

Folkestone & Hythe District and Parish Councils' Joint Committee

Held at:	Remote Meeting
Date	Thursday, 21 July 2022
Present	Councillors Graham Allison, Michael Boor, Frank Hobbs, Mrs Jennifer Hollingsbee and Terence Mullard
Others Present:	James Clapson (Case Officer - Committee Services), Andrew Clarke (Senior Area Officer - Environmental Enforcement), Sue Lewis (Case Officer - Committee Services), Dave Shore (Planning Manager - Otterpool Park LLP) and Karen Weller (Environmental Senior Specialist).

1. Appointment of chairman

Proposed by Councillor Hobbs
Seconded by Councillor Allison

RESOLVED:
That Councillor Hollingsbee be appointed as Chairman for the meeting.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes

Members agreed that the minutes were a correct record of the meeting held on 17 March 2022.

4. Flytipping Update

Karen Weller, Environmental Senior Specialist, and Andrew Clarke, Senior Area Officer (Environmental Enforcement), provided the Committee with an update regarding fly tipping in the district. During their address, the following points were noted:

- Fly tipping was the unauthorised deposit of controlled waste, without a licence.

- All cases of fly tipping were investigated, even if it did not take place on Council owned land.
- The team used smart water to find patterns and link events. They also installed cameras in key locations to gather video evidence.
- There were a number of wildlife cameras set up around the district that had proved very valuable in gathering evidence.
- Normally a first-time offender would be issued with a fixed penalty notice of £300. It was hoped that this would be enough to stop most people from re-offending.
- If there was a repeat offense, the Council would consider criminal prosecution. This was resource intensive as officers had to put a case together that proved beyond reasonable doubt that the individual was guilty.
- Folkestone and Hythe District Council (FHDC) worked closely with neighbouring Councils, to share information. An individual had recently been successfully prosecuted for fly tipping in Folkestone, Dover and Ashford.
- There were four officers who covered the FHDC area.
- Residents should be aware that they were responsible for the disposal of their rubbish. If someone offered to take it away, they remained responsible unless they had a transfer note detailing where it was collected, where it would be deposited, and the name and address of the collector.

In response to the Committee's comments and questions, it was noted that:

- Some people found it difficult to use the Kent County Council (KCC) Waste and Recycling Centre booking system. This could lead to fly tipping. However, KCC had conducted a consultation about the booking system, and it was found to have public support.
- The booking system also allowed the Council to identify individuals who did high a number of regular visits, this could suggest that they were providing an unofficial collection service which could be investigated.
- The Council would investigate fly tipping on private land; however the owner of the land was responsible for the removal of the waste.
- It was important to report instances of fly tipping, as every report could help officers link patterns of incidents and build a bigger picture of what was happening.
- A while ago, a settee had appeared outside St Mary in the Marsh Parish Council Hall and was reported. It was removed and no further action seemed to be taken. Often old furniture did not have many clues regarding ownership, so the item would just be removed.

Parish Councillor Allison wished to know if the number of bags given to the litter pickers were restricted. Ms Weller offered to investigate and respond to Parish Councillor Allison after the meeting.

5. Otterpool Park Update

Dave Shore, Planning Manager at Otterpool Park LLP, provided an update on the developments with the Otterpool Park (OP) project since the last update to the Committee, around three years ago. During the update it was noted that:

The Folkestone and Hythe Local Plan

- The Local Plan was adopted in 2013 and sought to meet the future needs of the district. The Plan was based upon an objectively assessed need for the creation of 350 new dwellings per year. Since then, the need had risen to 738 new dwelling per year.
- The Council had found that a key location to meet the strategic need for future housing growth was the OP site.
- The Core Strategy Review document (that included the OP site) was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination in February 2020. There was a public examination during the Winter of 2020, and further sessions held in the Summer of 2021.
- The inspectors published a series of modifications to make the plan sound, and the Council went out to public consultation on these modifications in October 2021. The Plan was adopted by full Council on 30 March 2022.
- Policies SS6 to SS9 of the adopted Local Plan related specifically to the OP site, and any planning application would primarily be judged against these policies.
- The Local Plan allocated up to 5600 new homes by 2036/37 on the OP site and recognised the potential for future growth of between 8,000 to 10,000 homes beyond the Local Plan period.

