

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Local Plan Sub-Committee held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Thursday, 8 August 2024 from 7.00 - 9.01 pm

Present: Councillors Stephen Giles-Medhurst, ,

Oliver Cooper, Steve Drury, Philip Hearn, Chris Mitchell, Sarah Nelmes and Andrew Scarth

Officers in Attendance:

Marko Kalik
Aaron Roberts
Sharon Keenlyside

External in Attendance:

Jon Bishop, Three Rivers Joint Residents Association.

LPSC29/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Christopher Alley, Stephen Cox, Louise Price.

LPSC30/23 MINUTES

It was confirmed that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2024 were a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

LPSC31/23 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

There was none.

LPSC32/23 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There was none.

LPSC33/23 LOCAL PLAN: UPDATED POLICIES FOLLOWING REGULATION 18 CONSULTATION

Marko Kalik, Head of Planning Policy and Conservation, presented the report and explained that the report was seeking Member agreement to the updates of Local Plan policies to be included in the Draft Regulation 19 Plan going to the Policy and Resources Committee.

Mr. Jon Bishop, Three Rivers Joint Residents Association, was invited to speak on the item. Mr. Bishop thanked officers for the quality of the report and spoke of the confidence the Association had in that the Regulation 19 consultation would be able to begin in September/October this year, as recently agreed by the Council. In regard to Appendix 1, the Association felt that it was vital that this small area was protected in the Three Rivers Local Plan (TRLP) and the policy wording should be tightened to make it explicit that planning permission would not be granted in the absence of a legally binding agreement for the required Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG). For Appendix 3, it was felt that it would be better phrased in the negative rather than the positive. For Appendix 5, under policy point 16, there were concerns where the word "public" was inserted. The views from all of the conservation area are inherently part of the conservation area. It was suggested that the wording was changed to "permission will not be granted for development outside but near to a

conservation area, if it adversely affects the setting, character, appearance or views out of that conservation area and public views into that conservation area”.

Appendix 1 – Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC).

The Head of Planning Policy & Conservation explained that this was a new policy resulting from Dacorum Borough Council’s Habitat’s Regulations Assessment (HRA) work. There were concerns about the accumulative impact of residential development on the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC and the work identified a Zone of Influence that included part of Three Rivers. The policy was put together in consultation with Natural England. The main policy was that developments that fall into the Zone of Influence, with 100 dwellings or more, would be required to produce an HRA and provide suitable SANG.

After Members questions, the Head of Policy Planning and Conservation confirmed that planning permission would not be given unless a S106 agreement was in place. There was very specific criteria for a new SANG including a 2.5km circular walk, adequate parking for visitors and the area of land having to be of a certain size.

AGREED: that officers would check if the neighbouring authority’s policy had reference to “a legally binding agreement”, and if so, to mirror it in the TRDC policy.

Appendix 2 – Northwood headquarters Ministry of Defence (MOD) Policy

The Head of Planning Policy and Conservation informed Members that it was a new policy following the original Regulation 18 Draft Plan based on the comments received from the MOD. There was one amendment to be added to the end of the third and last paragraph “unless the effect can be suitably mitigated against”.

The Head of Planning Policy and Conservation confirmed to the Sub-Committee that the mitigation was the responsibility of the developer, not the MOD.

Officers agreed to review the wording and circulate to Members.

AGREED: that the amendment would be added to the policy.

Appendix 3 – Residential Design and Layout Policy

The Head of Planning Policy and Conservation explained to the Sub-Committee that there had been a few minor changes and an additional section on tall buildings, as requested by Members at a previous meeting. It had been suggested that a tall building was defined as anything 10 metres or 4 storeys above ground level.

Members agreed that the wording of the policy would be better phrased in the negative rather than the positive.

A Member requested that policy limit “tall buildings” to strategic key centres and the principal town.

AGREED: that officers would:

- review restricting tall buildings to key centres and principal town,
- change the wording of the policy to be phrased in the negative rather than the positive,
- add in the reference to ‘above ground level’ and,
- add a reference to “secure by Design” if not referred to in other policies.

Appendix 4 – Local Distinctiveness and Place Shaping Policy

The Head of Planning Policy and Conservation informed Members that the reference to neighbourhood plans had been added as requested at a previous meeting as well as the reference to the diverse architecture of the district.

AGREED: to approve the updated policy.

Appendix 5 – Heritage and Historic Environment Policy.

The Head of Planning Policy and Conservation informed Members that the word “public” had been added following discussion at previous meetings but if agreed by Members would be removed.

A Member suggested that the wording be changed to something similar to “in to, out of or within the Conservation Area”. As a minor change, the Head of Planning Policy and Conservation would review the wording and bring it back as part of the draft plan.

After discussion, it was agreed that in paragraph 14a, the wording would be changed to “character and appearance”.

AGREED: to approve the updated policy subject to the minor changes above.

Appendix 6 – Social and Community Uses Policy.

The Head of Planning Policy and Conservation informed Members that there had been no changes to the policy.

AGREED: to approve the updated policy.

Appendix 7 – Flood Risk and Water Resources Policy.

The Head of Planning Policy and Conservation informed Members that the 110 litre per person water resources requirement from the Climate Change Adaptation Policy had been moved into the Flood Risk and Water Resources Policy.

AGREED: to approve the updated policy.

