

CABINET held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 2.00 pm on 1 NOVEMBER 2013

Present: Councillor J Ketteridge – Leader (Chairman)
Councillor J Cheetham – Deputy Leader
Councillor R Chambers – Portfolio Holder for Finance
Councillor J Redfern – Portfolio Holder for Housing
Councillor H Rolfe – Portfolio Holder for Community, Partnerships and Engagement
Councillor A Walters – Portfolio Holder for Community Safety

Also present: Councillors S Howell, J Salmon and L Wells.

Officers in attendance: J Mitchell (Chief Executive), R Harborough (Director of Public Services), C Nicholson (Solicitor), M Cox (Democratic Services Officer), A Taylor (Assistant Director Planning and Building Control) and A Webb (Director of Corporate Services).

CA55 PUBLIC SPEAKING

A statement was read by Mr Matt North on behalf of Uttlesford United Residents. A copy of the statement is attached to the minutes.

CA56 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Godwin.

CA57 MINUTES

The Minutes of the previous meeting, held on 24 October 2013 were not yet available and would be considered at the next Cabinet meeting.

CA58 STATEMENTS FROM NON EXECUTIVE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Councillor Alan Dean said he had attended the Local Plan Working Group meeting earlier in the day. The main message that he had taken from that meeting was that 'we are where we are' in terms of the additional housing numbers required. He felt that the Council had wasted time in progressing the plan, but he was concerned that it should not now take the easy option and return to option 4 mark 2 with the additional housing allocation at Elsenham.

He said that methodology for selecting additional housing sites, attached to the working group papers, highlighted other sites within the SHLAA document which could be looked at. He urged the council to take a more strategic approach and look at other settlements where there were benefits for growth. For example, the sites at Takeley that had good access, had been dismissed. If a major extension was required the council should look more widely at possible sites and not revert to where it started. He argued that the proposed public consultation was inadequate, it was not correct to say that this was a continuation of the process, it was a step change.

CA59

FUTURE HOUSING GROWTH

Councillor Barker presented a report on the time frame and scale of growth to be met in the new Local Plan. This report had been discussed in detail at the Local Plan Working Group on 17 October 2013 where members had agreed with the report's recommendations.

The report explained why the review had been necessary. It had become clear since the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and from recent Inspectors' decisions that the Government was expecting authorities to provide a scale of growth based on the highest and most up to date figures being produced by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and Office of National Statistics (ONS). It was now clear that a plan based on the previous economic scenario was very unlikely to be found sound by an Inspector and the 2010 based SNPP projections now provided the most appropriate basis for planning for growth in Uttlesford.

For the Council to meet its objectively assessed need it was now required to prepare a plan for 10,460 homes between 2011 and 2031 (523 dwelling per year). This revised figure required the Council to identify additional sites for a further 2,680 homes.

Partly in response to points raised by Mr North, Councillor Barker said it was not possible to go back to the beginning of the plan process. It was clear that the Government was set on building for growth, and if the plan was to be found sound, the council had to move forward with a plan based on the objectively assessed need of 523 dwellings a year. She said it wasn't unusual to have a lengthy plan preparation given the background work required, but now after years of work there was a robust evidence base behind the proposals. It was unfortunate that the process had been delayed by the highway assessment but it was important now to progress the plan in line with the Government's requirements.

Councillor Rolfe said he was proud of the Local Plan process to date. It had been incumbent on the Council to plan for the lower number of dwellings, as this is what the residents wanted. It was external

circumstances that had brought the council to this position. He pointed to the extensive analysis and advice behind the recommendations in the report and he was satisfied that a robust conclusion had been reached. He added that it was not possible to rewind the plan process as implementation was already underway; applications had come forward for some of the draft allocation sites. He was conscious that Uttlesford was a very sensitive area in relation to new housing but he felt that the locations suggested for the additional houses were logical.

Councillor Ketteridge pointed to the timeline of events set out in the report, which clearly explained the path taken by the Council. In coming to the conclusion on the housing numbers and the plan period note had been taken of national advice, Counsel Opinion, and meetings held with the Planning Inspector and Government ministers. The Government's intention was very clear, the only measure of objectively assessed need was the SNP analysis. He pointed out that it was not just Uttlesford that was affected. Other Authorities who were further down the process had found their plans sent back for a review of the numbers.

Councillor Redfern said she was pleased that the council was continuing with the dispersal option, as this was the best way to address for the large numbers of residents on the housing waiting list.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet accepts the following as the basis on which to move forward with the Local Plan.

- 1 The objectively assessed need for housing in the Local Plan should not be based on the economic scenario but should be based on the 2010 based sub-national population projections.
- 2 The plan should cover at least a 15 year time frame from adoption.
- 3 The plan period will be 2011 – 2031 and will provide for 10,460 dwellings. This requires the council to identify sites for about 2,680 homes.
- 4 The 5 year land supply requirement is based on the objectively assessed need of 523 dwellings a year.

