

LPU Cross Party Working Group Meeting Minutes – 12th and 20th September 2023

Session 1 (12th September)

Group 1: Environmental policies

Attendees: Cllrs Ashfield, Johnstone, Rhatigan, Tuck and Watts

Policy ENV1: Landscape

- Questions were raised about the hierarchy for Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)/Valued Landscapes compared to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC). Officers advised that a different status is applicable to each category with AONB/valued landscapes being a landscape designation, and SSSIs/SINCs relating to biodiversity.
- The AONB covers a significant proportion of the borough where housing growth is restricted. It was queried whether the LPU should specify a set number of dwellings to be delivered per year within the AONB and whether this would strengthen the Plan. Officers advised that it is essential to follow what is set out in national policy in terms of protecting the AONB and a more flexible approach would not be suitable. Draft policies already allow suitable limited growth to meet local needs.
- The borough has a number of important river corridors. It was queried whether the Plan should have a policy that further strengthens their protection e.g. no development within 200m? Members were advised that this is covered under a new policy in the LPU (Policy ENV5) – see comments below under Policy ENV5.
- Should Pamber Forest be referenced within this policy? Officers confirmed that Pamber Forest is already referenced in the policy as a recognised Valued Landscape. Members noted that the boundary of Pamber Forest extends into Skates lane. The context of such areas needs to be understood for these woodlands to survive. Landscapes are being artificially contained in the plan and this does not reflect what is on the ground. Officers confirmed this is covered by policy ENV6 and draft policies aim to improve connectivity and areas that support designated sites.
- A reference to swift boxes could be included in all development. Whilst this is referred to in the Landscape, Biodiversity and Trees SPD it was agreed that this could be added to the LPU. Suitable wording has been incorporated into Paragraph 15 of Policy ENV6 (ACTION)

Policy ENV2: Strategic Gaps

- Members emphasised that gaps are important for defining communities' sense of identity and the council needs to make sure that gaps cannot be eroded. Officer confirmed that visual separation is the key and that the policy does not prevent all development in gaps.

Policy ENV3: Thames Basin Heath (TBH) Special Protection Area

- Members questioned whether the 5-7km zone used to be 10km. Officers confirmed the TBH policy has been in place for at least 10 years and remains the same.

Policy ENV4: Nutrient Neutrality

- It was questioned why additional benefits are mentioned in supporting text paragraph 4? Officers explained that this is to cover the potential for stacking on site.

Policy ENV5: River Loddon, Test and Enborne Corridors

- Discussion around what "adjacent" means in the policy (paragraph 2). Officers confirmed this means land adjoining / close to. Flood zones 2 and 3 represent the river corridor.
- Members referred to a Government document which sets out a 200m buffer for rivers. Run off is a huge concern and a river's ecology must be protected. Difficult to prevent any development unless it is in flood zone. Officers acknowledged the difficulty in defining river corridor as character/extent varies between rural and urban areas. What might be feasible in a rural setting is not in an urban context as it would sterilise too much land and be too onerous. The use of flood zones provides for the consistent application of the rivers policy which seeks to enable the cumulative consideration of all of the issues affecting river corridors. Officers are not familiar with the reference to a 200m buffer but the council's Strategic Flood risk Assessment (SFRA) recommends a 10m wide buffer strip alongside main rivers and 5m alongside ordinary watercourses. New development within 8m of a main river or ordinary watercourse requires consent from the EA or HCC (as LLFA). (ACTION to consider silt runoff)
- It was highlighted that draft policy ENV5 is a cross cutting policy – in some instances, further details are provided in individual policies.
- It was requested that the first bullet point under this policy should mention the Bere Winterbourne. It was agreed to mention Winterbournes more generally and this has been added to the policy via a new bullet point (ACTION).

- It was queried whether the River Enborne has too much prominence in paragraph 5 of the supporting text? It only just edges Echinswell and only has about half a mile within the borough. Officers explained the need for a consistent approach and that others were keen to have it in.
- There was a discussion on whether the Plan should address abstraction and the use of natural resources. Officers confirmed that the council does not have the expertise and are not the regulatory body that deals with the permitting process for abstraction/discharge into rivers by businesses. Data is probably available from the EA.
- Members expressed support for what is considered a useful policy.

Policy ENV6: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Conservation

- Members asked whether a bigger buffer for ancient woodland was suitable as the Woodland Trust encourage larger buffers. Mixed views were expressed around the impact of buffers on reducing housing yields versus the benefits of larger buffers in terms of ecology etc. Officers confirmed the PPG refers to a minimum buffer of 15m and that the policy is in line with that. Officers will always seek larger buffers where considered suitable and the evidence supports this.
- Questioned why we are settling 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) in the policy rather than 15%, as this is sometimes being achieved through planning applications at present. Members asked to see what evidence base work has been done to test this percentage. Officers confirmed research is ongoing but that robust evidence is necessary to justify going higher than 10% BNG, as confirmed by Natural England (NE). This evidence is not yet apparent and there is currently no detailed county-wide evidence available. More work is being undertaken and it is recognised that the council needs baseline data to highlight any decline or otherwise.
- It was noted that the requirements for BNG are at the early stages. The Government has yet to release additional guidance but as the Plan progresses more can be incorporated into the Plan.

