

Cabinet Lead Reports – Full Council 16 March 2022

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Cabinet Lead for Planning, Hayling Seafront Strategy and Coastal Management

Development Management

Workload

Case officers continue to operate with a blended mix of working from home and attendance at the Plaza when required. Site visits are being carried out with appropriate risk assessments in place.

The Planner publication has reported that nationally planning application submissions in January 2022 were 10% lower than in January 2021. This would suggest the market is beginning to return towards pre-Covid submissions (although the number of applications submitted is still well above January 2020 levels).

The team continues to maintain a high level of performance, with over 90% of applications determined within agreed deadlines during Quarters 1-3 of 2021/22.

Casework

A large number of significant planning applications remain under consideration by the team, including a number of cases where technical issues and/or 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; Padnell Grange, Cowplain (86 dwellings); Camp Down, Purbrook (hybrid application for up to 780 dwellings, community/nursery facility, retail unit and public open space); land west of Coldharbour Farm Road, Emsworth (44 dwellings); former SSE site, Bartons Road, Havant (191 apartments); land west of B&Q, Purbrook Way, Havant (new Lidl foodstore); land west of Hulbert Road, Havant (100 dwellings); Brockhampton West (up to 29,000sqm employment units); Cabbagefield Row, Leigh Park (150 dwellings); Land north of Long Copse Lane, Emsworth (210 dwellings); Land east of St George's Avenue, Havant (194 dwellings); Southmere Field, Havant (65 dwellings); Land at Lower Road, Bedhampton (43 dwellings) and Land west of Havant Crematorium, Havant (reserved matters application for 70 dwellings).

In addition to these, there have been recent major applications registered with the Authority which include Rook Farm, Hayling Island (300 dwellings); Land

rear of Fathoms Reach, Hayling Island (51 dwellings); and Dunsbury Park, Havant (6,877sqm of storage and distribution units).

Planning Committee

An application for Land west of Hulbert Road, Havant (up to 100 dwellings) was considered by the Committee at its meeting on 11th November. The application was contrary to the adopted Local Plan – however in engaging the ‘tilted balance’ set out in the National Planning Policy Framework the Committee concluded that the adverse impacts of granting planning permission in this instance would not significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits when assessed against the policies in the Framework taken as a whole. A resolution was secured to grant permission subject to the necessary S106 Agreement being completed.

The same Committee meeting saw a resolution to grant permission secured in respect of 34 additional dwellings at Forty Acres, Bedhampton. Permission was granted on 23rd December.

The Committee meeting held on 3rd February saw permission granted for revisions to the transport conditions attached to the proposed development at 32 New Lane, Havant (redevelopment of Pfizer site with new distribution warehouse facility).

Planning Policy

The agenda item regarding the withdrawal Havant Borough Local Plan, the preparation of a new local plan and the Housing Delivery Position Statement provide the main updates regarding planning policy.

Nonetheless, in terms of moving forward, the officers report highlights the challenging necessity to address the need for housing in Havant Borough. In reality, it will be impossible to do this within the Borough’s boundaries through the new plan. Thus, we must look to our neighbours and nearby local authorities to accommodate this need. This will also be challenging, particularly as both Portsmouth City and Gosport Borough have unmet need – Fareham’s submitted local plan already accommodates 900 of Portsmouth’s unmet need. This question of unmet need across the Solent will be resolved through the Partnership for South Hampshire’s emerging Joint Strategy (see separately the update from the Leader). Nonetheless, in the meantime, we must also seek any bilateral agreements that it is possible to reach. Test Valley Borough Council are currently consulting on a Draft Local Plan which only meets the need for housing in their Borough. As such, I have instructed officers to respond to the consultation and seek an accommodation of Havant Borough’s unmet need. Moving forwards, we will need to leave no stone unturned in meeting the need for housing within the Borough. However, we will need our neighbours and nearby local authorities to be equally as exhaustive in their search for suitable development sites.

Houses benefit from a 'permitted development rights' to undertake a number of common household projects without needing to seek planning permission from the Local Planning Authority. An article 4 direction is a tool which is employed by Local Planning Authorities to remove selected permitted development rights if there is the justification to do so. The Council began the preparation of an article 4 direction for the Langstone Conservation Area in 2011 with all of the statutory steps in its preparation taking place, save for the last one. This involves the confirmation of the Article 4 Direction to the Secretary of State following the one-year grace period to avoid compensation claims to the Council, as is commonplace. Regrettably, due to human error at the time this did not take place. This only came to light late last year following the determination of the planning application in question.

