

Minutes of the Joint Parish Councils Traffic Consultative Group

**Monday 21 May 2018 at 7.30 pm
TMBC Offices, Committee Room,
Gibson Building, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, West Malling ME1 4LZ**

Present: Cllr Tim Shaw – Borough Green PC, Cllr Ron Moore and Cllr David Thornewell – East Malling & Larkfield PC, Cllr Mike Mearns – Leybourne PC, Cllr Philip Olden – Mereworth PC, Cllr William Pierce – Offham PC, Cllr Pat Darby – Platt PC, Cllr Keith Johnson – Plaxtol PC, Cllr Mary McKinlay – Ryarsh PC, Cllr Michael Wells – Wateringbury PC, Cllr Gwyneth Barkham – West Malling PC, Sarah Huseyin – Parish Clerk to Ightham and Shipbourne PC's

1. **MEETING ADMIN** – Chair - Cllr Mike Mearns, Leybourne PC – Cllr Mearns welcomed everyone to the meeting.
 - Apologies For Absence – Cllr Barker – Kings Hill PC, Cllrs Franklin, Stretton and Williams – Offham PC, Ditton PC, Cllr Sue Bell – Snodland PC, Teston PC, Cllr Bullard, West Malling PC, Norman Kemp – NuVenture Buses
 - Minutes of Last Meeting – The Minutes of February 1st 2018 were approved.
 - Matters Arising From Minutes - None
 - Action Points From last Meeting – to write to Tom Tugendhat MP and Chris Fribbins of Railfuture. Responses will be discussed in Item 4.
 - New Members – Ryarsh, Snodland, Ditton and Trottscliffe
 - Website – The Secretary had received further quotes for setting up a framework website; they are all around £300 and we would also have to pay domain hosting fees.

2. **IAN BAILEY AND NIGEL DEWIT FROM TMBC GAVE AN UPDATE ON THE LOCAL PLAN WITH PARTICULAR REGARD TO THE TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE** (A copy of the slides will be sent with these Minutes)
The main points were as follows:

A new planning system was introduced by the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework NPPF in March 2012.
TMBC started preparing a new Local Plan “The Way Forward” which summarised the issues and options and proposed a new development strategy to meet housing needs in the Borough. The plan reached Regulation 18 stage and went to public consultation in September 2016.
There was a report to members in July 2017 and the new development strategy was refined on the basis of the responses, new evidence and other changes.
Meanwhile, Government reforms were going ahead and a White Paper was published which introduced a standardised methodology for calculating housing needs. For most Boroughs in the South East, this meant an increase in the number of new houses that would be required; for TMBC, a 23% increase from 696 to 859 per annum, a total of 3,000 over the planning period of 20 years. TMBC started to make a case for keeping the number to 696 as the increased figure was not sustainable. On 5th March 2018 the Government produced revised wording and introduced a transitional period; if Local Plans are submitted within 6 months of the final NPPF publication local figures could be used. This is what TMBC are aiming to achieve and at the Planning and Transportation Advisory Board (PTAB) on 6th March they recommended an amended timetable: The draft Local Plan will be considered on 5th June, PTAB will make recommendations for Cabinet on 24th July, special meetings of Cabinet on 3rd September and Full Council on 12th September and Regulation 19 consultations to start late September and run for a minimum of 6 weeks. Submission of Local Plan to the Secretary of State late November, early December 2018.
From submission to adoption – an Inspector will be appointed in spring/early summer 2019. A report with modifications will be adopted by the end of 2018 and there will be a review within 5 years.
The advantages of having an adopted plan is that there will be a guaranteed land supply.

At present, the evidence is being gathered and some key pieces are still being prepared including studies on transport, air quality, viability and a green belt study.

Nigel DeWit gave an outline of the transport considerations for the local plan.

There are 2 elements to the transport study: The assessment of the A20 VISUM study and the Transport Assessment. They look at what would happen to traffic if there is no local plan so that the impact of the local plan on the network can be assessed.

