

BOROUGH PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
22 OCTOBER 2009

(7.15pm – 8.45pm)

PRESENT: Councillor Richard Chellew (in the Chair);
Councillors John Bowcott, Philip Jones, Ian Munn and
Geraldine Stanford.

ALSO PRESENT: Council Officers
Tara Butler (Interim Spatial Policy Manager);
M.J.Udall (Democratic Services)

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 1)

No declarations were made at the start of the meeting, but when the item
“Reclaiming The Priory” was discussed:-

- (a) Councillor Ian Munn declared a personal interest by reason of his former membership of the Merton Priory Trust; and
- (b) Councillor Geraldine Stanford declared a personal interest by reason of her current membership of the Merton Priory Trust.

Both remained in the meeting room, whilst the item was discussed.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3(a))

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Borough Plan Advisory Committee held on 11 June 2009 be agreed as a correct record.

3 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES (Agenda Item 3(b))

None.

4 THE DRAFT CORE STRATEGY PUBLIC CONSULTATION (Agenda Item 4)

Tara Butler (Interim Spatial Policy Manager) introduced the report including advising that -

- Some 250 responses had been received to date, including from -
 - (a) about a 100 individuals, mostly seeking the return of AFC Wimbledon to the Borough; and
 - (b) a wide range organisations including community, business, environmental and heritage groups.
- No responses had yet been received from the following organisations, who were major players and who had all asked for an extension of time -
 - (i) the Government Office for London (GOL) and LB Wandsworth; and
 - (ii) the GLA (Greater London Authority) who wished to take account of the Draft London Plan (recently published on 12/10/09), in making their response.
- The 6 week consultation period had ended the previous week (on 16/10/09), but had been extended to 23 October 2009 due to the postal strike; at the Raynes Park Community Forum (on 19/10/09) it had been indicated that responses would be accepted until the end of October; and the Council web-site had been updated

BOROUGH PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
22 OCTOBER 2009

appropriately.

- By and large there was a lot of support for the draft Core Strategy (subject to certain tweaking).
- Instead of waiting until the next meeting on 7 January 2010, officers proposed to circulate in advance an information report to Advisory Committee members on the responses received; and then make recommendations at the January meeting on policies and how the Plan should be taken forward (taking account of representations received, further research, the new draft London Plan etc).

Tara Butler then responded to queries including on whether with responses from three major players (see above) still outstanding and the extension of the deadline for responses, the proposed timetable for signing off the Core Strategy by the end of February 2010 might need to be extended. Tara Butler indicated this depended on the responses from the three major players, but that it should be possible to give an indication of whether the current timetable could be adhered to, when the information report on all the responses received, was circulated in November.

RECEIVED

5 MERTON COUNCIL'S ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2008/09 (Agenda Item 5)

1. Tara Butler (Interim Spatial Policy Manager) introduced the report including referring to taking on board the comments made the previous year by trying to refine the layout etc; and indicating that an appendix with facts/figures would be added at the back.
2. Councillor Philip Jones indicated that he would submit detailed comments by e-mail, but that in trying to improve the AMR's appearance, the RIB guidelines for legibility had been not adhered to, with light colour print being used on a pale colour on pages 9, 24 & 27 making them difficult to read, and suggested the whole AMR be checked for this.
3. Various Members expressed concern about tables of figures being squashed together and the need for each table to clearly say what the figures relate to (e.g. 1000's, hectares, square metres, actual numbers, percentages etc).
4. Councillor Geraldine Stanford queried the housing figures on pages 54 & 60 for Figges Marsh of "Social Rented – nil; and Market – 5", since she was aware of two substantial developments in the Ward. Tara Butler requested the Councillor to send her details of the specific developments concerned.
5. The Chairman requested that if the Figges Marsh figures were found to be wrong, then all the housing figures for other Wards to be also checked. Tara Butler noted the request; indicated that all housing figures were indicative; outlined how the figures were obtained from Merton's Town Planning Section and would be checked against the GLA's figures when these became available at end of November.
6. Councillor Geraldine Stanford requested that under "Open Space" on page 99, the

BOROUGH PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
22 OCTOBER 2009

Friends Groups (of various parks/open spaces) be mentioned; and indicated that she would submit further detailed minor comments by e-mail.

7. Councillor Ian Munn requested that “Morrisons” be added to the points on Mitcham Town Centre’s economy. It was noted Morrisons maybe hadn’t moved into Mitcham during the 2008/09 period covered by this AMR. . Councillor Ian Munn and Geraldine Stanford also advised that on page 74, para. 6.33, the “Work with Thames Water and British Telecom to resolve flooding and drainage issues in (Mitcham) town centre” was still not completed and the problems were ongoing, and included unsafe footways for pedestrians.

8. There was discussion on how to make clear that the AMR report relates to the period 2008/09. It was concluded that it wouldn’t be practical to address issues outside of the 2008/09 period (e.g. by the addition of update notes) for every part of the AMR, but that instead the time limits of the report should be emphasised in the Introduction. Tara Butler undertook to

- (a) check on the position as at March 2009 as regards the flooding/drainage issues in Mitcham town centre; and
- (b) ensure that the period covered by the AMR mentioned on page 3 in para. 1.2 was made clearer and highlighted.

