

## **Cabinet Lead Reports – Full Council 27 January 2021**

**Councillor Gary Hughes**

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

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### **Development Management**

#### **Covid-19**

The advent of the latest lockdown has had little effect on the day-to-day operation of the Development Management team, with case officers continuing to routinely work from home and only limited members of the business support team attending the Plaza where they are not in a position to work from home. Site visits have significantly reduced and are only carried out where absolutely essential, with appropriate risk assessments in place.

At the same time, since July there have been unprecedented numbers of new applications and enquiries received in the team - the Planning Portal reporting 2020 as being its busiest summer on record for application submission, and with those levels being matched in November.

Despite these challenges, the team have been able to maintain a high level of performance, with over 91% of applications determined within agreed deadlines during Q2 of 2020/21.

#### **Casework**

A large number of significant planning applications remain under consideration by the team, including a number of cases where S106 negotiations are prolonging the time being taken to reach a decision. 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); land west of Hulbert Road, Havant (120 dwellings); land south of Bartons Road, Havant (new 64 bed care home); and former SSE site, Bartons Road, Havant (191 apartments and 2 drive-thru restaurants).

### **Development Management Committee**

The Committee considered one of the Pre-Submission Local Plan's proposed housing sites, Land East of Castle Avenue, at its meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> September – authorisation has been given for permission to be granted for 69 new homes.

Another of the Pre-Submission Local Plan's proposed housing sites, Land West of Horndean Road, was considered at the Committee meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> November – authorisation has been given for permission to be granted for 16 new homes.

Members will also recall that an appeal has been lodged against the Council's failure to determine the application for Land at Sinah Lane, Hayling Island (195 dwellings). The matter was the subject of a Committee meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> October, when it was resolved to inform the Planning Inspectorate that had an appeal not been lodged the Local Planning Authority would have been minded to grant permission for the development subject to a Section 106 Agreement and conditions.

In the meantime, a revised application for the Land at Sinah Lane has been submitted which will be scheduled for a Committee meeting in the current quarter.

Also returning to the Committee at its meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> January was a revised application for Land at Lower Road (50 dwellings), which sought to address the heritage-based reason for refusal of an earlier scheme on the site in March 2020. The application was refused again for similar reasons. This will be the subject of a public enquiry (initiated by the Developers) commencing 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2021.

### **Planning Policy**

The Local Plan is at an advanced stage and moving forwards. Following the Full Council decision on 9<sup>th</sup> September and a subsequent delegated approval, consultation took place on the changes to the Local Plan. This consultation closed at 4pm on 17 December 2020. Further details are on the council's website at [www.havant.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.havant.gov.uk/localplan).

The plan will be submitted to the Secretary of State in the coming weeks following the publication of the report summarising the main issues raised in the consultation and completion of remaining statements of common ground with key stakeholders. It is anticipated that it will be adopted by the end of the calendar year.

On 13 January 2021, the Cabinet also approved a Housing Delivery Action Plan. This is needed due to the lower than required rate of housebuilding in the Borough over the last three years despite having over 1500 dwellings with outstanding permissions. This will be reflected in the Housing Delivery Test results which are expected from Government shortly. This dip in housing delivery is due to factors outside of the Council's control, chiefly nutrients and the pandemic. The Action Plan sets out what is needed in order to address this.

As the Council knows, Government has proposed wide-reaching changes to the English planning system through the White Paper *Planning for the Future* together with shorter term reforms to the current planning system. On behalf

of Havant Borough Council, I have responded to both consultations, urging Government to urgently reconsider the reforms which would see the number of homes in the Borough nearly doubling. Those responses robustly argue against the proposed changes and highlight the detrimental impact they would have on the Borough.

Nonetheless, I was pleased to see that the Government are keeping the current methodology for calculating the need for housing. The alternative, which was proposed, was not fit for purpose for Havant Borough and I strongly urged the Government not to introduce it. I am pleased to see that Government listened to the feedback on the consultation and kept the current methodology, which our emerging local plan complies with.

### **Planning Enforcement**

Planning Enforcement sits within Neighbourhood Support service as part of a combined enforcement team, it covers a wide range of issues ranging from unlawful advertising through the destruction of Listed Buildings.

At the lower-level, issues often arise because of neighbour disputes and at the higher level, because of criminal and profiteering activity by unscrupulous developers leading to the destruction of property and trees in total disrespect of the public realm.

To ensure that the criminal and profiteering activity receives the attention it deserves the team operates on a priority basis in tackling work with Priority 1 representing the more serious to Priority 3 the least.

The team is currently handling a case load of some 130 issues of which ten are Priority 1:

**Priority 1:** Carry out the initial site visit for priority 1 cases within 1 working day.

- o Immediate damage or harm to protected trees and listed buildings/heritage assets where there is potential criminal offence and/or permanent harm.
- o Works to/ harm to/ damage to a designated heritage asset (listed buildings and demolition to buildings in a conservation area).
- o Work to/ felling/ damage or harm to Tree Preservation Order (TPO) trees or trees in Conservation Areas.
- o Unauthorised development that is causing irreparable harm.

and the remainder Priority 2/3.

