ELMBRIDGE BOROUGH COUNCIL
LOCAL PLAN WORKING GROUP

REPORT of a meeting held on 21 January 2015

Members of Working Group:

* B.J.F. Cheyne (Chairman)
* Mrs. S.R. Kapadia (Vice-Chairman)

Mrs. C.J. Cross  *  C.J. Elmer
*  R. Green  *  A.J. Hopkins
* Mrs. D. Mitchell

* Denotes attendance

(A. Kelly and C.R. Sadler were also present.)

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Local Plan Working Group (LPWG) held on 4 December 2014, were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. PROGRESS UPDATE ON LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The Working Group were provided with a progress update on the key elements of the work programme as set out within the Local Development Scheme 2014-17, together with a communications and staffing update.

Arising from discussion, it was noted that one firm had tendered for the work and that interviews would be taking place on 4 February 2015 to assess the tenderer’s suitability to deliver the contract. The Planning Policy Manager confirmed that the Council remained on course to adopt by April 2015.

AGREED that the update report on the Local Development Scheme be noted.

4. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Members considered a report that set out some proposed changes to the Statement of Community Involvement 2013 and in particular the Development Management section of the document. It was considered that greater detail should be provided to help the public understand the statutory requirements for publicity on planning applications.

Members provided some grammatical changes to paragraph 1.2 within the introduction. Arising from discussion, it was confirmed that the Publicity on Planning
Applications (section 9.16) was that undertaken in addition to the statutory publicity required by the Local Authority.

AGREED that

(a) the proposed amendments to the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) be supported, subject to the further comments on Section 1.2, as provided by Members, being incorporated into the document;

(b) support be given to the ‘Publicity of Planning Applications’ table being inserted into the main body of the document at page 19;

(c) the Planning Committee be recommended to agree the tracked changes document as set out at Appendix A to the report, as amended; and

(d) it be noted that following agreement by the Planning Committee, the updated SCI would be the subject of a six week public consultation period.

5. CIL 2015 ALLOCATION PROCESS

The Working Group considered a report recommending changes to the Local Infrastructure Spending Board Procedures, following feedback from the 2014 CIL allocation process.

Arising from discussion, Members requested that the proposed Procedures be amended as below and brought back to the next meeting for further consideration prior to agreement by way of an Individual Cabinet Member Decision Making meeting:

- Applicants should be invited to speak for up to 10 minutes, to enable a clear overview of their proposed project to be provided to the Local Spending Board;

- The number of meetings of the Local Spending Boards should not be limited to one a year, and that the Planning Policy Manager be requested to work up proposals to enable two rounds of funding each year; and

- Local Spending Boards should be permitted to determine in private the allocation of money following the bid presentations by all applicants at the meeting.

Furthermore, the Planning Policy Manager was requested to develop for consideration at the next Working Group meeting, a formal operating Procedure for adoption at a future Individual Cabinet Member Decision Making meeting, in respect of the Strategic Spending Board, to include:

- arrangements for Applicants to be invited to speak for up to 10 minutes to provide an overview their application;

- the Strategic Spending Board (SSB) determining in private the recommended
allocation of money following the bid presentations by all applicants at the meeting;

- the opportunity for relevant officers from across the Council to provide their expertise where appropriate in the consideration of bids; and

- officers working with key partners to establish an overall ethos to enable the strategic development of the Borough through SSB bids over the longer term, to avoid piecemeal, one-off projects being proposed with limited strategic value.

AGREED that

(a) the Planning Policy Manager be requested to update the proposed Local Spending Board Procedures as set out above, for consideration at the next meeting of the Working Group; and

(b) the Planning Policy Manager be requested to develop similar Procedures for consideration at the next meeting of the Working Group, in respect of the Strategic Spending Board.

6. GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION – 20 % DISCOUNT ON YOUR FIRST HOME

The Working Group considered the details and proposed response to the Government’s new Starter Homes Scheme consultation.

Arising from consideration of the item, Members raised concerns at the proposals and commented that there was no definition of a starter home in terms of expectations for size. Given land values in Elmbridge, Members considered that such a scheme would therefore be unlikely to deliver any appropriate starter home developments in the Borough.

The Planning Policy Manager was requested to consider the response in paragraph 3.7 in relation to allowing a mix of market and low cost starter homes. The Planning Policy Manager agreed that some support for such a position could be included in the response as this may well ensure some benefits with regard to infrastructure and affordable housing contributions.

Members considered that the Council’s Chief Executive should also be requested to write to the Borough’s two Members of Parliament to share the concerns raised in the proposed consultation response and to seek their support for the Council’s position in the response to the consultation paper.

AGREED that

(a) the Portfolio Holder for Regulatory Affairs be recommended to agree the proposed response to the Government’s consultation, as amended, and to submit it by the deadline of 9 February 2015; and
(b) the Portfolio Holder for Regulatory Affairs be requested to agree that the Council’s Chief Executive write to the Borough’s two Members of Parliament to share the concerns raised in the proposed consultation response and to seek their support for the Council’s position in the response to the consultation paper.

The meeting commenced at 7.00 p.m. and concluded at 8.15 p.m.

B.J.F. CHEYNE
CHAIRMAN

Committee and Member Services Officer
Mrs. M. Hayes - Committee and Member Services Manager

Other Officers in attendance
M. Behrendt - Planning Policy Manager
Ms. J. Jenkins - Infrastructure Delivery Coordinator