

HERTFORDSHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING PARTNERSHIP
Tuesday 26 January 2016

MINUTES

Present:

Cllr. M. Perkins	Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council (Chair)
Cllr. D. Ashley	Hertfordshire County Council (Vice Chair)
Cllr J. Metcalf	Broxbourne Borough Council
Cllr P. Seeby	Broxbourne Borough Council
Cllr. L. Haysey	East Herts District Council
Cllr. G. Jones	East Herts District Council
Cllr. D. Andrews	Hertfordshire County Council
Cllr J. Gardner	Stevenage Borough Council

Officers in Attendance

J. Custance	Watford Borough Council (Chair, HPG)
J. Doe	Dacorum Borough Council
K. Steptoe	East Herts District Council
J. Tiley	Hertfordshire County Council
A. Freeman	Hertfordshire County Council
R. Thacker	Hertfordshire County Council
A. Wood	Hertfordshire LEP
I. Fullstone	North Herts District Council
T. Harvey	St Albans City & District Council
M. Wells	Three Rivers District Council
C. Haigh	Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council
D. Welton	Hertfordshire Planning Co-ordinator (Minutes)

1. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were noted from Cllr. G. Sutton (Dacorum), Cllr. H. Cohen (Hertsmere), Cllr. D. Levett (North Herts), Cllr J. Daly (St Albans) and Cllr Sharpe (Watford).

It was noted that the meeting was not quorate. For a quorum there must be at least 6 voting Members present representing separate local authorities and there were only five present. Consequently, all decisions made will be provisional and an email circular will be forwarded following the meeting asking Members to confirm the decisions.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2015 were agreed as a true record.

Cllr Haysey commented that she had been very impressed with the Design South East presentation.

Jon Tiley confirmed the minutes will be published on a web page on the County Council Environment website. Other information, including the HIPP terms of reference will also be added. He also said that he would send a link to the web page.

3. PROPOSALS FOR RESEARCH INTO VIABILITY AND THE COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL)

Jon Tiley referred to the proposal that had been circulated. The proposal was in response to concerns that infrastructure requirements are being rejected by developers because of viability arguments. Assessments of viability by the conventional consultancies seem to support developer's business models and value calculations. Some authorities had funded consultancies that took a different view or were more creative in approaching the issue.

The proposal is to fund a study of the viability issues in the county to be undertaken by a specialist who is independent of the main group of consultancies. Chris Marsh Associates is an adviser only to the public sector and has indicated they would be prepared to undertake the work. The estimated cost for the work is £20,000 with 50% to be met by the County Council and 50% by the Districts. The project would be managed through the Hertfordshire Planning Group (HPG) with workshops and/or presentations to Members and Officers.

Cllr Metcalf asked what level of funding was required to support infrastructure needs relating to a standard three bedroom house. Cllr Ashley replied that a very rough estimate was in the region of £45,000 per dwelling was needed to fund the infrastructure requirements generated. James Doe referred to the lengthy process involved to arrive at figures for CIL contributions and how figures could vary significantly. As an example he said that a typical 3 bedroom in Hemel Hempstead could produce £10,000 of CIL receipts but in Berkhamsted, where the market is stronger, the figure was around £25,000.

Cllrs Perkins, Ashley and Haysey supported the proposal. Cllr Gardner supported it in principle but said that he would like to see the consultants brief. He added that some local authorities had CIL and some did not and it was necessary to look at how to achieve equality in terms of contributions to strategic infrastructure. Cllr Metcalf added that Broxbourne had done well out of S106 and that he would like to first discuss with his officers before making a commitment to fund the project.

In view that there was no quorum it was noted that the following recommendation would be circulated by email to HIPP Members to consider:

Recommendation

Subject to agreement of the project brief HIPP supports in principle the proposal to undertake research on viability issues, with contributions of £1,000 per District and £10,000 from HCC.

4. LOCALISATION OF PLANNING FEES

A report had been circulated. Kevin Steptoe referred to the provisions within the Housing & Planning Bill that would enable others to process planning applications could provide an opportunity for local authorities to come together to provide a service. There was a provision for pilots to be set up for this purpose and this could be something for HIPP to look at when details were clearer.

The following provisional recommendation to be circulated by email for HIPP Members approval:

That HIPP:

- (i) Bring their concerns to the attention of all Hertfordshire MPs and ask them for their support in requesting that the government give local planning authorities control over the setting of fees for planning applications, but subject to appropriate controls; and**
- (ii) Write to the Department for Communities and Local Government, with a copy to the Local Government Association, supporting the localisation of planning fees as set out in this report.**

5. RECRUITMENT & RETENTION OF PLANNERS

A report had been circulated. Cllr Perkins advised that she was a member of EELGA's Employers Panel that was referred to in the report and she would keep HIPP up to date with their project. Cllr Haysey added that the Mayor of London was to issue a report that looked at innovative ways to tackle the shortage of planners and she would forward it when available.