They look at the junctions across the borough to assess capacity, queue length and length of delays. The VISUM study of the A20 was published in March 2018 and looks at 16 junctions across the area from junction 4 M20 at Leybourne to the Coldharbour roundabout at junction 5 M20.

The study of the rest of the A20 is being prepared by Mott Macdonald and is due for completion by 5th June. The study is looking at 33 junctions where there is development pressure, including Borough Green, Hadlow and Tonbridge. It identifies potential mitigation measures and improvements to junctions. It also factors in highways infrastructure at key strategic sites where they are an integral part of the development and would provide a useful function for existing communities by providing relief and improving air quality. For example, around south Aylesford, a link from Hermitage Lane to the A20 poppy fields will relieve pressure on Hermitage Lane and the relief road to the north of Borough Green linking the A25 at Dark Hill roundabout to Nepicar would provide significant relief to A25 traffic and improve the air quality.

Further information can be found at www.tmbc.gov.uk/localplanevidence

Questions.

How do existing applications fit into the local plan, ie Aylesford Newsprint site and Aylesford Sandpit, will they be determined before the Local Plan? If they are rejected will they then fall under the local plan?

Is the County Council still intending to work on the junctions at the eastern end of A20 or wait until the Local Plan is completed?

Answer: Nothing stops because of the Local Plan and current applications are determined by the policy framework currently in place; the local development framework is now mature and for the first time last year numbers fell below the requirements. As regards the Aylesford Newsprint site, it will be predominantly business units and therefore falls outside the Local Plan. It is likely to be determined soon.

As regards Aylesford Sandpit, the County has raised no objections and the live applications were factored into the modelling. The studies factor in applications in progress. There is a local growth fund allocated for improvements to the highways. Kent Highways have worked on the Local Plan and there has also been engagement with Highways England.

Question – are there significant differences between Regulation 18 and Regulation 19?

Answer – Regulation 18 is the preliminary airing of the issues and options in meeting the housing needs and looks at affordability and infrastructure.

Regulation 19 is much more detailed and closer to what the Local Plan will look like taking into consideration planning policies.

Question – what are the data sources?

Answer – For the Local Plan evidence, a strategic housing market assessment governed the work. It starts with household projections based on the population and current trends, the Office of Statistics produce the figures. They then looked at sensitivity testing, ie is there pressure to produce more than the projections? For affordability they looked at mid earnings in the Borough and compared them to the mid-housing prices, this gave a ratio. House prices used to be 4.5 to 5 times earnings, now they are 11.7 times mid-earnings so there is an affordability uplift. All this was taken into account and gave the figure of 696 additional houses per year.

The new formula uses base projections and an affordability ratio, ie what can be secured as a mortgage – this figure is closer to 900 new houses per year although the government doesn't expect this figure.

Comment – Affordability is an important factor as people buying from out of area puts a greater burden on transport. How can we achieve affordable housing if the ratio is 11 times; it is unattainable.

Question – If a development is in an AQMA or will make an area an AQMA, where do we stand?

Answer – It is a very important factor and the air quality assessment is nearly complete. The link roads and relief roads will be an important factor in addressing this. Key junctions will be considered and if there are any negative impacts on AQMA's they will be taken into account.

Question – what takes precedence, the Local Plan or the Strategic Local Minerals Plan?

Answer – The Kent Waste and Minerals Plan is an integral part of the Local Plan and any applications need to comply with the requirements of the safeguarding policies. However, minerals safeguarding policies understand that you have to look at the economics of extraction and the need to address development needs in the Borough.

Comment – These sites need to be returned to green belt though?
Response – In Borough Green the plan is to make an exceptional circumstance to take a site out of green belt.

The Chairman urged Parishes to get their responses to the consultation in as the Inspectors would be unlikely to take any views into account that aren't in response to the consultation. He also asked whether there would be a possibility of extending the consultation period as the 6 week window doesn't work well with the Parish Council meeting timetable.

Response – It will largely depend on when the Government produces the NPPF. The main aim is to meet the deadline so that we don't have to start the whole process again.