Policy ENV7: Green and Blue Infrastructure

- Members highlighted that there are many toads and frogs in parts of the borough and planning applications are being refused due to negative impacts on them. It was questioned whether this will now need to be done via applications rather than through policies. Officers confirmed that details such as this would be addressed at planning application stage but that this is also covered by the proposed draft policy.

Policy ENV8: Local Green Space (LGS)

- Members queried whether protection for LGSs stays in place until Neighbourhood Plans are reviewed. Officers confirmed this is the case.
- Was questioned why allotments aren't included. The Local Green Space assessment process includes sites promoted through the Issues and Options consultation (or subsequently) and sites identified in the Green Infrastructure Strategy as Valued Parks and Open Spaces. Those allotments listed in the policy are sites that have been designated as Local Green Space in made Neighbourhood Plans. Unless promoted for consideration, allotments have not been assessed and are subject to other protection policies.
- Members asked if new sites can still come forward and should this policy contain guidance for those still wanting to promote sites? Officers confirmed that sites can be promoted through the Regulation 18 consultation.

Policy ENV9: Water Quality

- Members requested the separation of the third paragraph. A new paragraph should be created where the policy states '*Development proposals adjacent to a watercourse will incorporate measures.....*' (ACTION)
- Need to be clear on what surface water is. Also, the policy should refer to development in the "relevant catchment area" rather than "adjacent". Officers explained all areas will be in a catchment area so this is too onerous. It is a regulatory process and the EA will decide the level that waste water has to be treated at.
- Water quality is also about usage and reducing water usage. Officers confirmed this was being discussed under the new sustainable design policy. The hierarchy for using brown water first is already in the draft policy. Officers also referred to Offwat setting priorities and standards over extraction, water quality etc.
- It was considered that Paragraph 7 in the supporting text could be reworded to improve clarity. Groundwater (GW) quality in the Test is a greater concern than the surface water (SW) in the Loddon area. How can we compare GW with SW? Officers advised that the policy was highlighting wastewater discharges to groundwater in the Test catchment and surface water in the Loddon catchment area but it was accepted that the wording could be improved (ACTION)

Post Meeting Note:

- David George of Whitchurch Conservation Group forwarded suggestions to the portfolio holder regarding this policy including: a requirement for major developments to undertake risk assessments of their impact on water bodies; the policy needs to be linked to Water Framework Directive (WFD) targets

and directions of water quality movement; the reference to Grampian conditions needs to refer to the quantity and quality of wastewater.

Officers have considered the comments. If water companies need to revise their permits for wastewater treatment, they have to carry out risk assessments, and also need to take action if there is evidence of WFD deterioration. Requiring developers to carry out risk assessments would be unnecessarily onerous, and they wouldn't have all the technical information regarding wastewater treatment. The NPPF makes it clear that planning decisions should be made on the basis that pollution control regimes relating to water quality will operate effectively. Policy SS7 (previously SS4) is linked to this policy and refers to WFD targets. The use of Grampian conditions in this context is to enable the water company to manage the timing of connections to the public sewer so that it can comply with its statutory duties - conditions shouldn't be used to require compliance with other regulatory regimes.

Policy ENV10: Managing Flood Risk

- Members questioned whether flood zones alter and who updates the data. Officers confirmed the EA update the data regularly and that developers are referred to the EA website for the most up to date maps.
- Queried how we could have access to river management and what could it do for our area. Also, could the Catchment partnerships get better funding? River management is important and can add to BNG and it was requested that a reference be added to management. Additional wording has been added to paragraph 6 (ACTION)
- It was queried whether the Plan needs to refer to the sequential test in the policy. Officers confirmed this is set out in national guidance. It is also referred to in the policy. A sequential test is being carried out for the LPU and will be part of the Regulation 18 consultation.

Group 1: Economy Policies

Attendees: Cllrs Ashfield, Johnstone, Rhatigan, Watts and Ashfield.

Policy EMP1: Economic Growth and Investment

- Members queried why the Plan is promoting storage and distribution. Officers explained the need to provide such sites within the borough, which is evidenced in the relevant Employment Needs Assessment (ENA) which is in the process of being updated.
- A question was raised about whether the floorspace provided at sites in Priestly Road and Intech 2 would be deducted from the floorspace need to be allocated in the LPU. Officers confirmed that everything from the start of the Plan period would be taken into account.