Appendix 8 - Ground Conditions, Contamination and Pollution Policy

The Head of Planning Policy and Conservation informed Members that the section on light pollution had been updated to include guidance from the Institute of Lighting Professionals and it had been added that the hours of illumination shall be controlled as suggested by Members.

A Member commented that not all the guidance from the Institute of Lighting Professionals was free and therefore the latest guidance may not be available to everyone.

A Member raised a concern about the wording in paragraph 8a “minimum required” and suggested that this should be changed to accommodate members of the public who may require more lighting for safety reasons. It was suggested that it should be changed to “proposed lighting schemes are at least the minimum required for public safety and security. Lighting should seek to improve public safety and decrease crime”. Something should also be added regarding the controls to be used to tackle pollution. Members discussed the wording around this and that there had to be a balance of what lighting is considered reasonable and light pollution.

The Head of Planning Policy and Conservation said that some caveat writing could be added.

Members also felt that the wording of 8g may need reviewing.

Aaron Roberts, Senior Planning Officer explained that paragraph 8 policy doesn't relate solely to major development but also to lighting specific proposals, such as installation of floodlights etc.

A Member commented on paragraph 8e and asked that the wording makes clear that the standard would apply to adopted roads.

AGREED: to approve the updated policy subject to the changes above.

Appendix 9 - Waste Management and Recycling Policy

The Head of Planning Policy and Conservation informed Members that there were no changes to what had previously been agreed.

AGREED: to approve the updated policy.

Appendix 10 - Landscape Character Policy

The Head of Planning Policy and Conservation informed Members that there was only a minor change.

AGREED: to approve the updated policy.

Appendix 11 - Advertisements Policy

The Head of Planning Policy and Conservation informed Members that he had spoken to Development Management and reviewed regulations regarding paragraph 5d “advertisements must contribute to a safe and attractive environment” and the regulations require the Council to consider the safety aspect and amenity. Some advertisements may require consent. A safety consideration is whether advertisements obscure or partially obscure road/traffic signs or security/surveillance.

Members suggested that the wording in 5d be changed to “does not impact safety” and that the wording was more expansive.

Members also suggested that the wording in paragraph 11.2 needed to be stronger regarding flashing illuminated signs as flashing lights could trigger epilepsy. The Head of Planning Policy and Conservation explained that the justification for this was explained in paragraph 5a. It was agreed that the wording “Flashing illuminated signs should be avoided, whether internal or external” would be deleted.

A Member raised the point that in some areas, advertisements were of a high quality, and they had a design brief and suggested that TRDC also had supplementary planning guidance drawn up. This could also include shop fronts.

The Head of Planning Policy and Conservation commented that another policy refers to shop fronts that he would investigate that. As far as supplementary guidance was concerned, it may be something for the future but would be difficult within the time constraints for a small team. Further detail could be added to the policy bullet points.

Members mentioned paragraph 1 and suggested that highways network was used rather than specifically mentioning Highways England (now National Highways). The Head of Planning Policy and Conservation explained that National Highways had requested the wording. Members agreed that it should be made clear that both National Highways and the local Highways Authority would be consulted and suggested “appropriate Highway Authority”.

A Member commented that the Retail and Leisure Policy, the preferred option had removed the paragraph “shop fronts and displays should be appropriate to the character and function of the area” and the control of advertisements and shop fronts did not appear elsewhere in the Local Plan which was an oversight. It was requested that paragraph 9 was restored. The Head of Planning Policy and Conservation would investigate this.

AGREED: that there would be a re-wording of Paragraph 1, 5d, 11.2 and an investigation into advertisement restraint as detailed above and the revised policy would be circulated.

Appendix 12 - Deliveries, Servicing and Construction Policy

The Head of Planning Policy and Conservation informed Members that there were no changes to what had previously been agreed except for a minor word change.

A Member raised a concern about what paragraph 7 meant in practical terms. Officers agreed to add more supporting text regarding best practice.

A Member commented that collections had not been included in the policy and should be added throughout to be explicit. Officers agreed that collections could be included.

A Member suggested that Construction Impact Bonds be considered. The Head of Planning Policy and Conservation agreed to investigate this.

A Member commented that the wording in paragraph 3 was “should demonstrate” when all other wording was “must”.

It was noted that Highways England needed to be changed to National Highways.

AGREED: to approve the updated policy subject to the changes above.

RESOLVED: that the Local Plan Sub-Committee noted the contents of the report, and agreed to recommend to the Policy & Resources Committee the following policy updates subject to the changes agreed at this meeting:

- **Chilterns Beechwoods SAC Policy (Appendix 1)**
- **Northwood Headquarters MOD Policy (Appendix 2);**
- **Residential Design and Layout Policy (Appendix 3)**
- **Local Distinctiveness and Place Shaping Policy (Appendix 4)**
- **Heritage and Historic Environment Policy (Appendix 5)**
- **Social and Community Uses Policy (Appendix 6)**
- **Flood Risk and Water Resources Policy (Appendix 7)**
- **Ground Conditions, Contamination and Pollution Policy (Appendix 8)**
- **Waste Management and Recycling Policy (Appendix 9)**
- **Landscape Character Policy (Appendix 10)**
- **Advertisements Policy (Appendix 11)**
- **Deliveries, Servicing and Construction Policy (Appendix 12)**

CHAIRMAN