

Cabinet Lead Reports – Full Council 23 September 2020

Councillor Gary Hughes

**Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Lead for Planning, Hayling
Seafront Strategy, Commercial Services**

Development Management

Covid-19

Officers of the Development Management team have continued to undertake their normal duties throughout the pandemic, with all case officers routinely working from home and the business support team only attending the Plaza on a rota basis. Site visits were suspended during the initial months following lockdown, but external inspections have now resumed where necessary, with appropriate risk assessments in place.

Despite these challenges, the team have been able to maintain a high level of performance, with 90% of applications determined within agreed deadlines during Q1 of 2020/21.

The team is currently seeing a significant number of householder and tree-related applications being lodged with the Council following the easing of lockdown restrictions.

Legislation

The Government has rolled out a series of new legislative provisions through the summer with the aim of simplifying and streamlining the planning process, in particular to facilitate upward extensions to existing homes, and the creation of new dwellings in a range of scenarios. In addition, a fundamental revision to the Use Classes Order has been rolled out with the aim of providing additional flexibility in the range of uses of land and buildings which can be carried out without the need for planning permission.

Members have received a briefing on the changes, which will take time to bed in, and which in some cases are accompanied by new 'prior approval' processes which will enable the authority to retain control over certain aspects of the new permitted development rights.

Casework

A large number of significant planning applications remain under consideration by the team. These include Wellington Way redevelopment, Waterlooville (264 apartments and multi-storey car park); new 81 bed hotel at Larchwood Avenue, Bedhampton; BaE Systems site redevelopment, Waterlooville; Padnell Grange, Cowplain (86 dwellings); Camp Down,

Purbrook (hybrid application for up to 780 dwellings, community/nursery facility, retail unit and public open space); 108-110 Elm Grove, Hayling Island (39 unit sheltered housing scheme with retail unit and 4 flats); land west of Coldharbour Farm Road, Emsworth (44 dwellings); and land west of Hulbert Road, Havant (120 dwellings).

An appeal has been lodged against the Council's failure to determine the application for Land at Sinah Lane, Hayling Island (195 dwellings) – notwithstanding this, the matter will be the subject of a Development Management Committee in October to establish what the Council's case will be at the appeal. A further appeal has been lodged against the DMC refusal of a planning permission at Lower Road, Bedhampton.

Development Management Committee

The Committee authorised that planning permission be granted for the redevelopment of a commercial site at 5-7 Station Road, Hayling Island to provide 19 new flats and 2 offices at its meeting in August.

The Committee approved one of the Pre-Submission Local Plan's proposed housing sites, Land East of Castle Avenue, at its meeting on 10th September – the development will deliver 69 new homes.

Planning Policy

On 1 July the Cabinet recommended to the Full Council that changes are made to the Pre-Submission Havant Borough Local Plan. This was approved at an extraordinary meeting of the Full Council on 9th September. A further six weeks statutory public consultation will now take place, followed by submission to the Secretary of State this winter.

The Government's have announced proposed wholesale changes to the planning system in the *Planning for the Future White Paper* which is currently out to consultation. As such, the need to progress our Local Plan as swiftly as possible has never been higher. Having a recently adopted Local Plan will put Havant Borough Council in the best possible position to shape new development in the coming years and adapt as a new system comes into force.

The proposed changes to the planning system are fundamental in their nature – they are not 'bolt ons' but would be a new system of planning for England. These changes would fundamentally change the way that we plan for the future of our Borough. Whilst there are many aspects of the White Paper's proposals that I would wholeheartedly support, there are a lot that are concerning. In particular, the proposed rise in the need for housing in the Borough. As a result, on behalf of the Council, I will be responding to the consultation, suggesting changes to the approach. I will be seeking the views of my fellow councillors on this matter.

During the pandemic, our business as usual activity has not stopped. I am extremely pleased to announce the launch of the Council's mitigation scheme to ensure that new development in the Borough is nutrient neutral. As members know, this mitigation scheme is key to being able to progress our Local Plan. It is also key to our ability to implement our Regeneration Strategy, with all of the residential development sites in that strategy on brownfield land.

I am extremely pleased to be able to say that the Council's mitigation scheme has the full support of Natural England. As members may have seen, the document which we have produced to promote the scheme has a foreword from the Leader alongside one from the Chief Executive of Natural England. I am also grateful for the support of the Solent LEP, who have supported the scheme with grant funding.

Planning Enforcement

Building Control

Review of the Service is underway to bring in the agreed changes in structure to increase resilience and provide greater ability to bring in commercial work going forward.

The new Tascomi IT system is in place and in the later stages of bringing over all the data and configuration of the system. Having this system in place has helped significantly with a seamless transfer to home working in the lockdown. BC is working as normal, with inspections being undertaken in strictly controlled conditions, and has recently carried some work for a neighbouring Authority.