- It was queried whether it's suitable to direct some of London's jobs towards the borough of Basingstoke and Deane as jobs are important. Also, does the Plan consider economic corridors such as down the A30. Officers confirmed that the Plan looks to meet the borough's needs and the spatial strategy is not currently focused on corridors.
- Written comments from the Conservative Group suggested that the use of land for economic development other than storage and distribution should be prioritised in areas easily accessible by public transport. The policy is based on sustainable development principles and prioritises sites that are accessible by sustainable travel options.
- Written comments from the Conservative Group suggested that paragraphs (b) and (g) should be deleted because the use of land for storage and distribution is contrary to the key priorities, pillars and aims of the economic growth strategy due to such uses creating low quality jobs. However, this approach would be contrary to the NPPF and would cause issues of soundness. Recommendations contained in the Employment Needs Assessment, which forms part of the evidence base for the LPU, identifies a need for storage and distribution floorspace within the borough and these needs must be accommodated within the LPU.

Policy EMP2: Employment Land and Premises

- Members highlighted that employment areas in other settlements are very important but need to be the right size for the area. It is important to strengthen what we can do to ensure such premises retain their employment status. Officers advised that the policy stated that proposals should be suitable to the location which should ensure that they are the right size for the settlement.

Policy EMP3: Town, District and Local Centres

- It was stated that village facilities and service such as at Sherbourne St John should be protected. Officers advised that this is covered by policy COM12.

Policy EMP4: Rural Economy

- There was a discussion about the importance of the rural economy and it was felt the policy could be strengthened to recognise the role of the economy and its diversity. Reference should be made to important local rural economies such as equine and equestrian, horse racing, fishing and the businesses that support them. References have been added to criteria b) (ACTION)

Policy EMP5: Rural Tourism

- It was considered that reference should be made to Whitchurch Silk mill in the supporting text paragraph 2. Also it was felt that the policy is focussed on arts

and culture but should be wider in scope. The policy and supporting text does not refer to walking trails, access to the countryside and access to such tourist attractions as Watership Down Trail and Highclere Castle. New wording has been added to paragraph 5 (ACTION).

Policy SPS8: Basing View

- Members highlighted the importance of Basing View and queries whether it could be developed more as a live/work environment along the lines of Paddington Basin. Could there be more than 300 dwellings in the policy. Officers confirmed that the policy allows for flexibility around types of uses but that the focus remains on office uses with supporting development.
- Post meeting comments from Conservative Party Cllrs: ‘The need for a level of residential development isn’t clear in the policies. What impact or changes would be required for the zoning of Basing View to achieve this is also unclear. Is the plan to leave all plots empty in perpetuity if no commercial development comes forward?’ The Policy allows for approximately 300 homes plus student accommodation associated with any future education uses on the site. The zoning on Basing View has been removed to enable greater flexibility across the site. The policy continues to protect the business park for employment uses and other complementary uses to enable empty plots to be redeveloped suitably.

Policy SPS19: Oakdown Farm

- Concerns were raised about infrastructure, which will be particularly important to get right given that it is a Gateway site. Links from the site to nearby housing sites will be important to ensure sustainable development where walking and cycling can be prioritised. Additional wording added to criteria I (ACTION).
- Written comments from the Conservative Group raised concerns about large scale warehousing at junction 7 missing the opportunity to designate different employment uses including a science park.
- The policy allows for warehousing and/or industrial uses (use classes B2 and or B8) in line with identified floorspace needs for the borough. However, the draft policy is sufficiently flexible to allow for other uses which could include a science park. It could also allow for other high tech opportunities. The type of businesses allocated for under this policy is in line with the Employment Needs Assessment and is in accordance with the requirements of the NPPF.
- General support for SME’s could be included in the supporting text. Additional text has been added to paragraph 3 (ACTION).

Group 2: Climate Change Policies

Attendees: Cllrs Bound, Konieczko and McCormick,

Policy CLC1: A Carbon Neutral, Carbon Adapted Borough

- Members noted that this was an over-arching policy that linked the detailed policies of the Plan back to the council's Climate Emergency declaration. The more detailed policies then contained the 'teeth' for decision making. Members expressed their support for this approach, and particular support for criterion (d) relating to active travel.
- Written comments from the Conservative Group raised concerns about the non-specific nature of this policy. However, these are only 'general principles', and it cross-references to the more detailed policy requirements elsewhere in the Plan.

Policy ENV11: Energy Standards

- Members expressed support for the policy's high level of ambition.
- Members were pleased that the policy covered embodied carbon. It was noted that this was a rapidly changing area, and that if new best practice emerged prior to Reg 19, the policy could be updated.
- Written comments from the Conservative Group raised concerns about the impact of the low carbon requirements upon viability. These will be considered (alongside other policy requirements) as part of a comprehensive LPU viability study, to ensure that the Plan is deliverable in its entirety.