The Outline Planning Application by Otterpool Park

- The original application had been submitted in February 2019, this application had been modified and resubmitted in April 2022.
- The resubmission included three parameter plans:
 - Development areas and movement corridors; showing where development could take place and key strategic movement routes.
 - Open spaces and vegetation: showing areas of open space and vegetation that needed to be retained plus structural/advance planting
 - Building heights; detailing the maximum building heights across the site.
- The other documents submitted for approval were the Development Specification, that detailed the maximum amount of development that may be delivered on the site, such as housing numbers and floor space for retail; and the Strategic Design Principles (SDP). The SDP set out a series of design principles that needed to be incorporated into more detailed proposals submitted for approval at a future date.
- The Environmental Statement was also submitted, its aim was to identify any significant effects of the scheme and detail what mitigation measures could be introduced reduce their impact. The Non-Technical Summary was a useful document that summarised the detail of the Environmental Statement.

- A series of supporting strategy documents were also submitted, for example the Green Infrastructure Strategy and Heritage Strategy.

Headlines from the Application:

- Up to 8,500 new homes.
- 29,000 sqm of retail and associated usage.
- 87,500 sqm of employment floor space, designed to support 9,000 jobs.
- 67,000 sqm of education space. This could accommodate up to seven primary schools and two secondary schools.
- 8,000 sqm of hotel floor space.
- 8,500 sqm of leisure space.
- The provision of infrastructure such as utilities and sub-stations.
- A Focus on green infrastructure, with 50% of the site to remain open space.

Summary of the Changes Made Since the Previous Application:

- A lot of the changes were made in response to the comments received about the last application submission.
- An effort had been made to introduce more flexibility into the scheme. This was in recognition that it would be delivered over a period of 20 or 30 years, during which time the scheme needed to be able to adapt.
- The red line boundary of the application now included the Westenhanger Castle.
- A more detailed housing strategy had been submitted. It set out how the 22% rate of affordable housing could be met, and what the mix of rental and shared ownership could be.
- There was the need to demonstrate that there would not be an increase in the amount of nitrates and phosphates running off the site into the River Stour, and flowing on into Stodmarsh. Foul water could be treated onsite with a wastewater treatment works based at the Western end of the site, and reed beds could be used to provide further filtration. Natural England were in support of this approach.
- The Transport Strategy included a series of mobility hubs to connect and encourage active travel, public transport use and shared travel.
- There would be a three stage approach to the planning process that involved a phase level submission (masterplan, design code and delivery plan) as an additional step to the more traditional two stage approach.

Time Scales:

- The application was submitted in April 2022. This was subject to an eight week consultation.
- OP was discussing with the Planning Authority the consultation responses and any necessary changes to be made to the application.
- FHDC had commissioned Temple to do a technical review of the Environmental Statement. OP would provide clarification to the points they raised. It was hoped that public consultation on the points of clarification would commence in August 2022.

- Work to address other comments received has commenced. This would inform a further submission towards the end of August 2022, and probably go out to public consultation in September 2022.
- It was hoped that the application could be considered at Planning Committee sometime this year.
- Work on the Section 106 legal agreement was underway and could be complete in the early part of 2023.

In response to the Committee's comments and questions, it was noted that:

- Health provision was included within the community facilities heading, there was up to 11,000 sqm of floor space designated to health provision. Initially there needed to be a new GP practice to allow the scheme to meet its own needs, however the space could be used by health providers to meet the needs of those on the OP site and the surrounding area in the future.
- The Affinity Water, Water Resources Management Plan had calculated that the existing water infrastructure could accommodate 1,500 new homes, at which point a new pipe would be required from Paddlesworth Reservoir.
- Utility companies were expected to consider the existing local plan housing allocations when assessing the needs of the future.
- Members of the public had concerns that some of the specific detail from the initial application had been removed which created more uncertainty. A lot of the detail would be specified in the next two tiers of the process.
- The Commitments Register was a very useful document.
- A planning condition could require the submission of a phasing plan.
- It was recognised that the provision of a primary school was needed early in the project, this would help to build to build the local community.
- Some Section 106 Agreement moneys held by KCC, could be used for works on the Newingreen Junction improvement scheme.
- It was expected that the first occupation of homes would take place towards the middle or end of 2024.
- There was an indicative resident profile based on the types of homes that could be delivered. However, it would be important monitor the profile of those coming to the area and adapt the infrastructure provision accordingly to meet their needs.
- The affordable housing would be aimed at local people and there were schemes that could be put in place to facilitate this.
- The 22% affordable housing figure was in-line with the Local Plan requirement. It would be secured at that level through the Section 106 Agreement.
- It was expected that a primary school and a health facility would be provided towards the beginning of the project in order to meet the needs of the new residents.