

Report to	-	Council
Date	-	15 May 2017
Report of the	-	Executive Director of Business Operations
Subject	-	Decisions taken as a matter of urgency

The Council is asked to receive the report of Cabinet, in accordance with paragraph 17(a) of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, on a decision taken as a matter of urgency at its meeting held on 13 March 2017. (Council to note that there were no urgent decisions taken at the Cabinet meetings held on 3 April and 8 May 2017).

CABINET – 13 March 2017

CB16/88. SALEHURST AND ROBERTSBRIDGE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Salehurst and Robertsbridge Parish Council were in the process of producing a Neighbourhood Plan (S&RNP) and had submitted a draft in accordance with Regulation 16 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended), to the Council for formal public consultation; this was currently taking place over a 6-week period between Friday 10 February and Friday 24 March 2017.

Rother District Council (RDC's) was also a statutory consultee and the main issues to consider related to the capacity of proposed housing sites within Salehurst and Robertsbridge to meet Core Strategy requirements, the suitability of sites/topic policies in terms of their general conformity with the Council's strategic policies, as well as their contribution to sustainable development, compatibility with the Conservation Area, with national policies and with functions of East Sussex County Council (ESCC).

The draft NP identified three sites through which it aimed to achieve the Core Strategy requirements of 130 dwellings; the largest of these sites, Robertsbridge Mill, was expected to deliver 100 homes. A full planning application for 98 residential units plus commercial for the Robertsbridge Mill site had recently been received.

The Council's view on the current planning application and the draft S&RNP were inextricably entwined and therefore, any conclusion made on the housing numbers within the S&RNP would rely heavily on a considered assessment of the potential housing yield from the Mill site.

Councillor G. Johnson, Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning acknowledged the amount of work and effort that had gone into the production of the S&RNP and particularly the full and inclusive consultation that had been undertaken within the parish. Councillor Mrs Prochak as local Ward Member and Member of the S&RNP Steering Group was hopeful that as RDC planning officers had been

involved in the production of the S&RNP, there should be little divergence in the Council's response to the S&RNP.

Due to the time constraints delegated authority was requested to give officers sufficient time to assess the S&RNP, specifically in the light of the Mill site application, in order to provide duly considered representations on the S&RNP, notably on housing capacity, by 24 March 2017. It was agreed that the Executive Director of Business Operations and the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning be granted delegated authority to submit this Council's representations on the S&RNP, having sought the views of Cabinet prior to submitting the response.

It was further noted that so as not to compromise this Council's ability to comment on the draft S&RNP by the due deadline, the Chairman of Council had already agreed that this matter would be taken as an urgent decision and therefore outside the call-in arrangements.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Director of Business Operations and the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Planning be granted delegated authority to make representations on the submitted Salehurst & Robertsbridge Neighbourhood Plan, having sought the views of all Members of Cabinet prior to submitting this Council's proposed response.

The Chairman of Council had agreed that this decision could be taken as an urgent decision to enable the Council's representations to be made on Salehurst and Robertsbridge Parish Council's Neighbourhood Plan by 24 March.

(Councillor Mrs Prochak declared a personal interest in this matter as a member of the Salehurst and Robertsbridge Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group as was her husband who chairs the Group and in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct remained in the room during the consideration thereof).

(Cabinet Agenda Item 6.4)

Dr Anthony Leonard
Executive Director of Business Operations