Policy ENV12: Sustainable design, construction and adaptation

- Members suggested that criterion (c) should be expanded to include greywater recycling and this has been actioned. (ACTION)

Policy ENV13: Renewable and low carbon energy

- Members noted the intention to identify 'suitable areas' post Reg-18 but considered that suitable areas for wind were likely to be limited by the borough's topography.
- Members noted that the policy did include any specific references to geothermal. Officers explained that there was no evidence to indicate that geothermal would be a particularly important local resource, but that Policy ENV13 did not preclude it coming forward.
- Written comments from the Conservative Group suggested that the policy should explicitly support solar power on existing buildings and structures. An

additional supporting paragraph has been added although this has not been limited to solar (ACTION).

- Written comments from the Conservative Group identified an inconsistency in the policy wording in relation to wind turbines. The reference in the first paragraph has been removed, (ACTION).
- Written comments from the Conservative Group suggested that the policy should explicitly prevent commercial-scale energy generation in the AONB. It is not considered reasonable to include a blanket ban on such technologies, and that proposals should be considered on their merits. Although it is recognised that the importance of the AONB is highlighted in the supporting text, it is considered that there is scope to also highlight this in the policy and additional wording has been added to criteria b) (ACTION).
- Written comments from the Conservative Group suggested that the Plan should allocate land for renewable energy where it cannot be used for other types of development (for example, around Tadley). However, in order to be deliverable, there needs to be evidence that the land is available for this use. This is not currently the case, but this could be investigated in the future alongside the work to identify suitable areas.

Policy ENV14: Pollution

- It was noted that the policy set out an aspiration for new development to improve as well as mitigate pollution, and it was noted that this policy could be used in areas where air quality was considered to be poor.

Group 2: Design Policies

Attendees: Cllrs Bound, Konieczko, McCormick, Johnstone and Tuck.

Policies DES1-3: Design – General Comments

- The three design policies were discussed together. It was recognised that the new policies would be more detailed (and stronger) than the current policy (ALP Policy EM10).
- There was discussion around how terms such as beauty and 'high quality public realm' could be defined. Officers explained the types of considerations that could inform these judgements.
- There was discussion about the design of Electric Vehicle (EV) charging and in particular how it could be retrofitted to existing housing: it was noted that this issue was addressed in Policy COM2 (Transport). Officers have considered whether the supporting text to Policy COM2 should be enhanced to provide more detail about what 'safe, accessible and convenient charging facilities' means in practice. However, it has been concluded that Policy COM2 should not be prescriptive around the specific design of future EV

charging facilities, especially as this is likely to change within the LPU timeframe of up to 2040.

- There was a discussion about how good design could improve residential amenity and in particular minimise noise disturbance. Whilst it was acknowledged that internal noise (between houses and across party walls) was a matter for Building Regulations, other factors (such as the layout of the development, proximity of roads etc) could help to make development more 'liveable'. Liveability was a key consideration of LPU Policy DES3.
- A member asked if Space Syntax Theory was used in the consideration of layouts. Officers explained that although it was not referred to by name, the underlying issues addressed by space syntax such as allowing for convenient and quick routes and the size, use and connectivity of public spaces were addressed in the consideration of layouts and were covered by Policies DES1/DES2.
- It was suggested that it would be helpful to look at case studies and test whether the new policies would have given the DC Committee more strength to refuse poor schemes in the past. Officers have subsequently examined this issue and concluded that the new policies will provide more strength to refuse poor design. In particular, detailed topics, such as some of those addressed in the Design and Sustainability SPD, are now proposed to be accorded more strength as criteria in a LPU policy.

Policy DES2: Site Design

- Although the benefits of street trees were understood, members highlighted the importance of ensuring they were suitable in terms of their species, location and space allowed for planting and canopy width when mature etc. Additional wording has been added to paragraph 8 (ACTION).
- Written comments from Cllr Compton-Burnett suggested the following changes in relation to Policy DES2: Site Design.
 - g): add "Ensure that parking provision, cycle storage, bin storage and other service areas are easily accessible, incorporated and designed in a manner which is consistent with the overall character of the development..." The wording has been updated accordingly. (ACTION).

A related amendment has been made by officers to criteria (h) to state that waste and recycling storage areas are to be accessible to residents and will not have a detrimental impact on the character or appearance of the development. This amendment has been made so that it is clearer that criteria (g) addresses parking and service areas and criteria (h) addresses waste and recycling.

- k): add "Ensure that new and existing elements of the public realm will be suitably maintained and managed" (ACTION). The wording has been

updated but the amended criteria also explains that the new reference to existing elements of the public realm applies to where it is development related.