Commercial Contracts

Environmental Services

The Environmental Services of HBC along with those Delegated Environmental Services from EHDC continue to be carried out in successful manner even through during the period of turmoil around the Coronavirus pandemic. NSE have adhered to all Govt. guidelines with the health and wellbeing of their staff the priority at all times which is reflected by staff levels having remained consistent with very few related absentees across both councils.

The fact that NORSE continued to provide the majority of services throughout, demonstrated their 'can do, will do' approach, which was much appreciated by the residents. The Norse South East board (of which I am a non-executive Director) sent a letter of thanks to every member of staff acknowledging their commitment.

Waste services

Throughout the pandemic all crews have been out everyday bar a few right at the beginning of the lockdown. The only service that was suspended for a short period, at the beginning was Bulky Waste collections as a precaution to possible resource shortages.

Quantities of waste collected by the Refuse Crews has increased quite substantially over the lockdown, up by over 15% on the previous year. Crews have been heard to comment 'it is like Christmas every week'.

We continue to see growth in the garden waste service. As at the 27th August 2020 there were 12,866 customers compared with 11,500 last year. We have lost some customers but gained 2,477 new customers and continue to have new applications for the service being submitted.

Recycling Project Update

Due to the concentration of time and resource dealing with the Coronavirus pandemic, project timelines have had to be pushed back but the Recycling Project team have produced a draft Recycling Marketing Campaign to be considered for implementation.

NSE have carried out numerous tool-box talks for recycling crews around contamination checking and the need to use bin hangers to highlight the contaminate to the customer.

NSE have commenced erecting recycling awareness boards within or outside of the bin sheds on the Portsmouth City Council (PCC) Housing Estates within the borough. Sites selected are within the crew rounds highlighted in the May and June contamination reports from Hampshire Project Integra.

To date 12 sites have completed on the Wecock Estate (19 signs) and 11 sites (11 signs) completed on the Warren Estate, Havant.

There are further PCC sites to be completed along with some Guinness Hermitage, Radian Housing, and Vivid Housing in Waterlooville and West Leigh Estates

Grounds Maintenance

A joint approach by the HBC Emergency Planning team and NSE ensured that preparations were in place prior to the recent threat of storms to the area which included the possibility of extremely high rainfall in very short periods. Although these did not generally materialise I would like to place on record my thanks to all the team at Norse South East for their contribution to the preparation.

Beachlands

Beachlands at Hayling Island has seen unprecedented numbers of visitors this year due to the restrictions on travelling abroad. This has put an extra strain on the resources deployed to strive for all residents/visitors to enjoy the experience. Extra litter bin provision and increased resources over hot periods and Bank Holidays by Norse South East has ensured that overall the service we provide has remained at a high level, with more compliments than complaints being received.

A section of beach revetments was removed from the west of the Inn on the Beach, leaving only 50 metres of beach defences remaining. Of the 50 beach huts that are to the west of the Inn on the Beach, 30 will be moved northwards (away from the erosion zone) to offer them an element of protection during the winter. A more permanent location at a site to the east of Beachlands is being progressed.

See Hayling Seafront Strategy

Strategic Commissioning

County Council Liaison

NSTR

Hayling Seafront Strategy

Hayling Island seafront has been much in the media over the course of the summer. Whether it was illegal encampments, too many visitors, too many horses, too much litter, inconsiderate/dangerous parking, removal of some of the remaining revetments and groynes, proposed moving of some of the 'B' site beach huts, illegal launching of powered parachutes, concerns over pollution of the bathing waters, gathering of large numbers of motorcycles, the list goes on. Residents and visitors alike have contacted the media, social media, members of the Cabinet and their local councillors to vent their frustration.

I did an interview on BBC Radio Solent and the Leader did an interview on BBC South Today on the announcement that we are reviewing the existing (and very outdated bylaws) that allow horses to use Hayling Seafront during the summer months. At no point did I ever expect to be quoted in 'Horse and Hound'.

<https://www.horseandhound.co.uk/news/hope-for-riders-amid-worry-of-hayling-beach-horse-riding-ban-722670>

Hayling Island attracts a large number of visitors all eager to pursue their individual interests. At any one time there can be horse-riders, kite surfers, wind surfers, paddle boarders, swimmers, dog-walkers, walkers and

sunbathers all vying for a spot on the beach and a space in the car park. In the early part of the season, there were many complaints about over-flowing litter bins along the seafront. Quietly, without fanfare, NORSE deployed a new regime of more bins (doubling the existing capacity) and more collections until later into the evening. This has proved a great success. To receive comments from Marshall Hill (the owner of Beachlands), that in all his 30+ years, he has never seen the beachfront looking so clean, is testament to the success of this approach.

What is clear however, is that there needs to be a regime around Hayling Seafront that allows all of those visitors to go about their pursuits in a safe manner, aware and considerate of other beach users and respectful of local residents.

I have produced a concept paper that outlines a method of addressing the problem. I have shared it with senior officers, fellow Cabinet members and all Hayling Island councillors. It centres around four strands; management, control, direction and enforcement. I will have meetings later this month to discuss it further.