9. Councillor Geraldine Stanford requested that on page 73, para. 6.29, under heading “Morden Town Centre”, the section stating “Partial Removal of guardrails along the main road approved and funded by TfL etc...” be checked as regards whether any railings had been removed, and if so when. Tara Butler undertook to review this, and indicated that she understood the removal had been approved in 2009/10 (not 2008/09).

10. In relation to page 71, para. 6.21, various Members queried whether “CADAP had examined 26 applications in 2008/09”, and suggested the correct figure was “nil”. Tara Butler undertook to check this.

11. In response to Member’s concerns, including those outlined in 12, 13 & 14 below, Tara Butler confirmed that the AMR would be properly proof read, including for spelling and grammar and formatting issues, including ensuring sentences ended properly and were complete.

12. Councillor Philip Jones drew attention to some words inappropriately having an “s” at the end and/or being plural.

13. Councillor Ian Munn requested that the wording of E.2 on page 97 be checked, especially the phrase - “and a total 3.1 200 linear meter addition”, and if needed, an explanatory note be added.

14. Councillor Geraldine Stanford drew attention to the last sentence of para. 5.40 on page 62, which appeared incomplete.

15. Councillor Ian Munn queried the (housing) diagram on page 63 showing that a greater number of conversion applications (from a single dwelling to a number of flats) occurred in Wimbledon not Mitcham. Tara Butler indicated that she was

BOROUGH PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
22 OCTOBER 2009

positive the figures were correct and outlined the checks made including with others collecting the same data.

16. Councillor Ian Munn supported the layout used for the diagram on page 63, but requested that this diagram (and other similar ones elsewhere) be made larger so that the writing/figures on the diagram were legible. He also indicated that notwithstanding the comments made, the AMR layout generally was far better than last year.

17. Councillor Philip Jones requested that on page 62, para. 5.39, details be added of how many applicants won on appeal against Merton's refusal of their conversion application (from a single dwelling to a number of flats).

18. Members noted that if they had any further comments on the AMR, then they should e-mail the Chairman, Vice-Chair and Tara Butler.

RESOLVED: That (1) the Advisory Committee notes the first draft of Merton Council's Annual Monitoring Report 2008/09; and.

(2) the Advisory Committee recommends to Cabinet that the Director for Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Traffic Management, the Chairman and Vice Chair of the Borough Plan Advisory Committee be given delegated authority by Cabinet to make any amendments required and to agree Merton's Annual Monitoring Report for submission to the Secretary of State by 31 December 2009.

6 WANDLE VALLEY REGIONAL PARK – MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING WITH OTHER MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES ALONG THE WANDLE GROUP AND ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE (Agenda Item 6)

Tara Butler (Interim Spatial Policy Manager) introduced the report including that -

(a) the Local Authorities Along the Wandle (LAW) group comprised four partner boroughs, Croydon, Merton, Sutton and Wandsworth;

(b) it was proposed to submit the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the four boroughs in respect of the LAW group to the Cabinet of each borough; and

(c) Cabinet Member Councillor Diane Neil Mills had been Merton's representative on the LAW group to date, and it was proposed that she and Cabinet Member Councillor David Simpson be Merton's representatives on the new formal LAW Group (which will have two Elected Members from each of the above four boroughs).

Meetings in Public: Members queried whether LAW meetings would be open to other Councillors, residents and the public. It was noted that paragraph 13 of the MOU (on agenda page 33) referred to confidentiality, but didn't make the position clear; and as indicated in Resolution (3) below, Members agreed to recommend that the meetings be open to the public.

Wandle Forum and Wandle Festival groups: Councillor Ian Munn referred to the mention of the Wandle Forum in the report; suggested that it was a somewhat

BOROUGH PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
22 OCTOBER 2009

amorphous group that anyone could join; and noted that it appeared that the Merton Priory Trust was not a member. He also referred to the Wandle Festival group, which he suggested didn't consult with other groups; and noted that the dates of the Wandle Festival and Mitcham Carnival had clashed for the past two years.

Councillor Ian Munn highlighted that both groups did good work, but neither had a statutory basis; and that if Councillors wished to participate in either group, they could only do so as volunteers.

LAW group and WVRP Development Board – Membership and Structure: It was noted that Kingston and Richmond boroughs didn't have representatives on the LAW group but did have one representative each on the WVRP (Wandle Valley Regional Park) Development Board. It was noted that these boroughs were also part of the South London Partnership. Members considered that they needed more information on the reasons for the involvement of these two Boroughs and on the proposed organisational structures, particularly as set out in Appendix 2, and accordingly agreed, as set out in Resolution (4) below, to delegate authority to the Chairman and Vice-Chair to make any additional recommendations, after they had met further with officers.

It was noted that any further recommendations resulting, could be included in a Supplementary Agenda for the Cabinet meeting on 9 November 2009.