Policy DES3: Building Design

- Members highlighted the need for development to use good quality, local materials. It was agreed that Policy DES3(d) could be amended to emphasise the use of good quality traditional materials where this was consistent with the design approach of the development. Criteria d) has been updated accordingly (ACTION).
- There was concern that developers should not be able to use poor neighbouring precedents to justify their proposals given the references in Policies DES1 and DES3 to having regard to the surrounding area. Officers note that Policy DES1(b) does address this as it refers to development having regard to the “locally distinctive and valued characteristics of the area”. However, it was agreed that the reference in Policy DES3(b) to development being well related to “valued examples in the surrounding built form” could be strengthened so that it was clear that this applied to all aspects of the character of an area and not just scale (ACTION).
- Written comments from Cllr Compton-Burnett suggested the following changes in relation to Policy DES3: Building Design.
 - g): add “Do not have an unacceptable detrimental impact on neighbouring properties in relation to issues such as overlooking, access to natural light, sound pollution, outlook and overbearing impacts.” Noise has been added to the criteria (ACTION).
 - k): add “Do not have an unacceptable detrimental impact on neighbouring properties in relation to issues such as overlooking, access to natural light, sound pollution, outlook and overbearing impacts and light pollution.” Noise and light have been added to the criteria (ACTION).
 - 10. add “the provision of lifts in flatted developments of more than one storey in height.” Change made. (ACTION).
 - 10. add “Adequate safe, easily accessible storage for prams and push chairs within flats, or within communal areas on the ground floor or on landings” (ACTION). Updates made although it is noted that this suggestion reorders some of the words in this criteria as well as adding new text.
 - 10. add “Adequate safe, easily accessible space for mobility scooters within flats, or within communal areas on the ground floor or on landings” (ACTION). Updates made although it is noted that this suggestion reorders some of the words in this criteria as well as adding new text.

- 10. add “Well thought out and legible delivery arrangements with adequate and safe storage facilities for post and deliveries should the recipient be absent.” Change made (ACTION).
- 10. add “Canopied external entrance doors.” Change made (ACTION).
- 10. add “Internal layouts that are ergonomic and adaptable to facilitate flexible use of space, increase living choices, enable home working and make life easier for wheelchair users.” Change made (ACTION).

Policy DES4: Space Standards

- The space standards policy was supported.

Policy DES5: Density of New Development

- It was explained that the NPPF requires Local Plans to set minimum density standards in sustainable locations unless there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate. Officers explained that it had been decided to not include such density standards in the Local Plan Update as this could lead to the erosion of the established character of many parts of Basingstoke. It was explained that densities in rural areas were to be addressed by Neighbourhood Plans.
- A member highlighted that flatted development could be acceptable if it was well designed – and highlighted particularly good examples from Southwark in London (and suggested it might be helpful to do a site visit there in the future).

Policy DES6: Heritage

- Members noted that the policy sought to strike a balance between climate change mitigation and heritage. However, a member noted that improving energy efficiency did not always need to compromise heritage, for example with timber framed double glazing and secondary glazing.

Session 2 (20 September 2023)

Cllrs: Konieczko (Chair), Bound (M), Bowes, McCormick, Rhatigan, Taylor, Tuck, Watts

SPS2/SS2: Regeneration

- A member queried why the regeneration areas had been referred to as the *initial* priority areas. Officers pointed out that this allowed flexibility in the event that other regeneration proposals came forward over the plan period.

- A member queried whether the policy could do more to require or encourage partnership working with the RPs. It was explained that the LPU policy provided the planning framework and that this was best addressed through the Regeneration Strategy.
- It was agreed that the Regeneration Strategy needed to be added to the monitoring box in the future – but this could not be done until the strategy had been adopted.
- There was a discussion around how the policy could strengthen local residents' influence over development proposals. It was noted that the policy already required 'full involvement and consultation with the affected local communities', however members were concerned that residents were not always being listened to. Officers explained that the policy sets the requirement as much as it can, but a reference has been added to the best practice in the council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). (ACTION).
- The reference to 'old homes' in the final para should be explained in that it relates to existing homes. Change made (ACTION).
- There was a discussion around the types of 'enhanced facilities' that were required to support regeneration. It was suggested that this should be expanded to include health services and public transport connections. Additional wording added to paragraph 4. (ACTION).
- Post meeting comments from Cllr Compton-Burnett - Para 3: add "Masterplans and design codes must be prepared in collaboration with stakeholders for large scale proposals". Stakeholder collaboration in the development of masterplans and design codes should ensure that they reflect the needs of local communities and the organisations that will use the facilities, eg NHS, education organisations, sports clubs. Wording has been included in the following sentence where the point is more suitably captured (ACTION).