CA60

CONSULTATION ON HOUSING NUMBERS AND ADDITIONAL SITES

The Cabinet received details of the proposed consultation document. This which would seek views on the sites that had been identified to meet the additional 2680 dwellings required in the new Local Plan period.

Sites included in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) had been revisited and suitable sites, which were capable of delivering the additional housing, had been identified. The report to the working group earlier in the day had set out the rationale for choosing these sites.

The areas identified were Ashdon Road Saffron Walden, Land west of Great Dunmow and South of Stortford Road, Great Dunmow and land North East of Elsenham. An additional site, not in the SHLAA document at the Helena Romana site had also been identified and was tied in with the development of a new secondary school for Dunmow.

The public consultation would run from Monday 18th November 2013–Monday 10th January 2014, which included an extra 2 weeks to take account of the Christmas period. Anyone who had previously commented on the Local Plan would receive email notification, and publicity would be carried out in accordance with recently agreed procedures.

Following the consultation officers would prepare a report of the responses, this would be considered by members and any changes made to the draft plan. There would be a further consultation before the plan was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate and it was hoped that it would be adopted in early 2015.

Councillor Barker, responding to previous speakers' comments, said that development in key and small settlements could only provide a maximum of 1200 dwellings. These would continue to contribute to the 50 per annum allocated for windfall sites but the rest would need to be appropriate strategic sites. The public would have the opportunity to comment on the revised housing numbers and the additional sites proposed.

Councillor Rolfe stressed the important for residents to be kept informed as more detailed plans emerged for the proposed sites.

Councillor Ketteridge said that all of the sites in the SHLAA document had been subject to previous consultation. The sites that had been identified were the most suitable and also deliverable, as required by Government guidance.

RESOLVED that

- 1 The consultation document on additional housing numbers and sites dated November 2013 be approved as the basis for further consultation on the Draft Local Plan.

- 2 Authority to make minor editorial changes to the document be delegated to the Assistant Director Planning and Building Control in consultation with the Chairman.

CA61 **UTTLESFORD LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

The Cabinet received the updated Local Development Scheme, which had been revised to reflect the change in the Local Plan preparation timetable and the additional consultation on the revised housing numbers and the need for additional sites.

The expected date for adoption of the Local Plan was now February 2015. Consequently, the date for the adoption of the Gypsy and Traveller site allocations had been put back and was now planned for March 2016.

Councillor Barker commented that the Local Plan covered more than just the site allocations, there was also a large number of strategic and development management policies that sat behind the document. Members thanked officers for the tremendous amount of work they had undertaken during the preparation of the plan.

RESOLVED that

- 1 To approve the revised Local Development Scheme.
- 2 Authority to make minor editorial changes to the document be delegated to the Assistant Director Planning and Building Control in consultation with the Chairman.

CA62 **OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chief Executive reported that he had been advised by the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee that she intended to call – in the item relating to the consultation on housing numbers and additional site allocations. The Scrutiny Committee meeting would take place on Monday 11 November at 7.30pm.

The meeting ended at 2.30pm.

The Cabinet
Uttlesford District Council
London Road
Saffron Walden
Essex CB11 4ER



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November 1, 2013

To the Cabinet of Uttlesford Council,

We, the undersigned, have no confidence in the current process to deliver the Uttlesford Local Plan and consider the output so far to be flawed.

In light of the change in planning period, total number of houses required, and lack of meaningful engagement with residents to date, we demand the following:

1. The local plan development process be **stopped** and the current draft plan **discarded**.
2. A **brand new local plan development process** to be put in place, that meets the following standards:
 - a. It is **strategic**: it works to an agreed set of objectives and reviews options against these objectives. It takes account of existing infrastructure capacity and needs as well as the infrastructure requirements that accompany new households **before** deciding where to put houses.
 - b. It is **evidence-based**: up-to-date evidence is gathered first before decisions are taken.
 - c. It is **open and transparent**: information is provided in a timely and accessible manner to stakeholders. That all decisions and discussions related to the local plan are open to public scrutiny.
 - d. It includes **early and meaningful engagement** with local organisations and parish/town councils and that concerns and ideas of individuals and organisations in Uttlesford are properly considered.
 - e. It is **timely**: that a robust time-frame for development of the plan is put in place and accountability for meeting the time-frame established. We also believe a new plan can be done in less time than the current 2015 timescale.

We are currently conducting a Petition which will be presenting to the Chief Executive of Uttlesford shortly.

Yours sincerely,

Uttlesford United Residents:

- WeAreResidents.org
- Save Newport Village
- The Joint Parish Councils Steering Group (Save Our Villages)
- Save Stansted Village.
- Takeley Parish Council