

Item 7e - Orpington Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) - Consultation

DRAFT EXTRACT OF MINUTES FROM THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE HELD ON 11 JANUARY 2022

**86 ORPINGTON TOWN CENTRE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT – CONSULTATION DRAFT
Report HPR2021/067**

The report recommended that the revised Orpington Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was published for six weeks public consultation. The SPD provided guidance to assist with the determination of planning applications in the Orpington Town Centre area, including guidance on design requirements. Following the consultation period, the draft would return to Committee for adoption.

In opening the discussion, the Chairman noted that the purpose of the document was to give some guidelines around development in Orpington Town Centre, it did not have legal weight in its own right but once approved would be a planning consideration when applications were considered. When the Local Plan was revised in 2024 it was expected that much of the supplementary planning document would be uplifted into a revised Local Plan.

Committee Member and local Ward Councillor William Huntington-Thresher highlighted that it would be helpful to have a document offering guidelines for anyone considering investing in the town centre. It was noted that there was further work to be undertaken on the document although the full consultation should be progressed. Noting that there were a lot of people who were interested, it was suggested that the consultation period should be extended beyond 6 weeks. In addition, it was suggested that SPD Note 12 should be modified to require that there should be no reduction in parking at development sites

Councillor Huntington-Thresher moved that the draft Orpington Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document be endorsed for public consultation with consideration being given to extending the consultation beyond 6 weeks and an amendment to SPD Note 12 to suggested that there should be no reduction in parking at development sites.

The Committee noted with disappointment the low response rate to the initial consultation. Members also expressed concern at the processes that had been followed, noting that whilst Orpington Ward Councillors may have been consulted over a number of months, councillors from surrounding wards had no knowledge of the consultation. The need to build the confidence of local residents was highlighted and there was agreement that the consultation period should be extended to give all interested parties the opportunity to engage. It was noted that with the current Covid situation it would be difficult to engage with local residents' associations and provide a response within 6 weeks. It was also important that local residents felt that they had a genuine input into the process. It was therefore appropriate to have at least a 12-week consultation period.

Members highlighted that there were many aspects of the consultation that required further clarity.

In response to a question concerning the implication of purdah, the Legal Advisor to the Committee advised that the consultation could start before the start of purdah and could continue during the pre-election period as it would be considered to be continuing with normal council business.

The Committee sought assurances around the consultation that would be taking place. It was highlighted that more elected Members needed to be consulted and given the opportunity to discuss issues with local residents' associations. It would also be helpful to engage with the Council's Public Affairs Team in order to generate wider publicity for the consultation.

It was noted that on 18 March 2020, a paper was scheduled to be considered by the Development Control Committee, although as a result of the pandemic the item was deferred. However, Members of the Committee at that time would have received a copy of the report and therefore been aware of the proposals to consult on the SPD. The Head of Planning Policy and Strategy further confirmed that an online portal had been used to facilitate the consultation and details had been published on the Council's website. In addition, presentations had been given at meetings of the Bromley Economic Partnership and information had been distributed through the Orpington Business Improvement District and the Council's planning policy mailing list which included the residents' associations across Orpington and other parts of the Borough.

The Chairman proposed that

- (1) the draft Orpington Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document be endorsed for twelve weeks' public consultation, noting that there may be further minor amendments prior to consultation.
- (2) A communications plan, setting out proposals for consultation with all local ward members, be presented to the Renewal, Recreation and Housing PDS Committee on 26 January 2022.

The motion was seconded by Councillor William Huntington-Thresher, put to the vote and CARRIED.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1. The draft Orpington Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (shown at Appendix 1) be endorsed for twelve weeks public consultation, noting that there may be further minor amendments prior to consultation.**
- 2. A proposed communications plan, setting out proposals for consultation with all local ward members, be presented to the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee on 26 January 2022 for pre-decision scrutiny.**