SPS13: Basingstoke Leisure Park

- A member suggested that the policy should include specific reference to the Leisure and Recreational Needs Assessment (LRNA) – as the needs identified in this document could help to prioritise uses for the site. Although officers recognised that the LRNA could provide some useful background information, its specific focus was not on the type of commercial leisure activities that would be expected on the Leisure Park.
- It was suggested that the policy should highlight the importance of active lifestyles (including active travel) although some members noted that this

was already prominent within the policy. A reference has been added to supporting text paragraph 1 (ACTION).

- There was discussion about the importance of the Leisure Park being well connected to Basingstoke Town Centre. A reference has been added to supporting text paragraph 3 (ACTION).
- Post meeting comments from Cllr Compton-Burnett – ‘Green box para 1: add “enhanced leisure facilities ~~which support its role as a~~ in which all components on the site work together to provide a regional leisure destination”.’ No change has been made as the policy wording relates to the role of the park, in relation to the town centre etc and it is unclear what the new wording would bring in planning terms.

Add new Par 4. ‘The boundary of the leisure park is defined on the [Policies Map]. The leisure park should include the Golf Centre’. A reference to the policies map has been included in new wording, although the Park does not include the Golf Centre which operates (ACTION)

- Post meeting comments from Conservative Party Cllrs: ‘Not clear on the importance or future of food and beverage on the park’. The policy remains unchanged in this regard from the current adopted Local Plan and continues to support food and beverage where it remains ancillary and is required to make the new provision economically viable, without detriment to the borough’s defined retail centres.

SS3/4: Basingstoke Town Centre policies

- Some of the members had already shared their views on this policy at other meetings, including at the 7 September EPH meeting.
- It was agreed that more could be done to bring out Basingstoke’s identity in bullet point 5 and the policy criterion. This could refer to the town’s historic and cultural heritage and the importance of local vernacular, materials and sense of place. A new criteria 3 has been added to the policy, covering the points raised (ACTION).
- It was noted that that policy was high level, but it was agreed that it needed to be drafted this way as there was currently no certainty about what types of schemes will come forward. The purpose of the policy was to provide a framework to judge the acceptability of proposals.
- Members expressed an aspiration to encourage more small businesses to the Top of Town, but it was recognised that this was mainly beyond the scope of Planning.
- It was noted that providing connectivity across the town centre (and between the areas in SPS11) was very important and that this is already emphasised in the policy.

- Written comments from Cllr Compton-Burnett suggested the following changes in relation to Policy SS3:
 - Objective 3: For residents and visitors of all ages. Change made (ACTION)
 - Objective 7: Embrace and promote local heritage and culture. Change made (ACTION).
 - Criterion d: Include reference to blue space (as well as green space). Agree change given potential opportunities around the culverted Loddon and the canal. Change made (ACTION).
 - Criterion m: Add 'Make provision for facilities, such as toilets and benches, to enable people of all ages to enjoy the amenities'. A new criteria g) has been added about the public realm and the facilities within it (ACTION).
 - Criterion m: Add 'Pedestrian routes should provide safe passage for pushchairs and wheelchairs'. Agree that this could be added to the criterion about connectivity and change made (ACTION).
 - Text para 1: Add reference to cultural uses Change made (ACTION).

- Written comments from Cllr Compton-Burnett suggested the following changes in relation to Policy SS4:
 - Suggest that the Malls must, 'Establish a welcoming gateway to the town, which reflects the town's heritage and its aspirations for the future'. On balance, this was not considered necessary to include a specific reference, as all development in the town should meet these design standards (as set out in Policy SS3); and
 - To add reference in the supporting text to opportunities for leisure in The Malls. Change made (ACTION).

- Written comments from the Conservative Group suggested that the policy should:
 - Highlight the importance of mixed use development to create a thriving town centre. No changes were considered necessary as this is already reflected in para 4 of the supporting text to Policy SS3.
 - Require high density development to be high quality. No changes were made as it was considered that this was already adequately reflected in Policy SS3 as well as the new LPU design policies.

The response also raised concerns about the potential loss of car parking (as successful regeneration would result in more visitors) and suggested that a net neutral position on car parking spaces should be retained as a minimum. It is considered that the need for parking is adequately addressed by SS3 criterion (k) which ensures the needs of residents and

visitors are met, and allows proposals to be determined on their merits noting that the situation might change over the life of the Plan.

