidated test of “sustainable development”, which would include consideration of environmental impact? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Yes.**

7(b). How could strategic, cross-boundary issues be best planned for in the absence of a formal Duty to Cooperate?

**There must be a formal Duty to Cooperate as without it, stalemate or unacceptable developments will occur.**

Page 29

Questions 8(a). Do you agree that a standard method for establishing housing requirements (that takes into account constraints) should be introduced? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**No. There should be regional strategic policies aimed at promoting growth where necessary. The doubling of housing requirement for Wokingham Borough whilst areas such as the north east are reduced shows how inappropriate a national standard is.**

8(b). Do you agree that affordability and the extent of existing urban areas are appropriate indicators of the quantity of development to be accommodated? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Not sure. There is a need to encourage housing to ensure demand is met but without a parallel strategy to encourage demand elsewhere this will exacerbate uncontrolled development in ‘desirable’ areas. For example, in areas such as ours without a large amount of brownfield sites the pressure on green areas will increase dramatically.**

Page 30

Questions 9(a). Do you agree that there should be automatic outline permission for areas for substantial development (Growth areas) with faster routes for detailed consent? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**No. An externally imposed growth area would impact on the local area and may conflict with the local plan.**

9(b). Do you agree with our proposals above for the consent arrangements for Renewal and Protected areas? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Yes. As the NPPF will still be in force this means that we will still need to operate with the current system even with streamlining. Whilst this is more complex it does give some safeguards for localities.**

9(c). Do you think there is a case for allowing new settlements to be brought forward under the Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects regime? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Not sure. Whilst it would be advantageous to have some national projects so that investment can be bought in ahead of time there needs to be adequate safeguards and controls for local decisions to be included in the process. There should be clear, transparent, and compelling reasons to allocate such projects.**

Page 32

Question 10. Do you agree with our proposals to make decision-making faster and more certain? 33  
[Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**No. The need for scrutiny, transparency and accountability must not be lost due to tight time constraints. Also, the administration needs to be suitably resourced to ensure that timescales can be achieved.**

Page 34

Question 11. Do you agree with our proposals for accessible, web-based Local Plans? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Yes. We have them already. The digital proposals seem weak and obvious and do not go far enough.**

Page 35

Question 12. Do you agree with our proposals for a 30-month statutory timescale for the production of Local Plans? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Not sure. We propose a statutory timescale with intermediate targets.**

Page 36

Questions 13(a). Do you agree that Neighbourhood Plans should be retained in the reformed planning system? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Yes. We want them to be strengthened in the process and should be a 'first call' for deciding development.**

13(b). How can the neighbourhood planning process be developed to meet our objectives, such as in the use of digital tools and reflecting community preferences about design?

**There needs to be a better infrastructure and funding for the support of NP development and the ongoing implementation of the plan.**

Page 37

Question 14. Do you agree there should be a stronger emphasis on the build out of developments? And if so, what further measures would you support? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Yes. If developers do not build out within a reasonable period, then there should be a statutory right for local authorities to take over and arrange for other developers to complete the site.**

Pillar Two – Planning for beautiful and sustainable places

Page 38

Questions 15. What do you think about the design of new development that has happened recently in your area? [Not sure or indifferent / Beautiful and/or well-designed / Ugly and/or poorly-designed / There hasn't been any / Other – please specify]

**Other. Local development has been dated, not satisfying local needs and not sustainable for the future.**

16. Sustainability is at the heart of our proposals. What is your priority for sustainability in your area? [Less reliance on cars / More green and open spaces / Energy efficiency of new buildings / More trees / Other – please specify]

**Other – all the above but we disagree that 'sustainability is at the heart' of your proposals. We see little evidence in concrete proposals.**

Page 40

Question 17. Do you agree with our proposals for improving the production and use of design guides and codes? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Yes.**

Page 41

Question 18. Do you agree that we should establish a new body to support design coding and building better places, and that each authority should have a chief officer for design and place-making? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Not sure. We do not need uniform design across the country, and we would prefer to see this rooted in the locality rather than at national level. We do not believe it will be economically viable to appoint chief officers for design without major central investment in the planning system.**