Confirmation of the Article 4 has now taken place and so planning permission will be required for a number of household development projects which otherwise have the potential to cause harm to the special character of the Langstone Conservation Area

Hayling Seafront Strategy

The Hayling Island Seafront Ambition and engagement report was presented to Cabinet in March to update on work underway to develop a Hayling Island Seafront Strategy. Work includes:

- An update on the engagement programme that ran last Autumn. The council received over 650 responses and a full report can be seen within the Cabinet papers
- A revised ambition for Hayling Island Seafront following on from the engagement programme
- The start of the development of a brand for the seafront and early opportunities to implement the agreed branding
- A high-level Masterplan and delivery plan will follow after Cabinet endorsement.

The team continue to work with Coastal Partners, Neighbourhood Team and neighbouring authorities to ensure collaborative working.

Several Welcome Back Fund projects to beautify the seafront have been implemented recently such as shrub clearance on Sinah Commons (detailed below) and Eastoke boardwalk painting.

Welcome Back funded SSSI conservation work undertaken in February

Officers from Neighbourhood Quality have been working with colleagues from the Coastal Partnership and partners, Natural England to draw up plans for the maintenance and enhancement of the Sight of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) on Hayling Island Seafront.

The aim of the project was three-fold, namely, to open the space, to educate visitors as to the intrinsic value of the site and protect it from unlawful encampments by effective management.

The pilot area had been previously surveyed by an ecologist and areas featuring rare wildlife and nationally important flora and fauna had been mapped and indeed identified as being at risk from non-native invasive species.

Funding was secured from the “welcome back fund” to enable a detailed plan that was drafted in partnership with Natural England whose assent was granted for necessary remedial work which was undertaken by NORSE during last week of February.

The work has created clear spaces or scallops enhancing the natural habitat removing brambles and holm oaks in amongst the gorse and will be monitored for the summer period. It is intended to work with volunteer conservation groups moving forward to clear further areas in autumn 2022.

The site is very much part of the Season 22 offer as it sits within the area subject to the “Blue Flag” application which was submitted in January.

Coastal Management

South Hayling Beach Management Activities (BMA) (2017-2024)

Regular inspections of the south Hayling frontage are ongoing. Storm Barra and Storm Eunice saw some beach draw-down, but not sufficient to warrant urgent large scale beach management works. The promenade was cleared by Norse during January 2022, and similar works are likely to be undertaken following Storm Eunice. A beach survey will be carried out during February 2022 to inform our next planned beach management campaign, scheduled for mid-March 2022. It is likely that this campaign will last for 3 weeks on site and will build the beach back to its design profile and volume prior to the Easter holidays. These works are funded by Environment Agency Grant in Aid funding.

Flood Protection – Winter Preparations

All flood boards have been installed along the Eastoke frontage for the winter period and will remain in situ until the Spring. The flood boards are regularly checked by CP Engineers and NorseSE during this time. The boards will remain in place until just prior to the Easter holidays, at which point they will be removed and stored for the summer period.

West Beach – Scoping and Regeneration

Monitoring is ongoing and limited change has occurred so far this winter. The current position of the beach crest lies within the estimated initial cutback risk zone area identified prior to the structure being removed. It is expected that over time, under average wave and weather conditions the beach crest will

continue to roll back into the 'rebound zone'. The next survey of this site is scheduled for February 2022, when additional data will be available to understand any change in position of the beach crest.

Hayling Island Coastal Management Strategy

The option appraisal stage of the project will shortly be coming to an end. The project team have now reviewed the Option Appraisal Report and updated Economics Report, setting out the draft coastal management strategy and the associated costs and benefits. A draft cabinet report has been prepared to engage and inform HBC on the draft coastal management strategy, prior to public engagement. The report is currently in circulation for initial review.

We are currently in the process of planning the engagement with landowners and key stakeholders, programmed for March and April 2022. Following this, we plan to further engage with the public on the draft leading options in June 2022. Engagement dates and locations will be confirmed nearer the time.

Langstone Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Scheme – Detailed Design

The Project Team have been working collaboratively with AECOM and our other Consultants as the project moves through Detailed Design. The Ground Investigation (GI) Interpretive report has now been received from AECOM and is currently undergoing updates following a first review. A final version of the Phase 2 (Non-destructive testing/inspection) Structural Investigations (SI) report has also been received. A design freeze was agreed on 11th February, confirming the leading options to take forwards to Detail Design to further develop, refine and optimise. The purpose of the design freeze was to confirm the type of defence solution and overall alignment following integration of results from the GI, SI and feedback from stakeholder engagement. The projects next milestone is the 50% Design.

