

## Strategic Environment Cabinet Committee

Tuesday, 14 February 2023

7.30 pm

### Present:

Cllr Lauren Sullivan (Chair)  
Cllr Brian Sangha (Vice-Chair)

Councillors: Dakota Dibben  
Brian Francis  
Baljit Hayre  
Leslie Hills  
Leslie Hoskins  
Bob Lane  
Emma Morley

Wendy Lane	Assistant Director (Planning)
Tom Reynolds	Assistant Director (Strategic Regeneration)
Glyn Tully	Associate Director, Head of Urban Design – Levitt Bernstein
Renzo Campisi	Senior Architect – Levitt Bernstein
Karen Gingles	Committee Services Officer (Minutes)

### 125. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence was received from Cllr Nirmal Khabra. Cllr Baljit Hayre was his substitute. An apology for absence was also received from Cllr Harold Craske.

### 126. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 22 November 2022 were signed by the Chair.

### 127. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### 128. Design for Gravesham - update

The Assistant Director (Strategic Regeneration) introduced Glyn Tully and Renzo Campisi from Levitt Bernstein, who presented the Committee with an update on the Design for Gravesham. The presentation can be viewed via the following link [\(Public Pack\)Design For Gravesham Update - Supplementary Agenda Supplement for Strategic Environment Cabinet Committee, 14/02/2023 19:30](#)

The presentation outlined the process that would be undertaken to provide Gravesham with a design code for quality and sustainable regeneration for future development and regeneration. Members were advised that the framework created in the finished document could follow the Council's principles of Place, People and Progress:

- Place - Enhancing the borough's heritage, landscape and character, valuing the unique character of each area of the borough.
- People – Engaging with the community and stakeholders by holding workshop events to listen to local stories and testimonials.
- Progress – Providing sustainable and quality design principles for new developers and a framework for community and place led regeneration.

The Committee were advised of the step by step process to completion and informed the project was currently at stage one, initial engagement. Members were updated that an online survey would be launched very soon plus there would be local engagement events planned in March.

The Committee were invited to ask questions and to make comment:

- Clarity was sought regarding timescales for the process of completion of the design code. Members were informed that the stage one preliminary engagement process was hoped to be completed by 17<sup>th</sup> March 2023 before the pre-election period. It was expected that a draft of the design code be available in September 2023, with a six-week consultation period to follow (as the ambition is for the design code to be adopted as a planning document). It was hoped that the adoption of the new design code would be towards the end of November/early December 2023 (subject to internal governance approval process).
- The Assistant Director (Strategic Regeneration) informed Members that he had conducted Ward walks with Members and had met with community groups and was keen to continue to do so.

The Chair advised Members that the Government had asked all local authorities to develop a design code that would stand the test of time and set a standard for future developers. This code would give guidance of what the Planning Authority were looking for in a development. The design would be created with the voices of the community in mind, in setting the framework.

- The Committee queried how transport would be considered as part of the design code. Members were advised that transport was key and consideration would be given to the changing modes of transport and so there would need to be flexibility within the document. There would also need to be an understanding of active travel routes along with the impact of the future Lower Thames Crossing. Members were notified that a PTAL (Public Transport Accessibility Levels) study could be a method used to develop a parking strategy.
- Levitt Bernstein advised that feedback from Ward walks had already proved very useful and had been fed into the work undertaken so far. Research through public engagement would continue and would be ongoing throughout the development of the document. The document would be of use to both planning officers and the residents, being easily accessible and simple in understanding the Council's expectations.
- The Assistant Director (Strategic Regeneration) informed the Committee that the design code could influence future developments once adopted. Developments that had already received planning permission would not be impacted by the new

framework and would need to be acknowledged as part of the development of the code.

- Members asked if industry could be incorporated within the code, enabling the Council to encourage high quality industry and commerce in the borough.

The Chair thanked Levitt Bernstein for taking the time to present the plans for Design for Gravesham to the Committee and advised that The Assistant Director (Strategic Regeneration) would share with Members any example codes Levitt Bernstein provide.

The Committee noted the presentation.

### **129. Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: Consultation on draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)**

The Committee were presented with the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: Consultation on the draft National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The presentation can be viewed via the following link ([Public Pack](#))[Levelling-up And Regeneration Bill - Consultation on Draft National Policy Framework - Supplementary Agenda Supplement for Strategic Environment Cabinet Committee, 14/02/2023 19:30 \(gravesham.gov.uk\)](#)

The Committee were informed that the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) consultation, would close on 2 March 2023 and had sought the Council's views with a series of questions. The Assistant Director (Planning) advised that there would be a further and fuller update of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) once the Levelling up and Regeneration Act was in place.

Following the presentation, the Committee were invited to ask questions and make comment:

- The Chair queried if the Council had received clarification on Gravesham's housing target. The Assistant Director (Planning) advised that the standard method guidance specified a starting projection of 707 homes per year.
- The Chair noted that the elements addressed within the consultation had increased clarity and would benefit Gravesham in controlling what developers were permitted to carry out. Members agreed that the National Planning Policy Framework gave Local Authorities control over development within the borough.
- Clarification was sought regarding the timescale for the Planning Inspectorate to carry out the work required, in light of the upcoming elections. The Assistant Director (Planning) informed the Committee that the Planning Inspectorate had experienced issues for a while, with the number of inspectors available to carry out Local Plan examinations, with many retiring and recruitment issues. The Assistant Director (Planning) alluded that a number of local authorities had stopped plan production, as a result of the announcement, as wanted to know the national policy context.
- The Assistant Director (Planning) advised she was unsure how long the Government had to consider Gravesham's comments from the consultation as there was a clear desire for the revised NPPF to be in place in Spring 2023. Some of the changes

required legislative changes so that would take time. The Assistant Director (Planning) advised Members that when drafting a response to Government, she would raise the concern related to capacity within the Planning Inspectorate to deal with the proposed new plan-making system

- Concern was raised on how the National Planning Policy Framework would impact on the work already carried on the Local Plan. The Assistant Director (Planning) informed members that the National Planning Policy Framework was a material consideration for planning decisions and for plan-making there is the need for the emerging plan to be consistency with the NPPF and she believed that these revisions clarified areas of uncertainty. The Committee were advised that the Local Plan was adopted in 2014 and reviewed in 2019. The emerging plan will be updated to reflect the revised evidence base and the national planning policy framework in place. The Assistant Director (Planning) informed Members that the plan would be brought to Full Council for approval for the pre-submission consultation stage and this was anticipated to be late 2023.

The Chair concluded and noted the importance of an update due to the ever-changing guidance presented.

The Committee noted the presentation.

### **Close of meeting**

The meeting ended at 9:16pm