COM1: Infrastructure

- Members identified the desirability of future-proofing infrastructure (for example by safeguarding additional land to allow for possible future expansion). Officers explained that this was achievable when future development was known about or committed (for example, allocations in the Local Plan), but it would not be reasonable to blight third party land without a reasonable level of certainty.
- With respect to paragraph 13, Members suggested that this could also make reference to demonstrating no adverse impact on water quality. Wording updated to reflect the point made (ACTION).
- With respect to paragraph 19, Members suggested that the reference to the LEP is removed given that it is understood that the LEPs are no longer likely to be receiving government funding. Officers agreed to review this and to update this paragraph as appropriate. (ACTION). Post meeting note: Reference to the LEP Network website states: *On 4 August the Minister for Levelling Up and the Minister for Enterprise, Markets and Small Business sent a joint letter to LEP chairs etc confirming the government's decision to withdraw government funding from April 2024 and transfer their functions to local and combined authorities. Some LEPs may choose to continue operations without core funding, either until a devolution deal is agreed for their area or in perpetuity and states that where an upper tier local authority or authorities wish to continue using the LEP as a vehicle to continue delivery of these core functions, or if they wish in due course to pursue integration of a LEP, they are free to do so.*
- Members queried the approach with respect to planning applications relating to developments taking place outside of the borough (e.g. within neighbouring council's areas, such as the Sandleford development within West Berkshire). Officers confirmed that such developments are normally the subject of out of borough consultations from the relevant LPA. This enables BDBC to consider the likely impacts upon the area and the need for mitigations and associated infrastructure improvements. This would inform BDBC's representation to the relevant LPA.
- Members requested clarification from the Development Management Team as to the likely circumstances and any established thresholds/criteria, which trigger the requirement for other LPA's to issue out of borough consultations for consideration by BDBC. The team consult other authorities on a case-by-case basis (looking at size/proximity) and there are no specific thresholds. The LPA would also consult (and be consulted) on relevant issues through the plan-making process.

- Written comments from Cllr Compton-Burnett suggested that the first paragraph should include reference to working with stakeholders that will use the facility (e.g. NHS, schools, sports clubs), because the existing term 'infrastructure operator' refers to the operation and maintenance of the structure rather than its use. However, it is considered that the term 'infrastructure operators' is sufficiently broad to cover uses that will operate from the premises.
- It was also suggested that the fifth paragraph should refer to improvements as well as new infrastructure, which is agreed. Change made (ACTION).
- Written comments from the Conservative Group suggested that there was no indication how infrastructure delivery will be managed to allow infrastructure to 'catch up' in the first five years of the Plan. It is considered that it would be most appropriate for this to be set out alongside Policy SS1 (Scale and Distribution of Development) and this will be reviewed in due course.

COM2: Transport

- With respect to the first part of the policy and criterion c) Members suggested that this should be expanded to make reference to other key locations such as the hospital and major employment areas. Additional wording has been added (ACTION).
- With respect to the servicing of new developments by public transport Members made reference to recent comments made by Stagecoach around the challenges in accessing recent housing developments such as Hounsome Fields. Officers suggested that the supporting text to this policy could be updated to make reference to Stagecoach's current design guidance or its successor, which provides detailed design recommendations and examples of best practice. Additional wording added to paragraph 11 (ACTION)
- With respect to paragraph 5 and the reference to HCC's emerging LTP4 and HCC's identified Guiding Principles, Members questioned whether reference to 'Significantly...' could be removed from the start of the first bullet point. Officers confirmed that these bullet points are direct quotations from HCC's emerging LTP4 so this could not be changed.
- Written comments from the Conservative Group raised concerns about the impact of development upon residents that need to travel by car. In particular, they highlighted the lack of spare capacity on the ring road and other A roads. However, it is considered that no change to the policy is required, and it should be noted that this has been considered by the council's highway modelling which has informed the LPU Transport Assessment.

SS10 - Chineham Railway Station

- A discussion took place regarding the deliverability of the policy.
- With respect to the Basingstoke to Reading railway line, Members noted the opening of the new Reading Green Park station and queried the cost of bringing forward this new station. A cost in the region of £20M was suggested although Chineham could be more expensive to deliver given the existing railway line is located within a cutting. The Reading Green Park project was supported by different funding sources including from the Local Enterprise Partnership, the Government's New Station Fund, etc. The future availability of external funding is likely to be a significant factor in progressing a new station at Chineham.

COM3: Affordable Housing

- Members noted that the draft policy includes First Homes. It was explained that these had been introduced through the PPG and a Written Ministerial Statement, but had not yet been included in the NPPF. The draft policy therefore includes a caveat that these would not be required if they were no longer included in national policy in the future. Members agreed that this was a good approach given the high levels of affordable need in the borough.
- A member noted that a large proportion of people on the council's CBL Register required 1-bed accommodation and queried how the policy could help address this need. It was explained that the policy required the mix and size of affordable homes to have 'regard to the type of need shown on the council's housing registers'. Making the suggested change has the potential consequence of neglecting the need for larger units of accommodation, making it difficult to secure larger properties in site negotiations. The wait on the register for four bed properties is as long as the wait for one bed properties.
- It was queried why, in paragraph 2, the housing requirement was not always rounded upwards. The proposed approach to round to the nearest whole number aligns with the approach in the current Housing SPD. Additional wording added to the paragraph to reflect this point (ACTION).
- Written comments from the Conservative Group queried the percentages used for calculating First Homes as they thought it was a percentage of the whole development. However, the 25% First Homes figure is taken as a proportion of the affordable dwellings and not of the whole development.
- The Conservative Group raised concerns on achieving viability with the 60% social rented split and the limitations it puts on providing intermediate options to provide opportunities to get onto the housing ladder. The Conservative Group challenged adding a 60% social rent percentage to all sites because some are located away from infrastructure and could create social isolation and inequalities. They proposed using the settlement hierarchy and site size

to determine the appropriateness of social rented homes. This has not been taken forward as one consistent social: intermediate percentage split has been used for all sites as this is considered the best approach to meet needs, and results in a standard, easily understandable policy.