In discussion Members discussed whether the option of looking at shared services should be investigated. There was some concern as to whether there was an appetite for this in Hertfordshire and if it could result in a loss of local democracy in decision making. Kevin Steptoe added that a large proportion of planning applications related to fairly minor and routine work but Tracy Harvey commented that going down the shared service road would still mean a shortage of around 20 planners in the County.

The following provisional recommendation to be circulated by email for HIPP Members approval:

- (i) That officers have further dialogue with the University of Hertfordshire and the RTPI with a view to developing planning training facilities in the County; and**
- (ii) Officers explore the range of options for responding to the issue of a shortage of planners with a report back to a future meeting of HIPP.**

6. REPORT ON SECOND WIDER SOUTH EAST SUMMIT

Cllr Haysey referred to the Second Wider South East Summit held on 11 December. The formal minutes had not yet been produced but would be circulated when available. There was concern at the amount of growth emanating from London and a Political Steering Group had been established to manage the consultation around the review of the London Plan. Cllr Haysey added that she had been appointed as one of the five representatives from the East of England. She had also attended Growth Commission meetings relating to growth corridors and added that Cross Rail 2 would also generate significant growth pressures.

Cllr Haysey stated that in future she would submit short briefing notes for HIPP so that the item could remain a standing item on the agenda.

7. TRANSPORT, INCLUDING AN UPDATE ON THE LOCAL TRANSPORT BODY

Jon Tiley referred to the report that had been circulated. He added that Network Rail would be invited to a future meeting of HIPP.

There was discussion around the infrastructure needed to support growth. Cross Rail 2, rail four tracking, the A1 and the A10 have considerable impact on the local network as do improvements to the M1 and M25.

Jon Tiley also referred to the Transport Vision, Rail Strategy and Cross Rail 2 that were detailed in his written report.

Rupert Thacker added that the new COMET model would be available in February. This will provide a picture of the network and inform the County's Transport & Growth Plans. A presentation would be made at the next HIPP meeting.

8. LEP UPDATE

Adam Wood was welcomed as the new representative from the Local Enterprise Partnership. He advised that the LEP was now five years old. He

stated that the LEP would be producing an Annual Report for the first time and outlined a number of recent achievements. These included the establishment of three growth area forums; a successful application for an Enterprise Zone for which St Albans and Dacorum should be congratulated; town centre regeneration projects at Stevenage, Hemel Hempstead and Hatfield and work on developing the Croxley Rail Link. He advised that a new Chair of the LEP, Mark Bretton, would take over in the summer.

Adam Wood agreed to provide a brief written report for future meetings.

9. STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

It was reported that the proposal to develop a special SPF event/meeting has been paused due to other events including the recent devolution meeting.

Cllr Perkins commented that she did not think that there was an appetite for devolution in Hertfordshire but there did seem interest in closer working arrangements. It may also be worth looking at whether Local Plans can be better aligned as everyone appears to be working to different periods. The Strategic Planning Framework item will remain as a standing item on the agenda.

10. HIPP FORWARD PROGRAMME

The Chair advised that she could not make the original date for the March meeting so would like to rearrange it. The Coordinator will circulate alternative options.

The forward programme was noted as follows:

HIPP – March 2016

- Population & Household Projections – implications for Hertfordshire
- London Plan/Wider South East Engagement
- Strategic Planning Framework
- Transport Strategy – to include a detailed presentation, including the outputs of the stakeholder consultation
- COMET Transport Model & Growth & Transport Plans
- Transport – including LTB Update
- LEP Update
- Water Study Update

Info items

- HIPP Work Programme
- LTB Minutes (if appropriate)

HIPP – June 2016

- London Plan/Wider South East Engagement
- Strategic Planning Framework
- Transport – including LTB Update
- LEP Update

Info items

- HIPP Work Programme
- LTB Minutes (if appropriate)

Meeting Date to be determined

- Planning & Health – deferred from December meeting
- Promoting Good Design & Role of HIPP (after the Building Futures Tour of examples of good design)
- Affordable Housing/Starter Homes and the Housing & Planning Bill (Colin Haigh to lead)
- Post 2031 Housing Delivery Options
- Network Rail Presentation

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members discussed the two DCLG consultation documents that had been circulated as information items. The Chair particularly noted that the technical consultation on the new homes bonus included a reference to the possibility of withholding the bonus from areas where an authority did not have a Local Plan in place. It was suggested that

The following provisional recommendation to be circulated by email for HIPP Members approval:

That the Coordinator, in consultation with officers, prepares joint strategic level responses to both the consultation on the proposed changes to national planning policy and the new homes bonus technical consultation. Due to timescales involved draft responses will be circulated for final Member comments at short, possibly one days, notice.

12. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The March meeting is to be rearranged and the Coordinator will canvass alternatives.

Provisional dates for 2016/17 are as follows. These will remain provisional and may change following the publication of council diaries.

Tuesday 7 June 2016
Tuesday 26 July 2016
Thursday 29 September 2016
Thursday 17 November 2016
Tuesday 24 January 2017
Wednesday 15 March 2017

HIPP meetings are 6.00pm (for 6.30pm) usually at County Hall but if an authority wishes to host one please contact the Co-ordinator at:
des.welton@ntlworld.com