- RESOLVED: That (1) the Advisory Committee notes the proposed Memorandum of Understanding between the four boroughs in respect of the Local Authorities Along the Wandle (LAW) group (Appendix 1);
- (2) the Advisory Committee notes the proposed organisational structure for the Wandle Valley Regional Park (Appendix 2); and
- (3) the Borough Plan Advisory Committee recommends to Cabinet that meetings of the Local Authorities Along the Wandle (LAW) group be held in public; and
- (4) the Chairman and Vice-Chair -
- (a) are provided by officers with a further explanation and information on the proposed governance structure and membership of LAW and the Wandle Valley Regional Park (WVRP) Development Board and other WVRP organisational bodies; and
- (b) be delegated authority to make any additional recommendations to the Cabinet, if needed, so that these can be reported to Cabinet for consideration at their meeting of 9 November 2009.

7 RECLAIMING THE PRIORY

Following on from the above report on Wandle Valley Regional Park, the Advisory Committee considered a research paper "Reclaiming the Priory" which looked at the site of Merton Priory in Colliers Wood (located within Wandle Valley). As requested by the Chairman, the paper had been circulated in advance to Advisory Committee

BOROUGH PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
22 OCTOBER 2009

Members. It was not accompanied by a report from Merton officers.

The research paper -

- Highlighted that Merton Priory was the site of the first English Parliament and where the first English Statute Law was passed, "The Statute of Merton".
- Highlighted the importance of the above as the basis for the American and most of the Commonwealth countries' systems of government and their legal systems.
- Suggested the site is of international importance and warranted designation as a World Heritage Site.
- Highlighted that Merton Priory included the site of William Morris's factory and Liberty's factory; and suggested that therefore Merton Priory site has unparalleled artistic importance.
- Suggested a possible vision for the future of the site, including major improvements to its appearance, possible changes/removal for certain existing development in the area; and the possible provision of new development including new workshops, retail outlets, a new university facility and a Visitor Centre.

The Chairman introduced the research paper including referring to the discussions at the previous meeting; and advising the paper was the result of bringing in an outside organisation to contact and liaise with interested parties and to produce a vision of how to protect and enhance the site for the future.

The Chairman highlighted the importance of a possible application for World Heritage status; advised that the UN only approved two applications in 10 years and there were already 80 existing applications ongoing; and noted that that such an application could possibly help in obtaining funds for the Merton Priory site and the removal of the existing overhead pylons on the site.

The Chairman suggested that improvement of the Merton Priory site and any World Heritage status application could be of major importance in progressing the Wandale Valley Regional Park scheme.

The Chairman confirmed that he was suggesting the research paper, together with a (to be compiled) report from Merton officers be submitted for consideration to a Cabinet meeting (after the next Cabinet on 9/11/09).

There was then considerable discussion of the research paper's ambitious vision. The Chairman advised that any application for World Heritage status could cost between £0.25m/£0.4m; indicated that he had asked Merton College, Oxford if they would consider writing the World Heritage application on Merton's behalf (and that he hoped they not charge for their input); and outlined various organisations he had approached for funding including the Bridge House Trust."

RESOLVED: That the Advisory Committee recommends to Cabinet that consideration be given to the research paper "Reclaiming the Priory" and its

BOROUGH PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
22 OCTOBER 2009

recommendations.

8 PROGRESS ON THE SOUTH LONDON WASTE PLAN PUBLIC
CONSULTATION (Agenda Item 7)

The Chair agreed to the submission of this item as a matter of urgency so that the Borough Plan Advisory Committee can be updated on the progress of the South London Waste Plan Stage 2 consultation at the same time as considering the Core Strategy consultation, a report of which is also going to this meeting.

Tara Butler (Interim Spatial Policy Manager) introduced the report including that -

- The consultation period had ended on 16 October 2009 but that, due to the postal strike, responses received after that date would be considered.
- Some 1,500 responses had been received to date across all four boroughs.
- A summary of the responses and the next steps would be submitted to the Member-level Joint Waste Plan Working Party on 10 November 2009.
- The responses had included suggestion for a number of alternative waste sites, including the Greyhound Stadium, Plough Lane in Merton, 6 sites in Sutton, a few in Kingston and one site in Lambeth.
- The suggested alternative waste sites would be assessed against the same criteria used for other sites; at present it appeared that at least six would meet the criteria, which would necessitate another round of consultation.
- Such further consultation would produce delays to the submission of the Waste Plan to the Secretary of State, but should not affect the eventual date of the adoption of the Waste Plan or the Core Strategy timetable.

In response to queries, Tara Butler -

(a) advised that although the earlier consultation last year in September 2008 had offered the public the opportunity to suggest alternative sites, under the LDF legislative framework, there had to be further consultation at this stage if alternative sites were suggested and they meet the assessment criteria; and

(b) undertook to check if alternative sites, not previously mentioned, were suggested under the further consultation, whether yet more consultation had to be undertaken.

RESOLVED: That the Advisory Committee notes the progress of the South London Waste Plan consultation July-October 2009 and of emerging responses.

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