

REIGATE AND BANSTEAD BOROUGH COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK SCRUTINY REVIEW PANEL

Notes of the meeting held at 6pm on 18 February 2020

Present: Councillors P. Harp (Chair), D. Allcard, M. Blacker, S. Parnall

Officers: Andrew Benson (Head of Planning), John McNally, Catherine Rylands, Catriona Marchant (Democratic Services Officer)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence Councillor S. McKenna (Panel Member).

2. Election of panel chair

Councillor P. Harp was nominated as Panel Chair, proposed by Councillor D. Allcard and seconded by Councillor M. Blacker.

3. Introduction to the report outlining the consultation responses on the draft supplementary planning documents

Planning Policy Officers outlined the report and annex outlining the consultation responses on the Draft Affordable Housing, Barn and Farm Conversions, Historic Parks and Gardens and Reigate Shop Front Design Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs). Following the adoption of the Development Management Plan (DMP) in September 2019, a public consultation was undertaken from 6 January to 8 February 2020 on these four SPDs. Overview & Scrutiny Committee asked for this Panel to be set up to consider the public consultation responses.

4. Panel's comments/observations on consultation responses

Members considered the public consultation responses to the Draft Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) listed above. The Panel made the following observations and comments on the consultation responses, focusing on the suggestions from the consultation responses that had been taken on board (highlighted in green):

Draft Barn and Farms Conversions SPD

- **Surrey Hills AONB (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) consultation response (SPD paragraph 4.8)** – Panel Members noted that the Surrey AONB Management Plan 2020-25 had an updated policy that said: 'Proposals to redevelop or convert farm buildings that would render the associated farmed landscape unviable will be resisted'. Its accompanying text in its response said that 'Farmland in the Surrey Hills has diminished, often going to equestrian uses' such as indoor riding arenas and sand schools which contributed to so-called 'horsiculture'. Members discussed the merits of barns with medieval structures, Dutch barns, barn conversions, large greenhouses and the protection of run-down traditional farm buildings of an agricultural nature that can contribute to the beauty of the landscape. The proposed Council response was that applications for development in the Surrey Hills AONB will also need to accord with DMP Policy NHE1 – Landscape Protection

which had regard to the current Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan. The DMP also recognised the potential impact of 'horsiculture' in DMP Policy NHE8 'Horse Keeping and Equestrian Development'. The SPD would give guidance on the appropriate rural character and features seeking to protect.

- **Insulation standards** – It was noted that in response to a question on insulation standards in buildings that energy requirements are addressed via Core Strategy Policy (CS10 – Sustainable Development) and included DMP Objective SC8 to “encourage new development to incorporate passive and active energy efficiency measures and climate change resilience measures and where appropriate incorporate renewable energy technologies”.
- **External cladding** – the consultee questioned the type of wood permitted for use as external cladding in paragraph 3.56 of the draft SPD and asked whether the Council preferred/permitted oak, elm and preservative treated softwood. It was noted that the type of wood required would be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Panel Members discussed using the traditional featheredge profile of weatherboarding for barns, rather than tongue and groove, insulation materials for timber buildings and use of fire-proof chemicals.
- **Brick and Stone barns** – it was noted that 'diamond brick ventilation patterns' in paragraph 3.19 of the SPD would be amended to 'diamond brick ventilation patterns.'

Draft historic parks and gardens

- **Nork and Burgh Heath** – Panel Members noted that residents may expect Nork Park and Great Burgh to be described as being in Nork not Burgh Heath. It was agreed the draft text would remain as Nork and Burgh Heath was the historic name.
- **Box** – Panel Members discussed historic traditional Box hedges versus modern Box. Due to the damage caused by the Box Tree Caterpillar, modern Box is expensive to treat so the use of alternatives such as Box Leaf Holly should be encouraged.
- **Surrey Gardens Trust** response – it was noted that in Appendix 2: Historic England – the Gatton Park Register Entry was given in full but not the Reigate Priory entry. Officers said work was being undertaken to understand whether there was more detail for Reigate Priory and if so, this would be included in the SPD.

Draft Reigate Shop Front Design SPD

- It was noted that Reigate Shop Front Design would be amended to read Reigate Town Centre Shop Front Design. Panel Members asked if a set of suitable templates could be added as a guide when retailers were designing a shop front. It was noted that the SDP contained a lot of detail and drawings. No amendments were proposed on the use of the words 'enhance/enhanced' were part of the statutory duty 'to preserve or enhance'.

Draft Affordable housing SPD

- It was noted that Affordable Housing was a standard policy definition in the DMP, and this SPD could only provide guidance on policy. Panel Members said that amendments had been made to Figure 1 in the draft SPD on the affordability of housing in the Borough. Panel Members referred to a consultee's response on paragraph 5.35 suggesting the importance of meeting Passivhaus or equivalent energy standards. It was noted that requirement of Passivhaus energy standards would go beyond the role of the SPD. New developments' energy efficiency standards are dealt with through Core Strategy Policy CS10 'Sustainable Development' and DMP. Members discussed development of smaller houses (rather than larger houses) and energy standards in affordable housing.
- Members had no comments to make on paragraph 5.27 regarding the guidance which was informed by a detailed Housing Needs Assessment prepared by Icenl.
- Members noted a consultee Rentplus UK Ltd's response to a statement on the delivery of other affordable routes to home ownership such as affordable rent to buy. The Panel noted that paragraph 5.28 does allow for some flexibility on a site-by-site basis. This was subject to a government consultation and emerging policy on the issue which was proposing a slightly different model of shared ownership.

- A consultee responding on behalf of Miller Homes and Thakeham Homes commented on paragraphs 3.17, 5.21 and 5.31 in the Draft SPD – the definition of increased flexibility on affordable housing provision and viability assessments. Members noted the Council’s proposed response – that the SPD provided guidance on the delivery of the latest assessment of affordable housing needs. DMP Policy DES6 was considered flexible enough to ensure that the size and tenure of affordable housing reflected the affordable housing needs in the borough at the time. Needs identified were based on discussion with the Council’s Housing Strategy team regarding the need for accommodation in the Borough. Panel Members noted their disagreement with the developers’ consultation responses.
- Paragraph 5.36 – it was noted that the SPD provided guidance on restricting rented accommodation blocks to 4 storeys which was considered appropriate, particularly regarding its impact on the environment. Planning policy officers agreed to add text to explain why this was the case.
- It was confirmed that the Council’s response to the consultee on paragraph 5.26 regarding an agreed legal agreement on affordable rent levels would mean there would be an amendment of the draft SPD with explanatory text.
- Members discussed the consultee’s response on paragraphs 6.11 – 6.13 which asked for a list of “approved viability experts”. It was confirmed that it was not possible for the Council to have this suggested list. However, it was noted that paragraph 6.9 does require for the developer to pay for the cost of external assessment of the appraisals submitted. The wording was amended to clarify that where necessary the cost of external assessment may include a full detailed viability assessment.

There were no further comments from Panel Members on the Council’s proposed responses (highlighted in blue) that had agreed updated Draft SPD text following consultee responses. It was noted that in total there were 35 representations from the public consultation exercise.

This concluded the LDF Scrutiny Review Panel discussion. Notes from the meeting would be circulated to Panel Members as well as the revised updated Draft SPDs. The report was due to be discussed at Overview and Scrutiny on 16 April 2020 and adopted by the Executive at its meeting on 23 April 2020.

Members thanked the Planning Policy team officers for their work and presentation in the detailed consultation document.

5. Any other business

There was no other business.

The meeting closed at 7.20 pm