COM4: Rural Exception Sites (RES) and First Homes Exception Sites (FHES)

- It was noted that the policy included caveats to remove the support for FHESs if they were no longer supported by national policy.
- Written comments from the Conservative Group suggested that there was an 'omission in the detail on this', but it is not clear what further detail is considered necessary.

COM4: Single plot rural exception sites

- It was noted that there could be instances where an extended family might require more than one new home. It was explained that in such cases, multiple applications for single plot rural exception sites could be submitted, and the determination of each application would take into account the circumstances of each applicant.

SPS6: New Housing in the countryside

- In relation to criterion (e), it was queried how an 'unmet need in the local area' that was 'locally agreed' would be evidenced. Members were signposted to supporting text paras 9-12, which had been informed by the council's informal guidance note on ALP Policy SS6 and appeal decisions.
- It was queried whether criterion (c) would allow unsuitable buildings to be converted. Members reviewed supporting text para 5 and agreed that this text addressed the concern.
- It was queried whether the policy could prevent circumstances where a replacement dwelling had been built, and the previous house had then been retained. It was noted that the policy did not support this and that such proposals would need to be judged on their merits.

COM6: Housing Mix for Market Housing

- Members noted that the footnote relating to bungalows had been deleted, but that the same requirements were now included in the policy's main text.

COM7: Specialist accommodation for older people and those with specialised needs

- No comments.

COM8: Custom and self-build housing

- Concern was expressed that sites with self-build housing might look unfinished for a long period of time as self-building could be slow. However, it

was considered that this was outside the scope of planning and likely to be something that the landowner selling the plots might wish to control.

COM9: Accessible and adaptable dwellings

- Members suggested that reference to the term 'Lifetime Homes' in the supporting text would be helpful. Change made (ACTION).
- Members also requested that the policy's supporting text was updated to recognise how accessible and adaptable homes could contribute to building communities. Change made (ACTION)

COM10: Gypsies, travellers and travelling show people

- Concern was expressed over the current delivery of pitches in the borough and that there should be more emphasis on windfall sites rather than just strategic allocations. The draft policy sets out criteria for assessing potential windfall applications.
- Members discussed the challenges of putting pitches close to the settled community on strategic sites. It was considered that conflicts could be reduced if developers were required to identify the location of pitch(es) before any homes are built or sold and that this should be considered through the masterplanning process or as early as possible to provide certainty. Additional wording has been added to paragraph 11 (ACTION).
- Written comments from the Conservative Group and Cllr Compton-Burnett suggested that the inclusion of criteria on the suitability of the site in paragraph 13 suggests that contaminated sites, site close to power lines, railway lines, and un-neighbourly uses would be unsuitable for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Show People, but suitable for everyone else, which appears inconsistent. The relevant text has been deleted (ACTION).

COM11/COM12: Community facilities

- Members discussed the suitability of the paragraph underneath the criteria in Policy COM12. Officers pointed out that the paragraph allowed the decision maker to retain control as they could weigh any benefits against loss. It was also noted that the same text was already included in the Adopted Local Plan. It was suggested that the supporting text should refer to timing – to ensure that there wouldn't be a gap between one facility being lost and another being provided. A new paragraph has been added to the supporting text (ACTION).
- It was noted that para 9 of the supporting text to COM12 strengthened the council's control in the event that a community facility that had been proposed as part of a new development did not come forward.

- Written comments from Cllr Compton-Burnett asked for the addition of multi-functional green space to be incorporated into the list of examples of community facilities in the supporting text to COM11. Change made (ACTION)

Employment Land

- Concerns were raised about why the LPU is providing land and allocations for storage and distribution when this was not a sector encouraged in the borough due to quality of jobs etc. The increasing amount of depots being developed in Basingstoke was highlighted as a concern. Specific concerns about the draft allocation of Oakdown Farm was also highlighted, given the concerns of residents about development in this area and the refusal of previous planning applications. It was highlighted by officers how the LPU must identify suitable employment floorspace to meet its needs, in line with NPPF requirements. The allocation at Oakdown is for a lower amount of floorspace than proposals previously considered through the development management process.