**Priority 2:** Carry out the initial site visit for priority 2 cases within 10 days:

- o The stationing of new residential caravans in the countryside.
- o Commencement of works on major and other developments before the pre-commencement conditions have been discharged.
- o Works resulting in landscape harm to sensitive designations.

o Works likely to be harmful to public health or compromise highway safety.

**Priority 3:** Carry out the initial site visit for priority 3 cases within 15 working days if necessary following desktop appraisal:

- o Untidy sites
- o Display of advertisements
- o Other breaches of planning control

The cases are further broken down by category for example:-

Unauthorised building works - 52 cases  
Non-compliance with conditions - 40 cases  
Change of use - 18 cases

By far most of these cases can be resolved through ensuring the works are regularised through Planning permission or indeed by ensuring the compliance with the original Planning permission.

However, there remain other cases which require enforcement action including injunctions and potentially prosecution of the responsible party.

As important as these are especially if they impact on people's home life, they mostly sit within Priority 3.

Whilst the Priority levels are helpful in work allocation, they do not always represent the work involved in any case as a Priority 3 case can often be the subject to a lot of community and therefore Councillor concern.

In the main the work undertaken sits with two dedicated Planning Enforcement officers under a management team shared across both HBC and EHDC with additional administrative support from the HBC Business Support Team.

Further assistance comes from other Enforcement officers within the Neighbourhood Quality team who have recently been trained to undertake some of the more time consuming less technical issues freeing up the specialist officers

Planning Enforcement work by its very nature ideally requires officers to visit sites and indeed premises to see for themselves what has occurred. During the majority 2020 this has simply not been possible, and the officers have had to find other ways of gathering evidence and indeed ensuring compliance.

The Planning Enforcement team, which is non statutory, operates within the local Planning Enforcement Plan which is currently being updated to take account of recent changes in legislation and will be published shortly.

## **Commercial Contracts**

### **Environmental Services**

Services for both HBC and EHDC been carried out in successful manner by Norse South East during the period of turmoil around the Coronavirus pandemic. However, during the week commencing the 18<sup>th</sup> January the coronavirus pandemic affected the Havant waste and recycling service with a number of front line staff have been absent from work for Covid related reasons. As a consequence services have had to be prioritised to ensure the key waste collection service can continue uninterrupted. This means that the bin deliveries and the bulky waste paid for service has been suspended.

The website has been updated and the Customer Service team has been briefed to ensure customers are aware of the service changes.

It is anticipated that this service disruption will last for at least a week and the suspended services will be restarted as soon as staffing levels allow.

### **Waste services**

Throughout the pandemic all crews have been out every day and have seen continued increases in waste collected compared to previous years.

With the new lockdown in place, waste collection services have again been reviewed and, if absenteeism becomes an issue, will be prioritised. This was the case in December when garden waste services had to be temporarily suspended to re-prioritise crews onto mainstream waste and recycling collections. HBC officers and NSE are continually monitoring the situation

There is a renewed focus on noise of glass at bring sites and Norse South East has been commissioned to look at alternative collections methods and industry practises.

### **Recycling Project Update**

NSE have continued to carry 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 erected recycling awareness boards within or outside of the bin sheds on the Portsmouth City Council (PCC) Housing Estates within the borough. This will now be rolled out to sites owned by Guinness Hermitage, Radian Housing, and Vivid Housing in Waterlooville and West Leigh Estates

### **Grounds Maintenance**

The verge grass cutting carried out by NSE under the HBC agreement with HCC has finished for the season and the crews have moved on to leafing and hedge cutting.

## Hayling Seafront Strategy

A 'concept' paper identifying a model of operation across Hayling Seafront was presented to officers back in July. That paper sought to outline how the day to day management of all outputs could be delivered under a single entity with a range of interventions that would enable effective control of the seafront throughout the year ensuring a safe environment for all residents and visitors alike. The concept seeks to ensure that HBC complies fully with the requirements of managing the SSSI and SINC as required by Natural England, adopts strategies that are mindful of the changing nature of the coastline and compliment the regeneration ambition of the council. The concept paper contained a large number of information capture requirements, which are in course of being compiled. This output was briefed to Cabinet on the 16<sup>th</sup> December. From that briefing, a number of activities have been initiated with early delivery targets.

- **Manage** – work is underway to bring together the appropriate resource which will be responsible for co-ordinated operational management of the area, the focus being on the identified critical days.
- **Control** – review underway of the existing parking regime to better respond to the demand – not sure you will want to include given how close we are to the budgets for next year coming forward?
- **Direct** – Review of brown signage is underway / workshop due to be held this week, and any approved changes delivered in time for Easter (see below).

A workshop to review all of the tourist signs on Hayling Island took place on 14<sup>th</sup> January. The purpose was to consider whether they are still appropriate (current/not redundant) and did they correctly direct visitors to their desired destinations appropriately, with a view to reducing congestion and better manage the traffic accessing the seafront. It is intended to share the output with the members of the Hayling Island Infrastructure Advisory Group (HIIAG) inviting them to comment.