The Optimised Programme, which sees the programme extended by 1 year has now been successfully implemented into the project allowing for further opportunity for design reviews, and community and stakeholder engagement.

The formal financial approval letter received from the EA in January 2022 for the OBC confirms both technical assurance and financial approval for the Grant in Aid (£1,139,937), Local Levy (£794,000) and second tranche of Other Government Departments (£541,563) elements for the project. A number of meetings have been held this month to discuss and explore potential financial contributions for the project from Stakeholders. With further meetings being arranged for the upcoming months. Work continues with AECOM on the Saltmarsh Restoration Feasibility Study funded by the Water Environment Improvement Fund (WEIF).

The Project team are currently working with AECOM and our other Consultants towards the 50% Design review meeting milestone, scheduled for 26th April 2022, with planned acceptance of this expected on 1st June 2022. A public engagement event is now scheduled for July 2022 to share the 50% detailed design with community groups through our Stakeholder Working Group.

Broadmarsh Coastal Park, Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Feasibility Study

Following completion of the project and feasibility study, a cabinet report is currently being drafted to go back to Executive Board and Cabinet to progress the project to the next stage.

Warblington Seawall Repairs

Following a report of erosion of land from the farmer at Warblington, an inspection was carried out during early January 2022. The seawall fronting the farmland has become undermined due to lowering beach levels, and a small void has formed on the face of the structure. Discussions are ongoing regarding the environmental impact of repairs to the structure, and applications for consents for work will be considered over the next month.

Coastal Environmental Initiatives.

The Coastal Environment team are actively working across a number of initiatives that aim to protect and improve the natural coastal environment within the Havant Borough, such as:

- **Hayling Island Coastal Management Strategy – additional studies:** £75k additional funding has now been secured from the Environment Agency (EA), linked to the Hayling Island Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Strategy. This will be used to undertake additional work to support the policy option selection at key sites along the east coast of Hayling Island that present some of the best opportunities for coastal habitat creation on the Island. The funding will enable more detailed investigations at these sites and enhanced engagement with landowners at key locations to help present and discuss opportunities – prior to formalising the strategic policy at these sites.
- **Langstone FCERM scheme – Saltmarsh Feasibility Study:** We are currently working with our consultants to investigate the feasibility of using Beneficial use of Dredged Sediments (BuDS) / other management techniques to improve the degraded saltmarsh habitat fronting Langstone village. We are undertaking a feasibility study that will conclude whether the saltmarsh can be restored, and by what technique and at what cost. A report will be provided in March. This is being fully funded by the

Environment Agency's Water Environment Improvement Fund (WEIF), following a successful application for funding from the team. Within February, the team have also worked alongside the Blue Marine Foundation and wider partners to include an ask for £100k funding towards actual saltmarsh restoration on the ground. This request has been submitted as part of an 'Endangered Landscapes Programme' bid. We don't yet know full costs of any restoration works, but if the bid is successful, this £100k funding would be considered a healthy contribution to help unlock other funding sources.

- **Chichester Harbour Protection and Recovery of Nature (CHaPRoN), Southern Water Summit and linked initiatives:** CHaPRoN has a vision of 'working together for the protection and recovery of nature', focussed on Chichester Harbour. Coastal Partners are represented on the CHaPRoN Steering Group and are a key member of the Coastal Resilience Working Group. Over the past month, we have met to discuss the Group's action plan for habitat restoration within the Harbour, highlighting and prioritising opportunities. Linked to this, we have also attended the second technical working group of the Southern Water Harbour's summit, aiming to unlock opportunities for water quality improvements and habitat restoration. There is a big and positive drive towards improving our local coastal environment and we pleased to be involved in such initiatives on behalf of HBC. Members of the team also recently gave a talk to the Havant Climate Alliance, receiving positive feedback on the work being undertaken.
- **Regional Habitat Compensation Programme (RHCP):** Work has commenced on the 2021/22 Annual RHCP report, to update on progress on habitat creation linked to this programme. Ongoing delivery of this programme ensures that we can continue to protect our communities from coastal flooding and erosion, as it's a legal requirement in order to build new Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management schemes where they are most needed. We have also met with regulators to discuss the need for a Solent Wide Coastal Grazing Marsh study, which will help unlock future habitat creation initiatives. Over the coming year, the team will be investigating funding options for this and aim to establish a scope for the project.