3. AGM – Finances and Membership for 2018/9

We have £698 in the account. It was agreed that we should keep the membership fee at £50 per year per Parish. Secretary to issue invoices. Ditton, Ryarsh, Snodland, Trottscliffe and Wouldham would like to join which will bring membership to 17 Parishes.

The Clerk asked members to sign the attendance list and confirm that they are happy to stay on the mailing list to comply with GDPR regulations.

4. RECEIVE UPDATES ON THE FOLLOWING & DISCUSS AND AGREE ACTIONS

- **Parking Charges Consultation** – Nothing to report
- **M25 Slip Roads Sevenoaks** – Cllr Shaw said that the surveys carried out in March are with the Department of Transport, our local MP, Tom Tugendhat has given support to the J5 Slips and has met with Highways England. There is some significant funding for such a project.
- **Air Quality** – We are still uncertain about whether developments will be included in the Local Plan if they fall within an AQMA or would create an AQMA as this would contravene planning law. The question has been raised at KALC and at the JPCTCG meetings and KALC are waiting for a response from Nick Heslop.
- **Smart Motorway M20** – The works to create the smart motorway have been started and we have received a letter from Tom Tugendhat outlining the timetable and closures. Ryarsh PC reported that the removal of trees had caused an increase in noise pollution and that many residents were upset, it made the front page news of the Kent Messenger last week. Residents further down the M20 have had noise prevention measures put in place. They have consulted with Tom Tugendhat to consult with Highways England to replant trees once works are completed. There is also a problem with the maps as they are incorrect.
There is a delay with the replacement bridge as they are waiting to hear from Addington Parish Council.
There is an intention to put quieter surfaces on the new road.
The JPCTCG was asked to write to Tom Tugendhat to try and co-ordinate KCC and

- Highways England regarding the bridge so that disruption is kept to a minimum.
- **West Malling/ Kings Hill** - It was reported that there was an outline planning application for the Sportsman site, the triangle of land between Teston Road, A228 and King Hill.
- **Lower Thames Crossing** – No update
- **A20 Corridor** - The VISUM Study was published in March 2018 and is on the TMBC website.
- **Gatwick Airport** - No update
- **Taxi Services for the disabled** – The Secretary reported that Cllr Barker had some information and would pass it on. Cllr Means said that he had details of a firm in Vigo.
- **Proposed sand quarry at Ryarsh** – Cllr McKinlay reported that the consultation period had now closed and 2,360 residents had written to KCC to object. The KCC appointed sub-committee had met with the Ryarsh Protection Group and found it difficult to park proving the point that the access would be a big issue. The position of the site would mean that dust would be carried straight to the local primary school. The Ryarsh Protection Group are trying to find some alternative uses for the site for the landowners. The Borough Green Sandpit proposed the site, not the landowners. The sand would be transported to Sussex. The next meeting of the Committee is 30th July and they will know in November whether there is likely to be a planning application.
- **Speedwatch** – Annual Conference – Cllr Moore had been to the Conference (papers have already been circulated to members). He reported that membership had peaked 2 years ago, the number of observations has recently fallen but speeds and number of letters have gone up. Cars without tax and MOT's are now being picked up and police are starting to target certain sites. The website has recently been upgraded and the equipment scheme is ongoing.
- **Rail Franchise** – The secretary had received a letter from Chris Fribbins to say the Invitation to tender (ITT) has been issued to three companies (GoVia, Stagecoach and Abellio. The new franchise will not start until April 2019 now and there is planned to be a shake-up of the timetable in 2022.

A member expressed concern that the high speed train from Snodland to Maidstone West may not be continued. There is however talk of a train from Maidstone to Cambridge. New network timetables have started today.

5. 21:00 IDENTIFY & PRIORITISE FUTURE JPCTCG TOPICS

- Members asked for questions to be put to Tom Tugendhat about the J5 Slips M25, the M20 Smart Motorway, Railways and buses. This will be on 26th September. There will also be an update on the Local Plan.
- The Secretary was asked to invite Mike Whiting to speak at the November meeting.

6. AOB & NEXT MEETINGS

26th September – Update from Tom Tugendhat MP , 26th November – tbc

Cllr McKinlay offered to Chair the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.19pm