#### Page 41

Question 19. Do you agree with our proposal to consider how design might be given greater emphasis in the strategic objectives for Homes England? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Yes. There is need to encourage innovative design by supporting the training of designers and planners and exploring the evidence of good design in other countries.**

#### Page 43

Question 20. Do you agree with our proposals for implementing a fast-track for beauty? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Not sure. This proposal feels flimsy.**

### Pillar Three – Planning for infrastructure and connected places

#### Page 48

Question 21. When new development happens in your area, what is your priority for what comes with it? [More affordable housing / More or better infrastructure (such as transport, schools, health provision) / Design of new buildings / More shops and/or employment space / Green space / Don't know / Other – please specify]

**Other. Sustainability and future proofing. There needs to be a climate for bold proposals. For example, to separate residential and pedestrians and non-motorised traffic etc from motor traffic.**

#### Page 50

Questions 22(a). Should the Government replace the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 planning obligations with a new consolidated Infrastructure Levy, which is charged as a fixed proportion of development value above a set threshold? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**No. The current system of CIL seems to work well and ensures funds for infrastructure.**

22(b). Should the Infrastructure Levy rates be set nationally at a single rate, set nationally at an area-specific rate, or set locally? [Nationally at a single rate / Nationally at an area-specific rate / Locally]

**Within set parameters it should be decided locally.**

22(c). Should the Infrastructure Levy aim to capture the same amount of value overall, or more value, to support greater investment in infrastructure, affordable housing and local communities? [Same amount overall / More value / Less value / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**More value. Our local community is already struggling with the lack of appropriate infrastructure sufficient to meet increased demand due to recent development. The planning system needs to be reformed to ensure more investment is provided to mitigate these problems.**

22(d). Should we allow local authorities to borrow against the Infrastructure Levy, to support infrastructure delivery in their area? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Yes. If it is not at commercial rates. Local authorities need to be able to continue to borrow at preferential rates.**

#### Page 51

Question 23. Do you agree that the scope of the reformed Infrastructure Levy should capture changes of use through permitted development rights? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Yes. All loopholes should be closed.**

#### Page 52

Questions 24(a). Do you agree that we should aim to secure at least the same amount of affordable housing under the Infrastructure Levy, and as much on-site affordable provision, as at present? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Yes, but we would like an increase rather than an aim of securing at least the same amount. This suggests that affordable housing will reduce in the new system.**

24(b). Should affordable housing be secured as in-kind payment towards the Infrastructure Levy, or as a 'right to purchase' at discounted rates for local authorities? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Not sure. The entire system of funding 'affordable housing' needs to be reformed. It is difficult for local authorities to specify the types and quantity of such development and there is little incentive for developers to comply. Preferential social financing of affordable housing may be needed.**

24(c). If an in-kind delivery approach is taken, should we mitigate against local authority overpayment risk? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Yes. To do this it may be necessary to employ the developer as a sub-contractor to ensure fairness in the delivery.**

24(d). If an in-kind delivery approach is taken, are there additional steps that would need to be taken to support affordable housing quality? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Yes. The approach to good design needs to be applied to all forms of development. This needs to be a principle at the heart of the new planning system.**

#### Page 53

Question 25. Should local authorities have fewer restrictions over how they spend the Infrastructure Levy? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Yes. Any restrictions (including local and neighbourhood plans) need to be tested against the local population.**

25(a). If yes, should an affordable housing 'ring-fence' be developed? [Yes / No / Not sure. Please provide supporting statement.]

**Yes. Strict criteria and controls need to be developed as there are too many loopholes at the moment.**

#### Page 56

Question 26. Do you have any views on the potential impact of the proposals raised in this consultation on people with protected characteristics as defined in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010?

**Consideration needs to be given to all areas of the community and any special requirements therein.**

**Meeting Closed at 20:46**