

**CABINET MEETING held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD
SAFFRON WALDEN on 31 MARCH 2014 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillor J Ketteridge – Leader (Chairman).
Councillor S Barker – Portfolio Holder for Environment.
Councillor R Chambers – Portfolio Holder for Finance
Councillor J Cheetham – Deputy Leader.
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 J Davey, E Godwin, S Howell, M Lemon, E Parr, J Rose, J Salmon and L Wells.

Officers in attendance: J Mitchell (Chief Executive), M Cox (Democratic Services Officer), R Harborough (Director of Public Services), S Joyce (Assistant Chief Executive – Finance), M Perry (Assistant Chief Executive – Legal), A Taylor (Assistant Director Planning and Building Control) and A Webb (Director of Corporate Services).

CA92 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman informed the meeting that the proceedings were being sound recorded and would be streamed live on the Internet.

CA93 PUBLIC STATEMENTS

Mr Mike Hibbs from the Uttlesford Liberal Democrats spoke to the meeting in relation to the Local Plan Pre-Submission document. A copy of his statement and the response by Councillor Barker is appended to these minutes.

CA94 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Rich and V Ranger.

Councillor Barker declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Essex County Council.

CA95 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (LDS) REVISION

The Cabinet received the latest revision to the Local Development Scheme. The scheme set out the timetable and programme for the production of the new and revised documents that comprised the Local Plan and was required to be sent to the Inspector as part of the submission.

The latest revision reflected the minor change to the timetable and the expected publication of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.

Councillor Barker said that two further changes were required. The first was to allow for a full 6-week consultation period, which meant extending the timetable to early June. The second was to delay the publication of the Gypsy and Traveller Allocation Development Plan to June, because of the local elections taking place in other parts of the county.

RESOLVED to approve the revised Local Development Scheme with the following additional amendments to the timetable.

- Publication of the Local Plan and Pre-submission Consultation - April 2014 – June 2014
- Gypsy and Traveller Allocation Development Plan Document – June 2014.

CA96

PRE-SUBMISSION CONSULTATION DOCUMENT – UTTLESFORD LOCAL PLAN

Councillor Barker presented the report and asked Cabinet to endorse the Pre Submission Local Plan as the basis for the pre-submission consultation. The plan set out the planning policies and site allocations that the council intended to submit for independent examination later in the year.

She explained that the consultation would take place over a 6-week period from April – June 2014. This consultation was concerned with whether the legal requirements for producing the plan had been met and therefore the comments had to be made in a more structured way than in previous consultations.

She said the Local Plan had been subject to a number of consultations. The latest was January this year, on the additional sites to provide 523 new homes a year. The Local Plan Working Group had looked at each stage of the process. All the papers had been in the public domain and all members were invited to attend the meetings. The process was now nearing the end and once the Local Plan had been adopted the council would be in a stronger position to control development in the district.

Councillor Parr asked where it was evidenced that the 3800 representations had been taken into account and influenced this report. The Assistant Director Planning and Building Control explained that at the end of each consultation a report of representation was produced, which set out the policies, the representations received and the officers' suggested response. This led to the production of the updated document considered by the council.

Councillor Parr raised concerns about the delivery of water services for the new developments proposed at Elsenham as the water companies had commented that the service was near to capacity.

The Assistant Director said the water study had looked at the issues and it was clear that significant additional work was required for the new developments. Both water companies have been involved in these discussions.

Councillor Parr said the water study was out of date and asked if it would be revisited. The Assistant Director replied that there was no new study but there had been further consultation with the water companies about what was required which would lead into the infrastructure development plan for the future application for the site.

From information from the water companies, Councillor Parr said there appeared to be capacity for around 400 additional houses. The significant work to rebuild the water facility was likely to take 7 -10 years which raised concern about provision in the interim period. The Assistant Director replied that this information had been based on the existing structure. The water companies had additional longer term plans for the schemes that would ensure sufficient capacity. Most of the houses in Elsenham would be delivered at the end of the 20 year plan period.

Councillor Parr asked if the council was confident that the necessary infrastructure would be delivered. Councillor Barker replied that the developer was responsible for mitigating the effects of the development and the infrastructure was a requirement of the plan.

Councillor Lemon commented that if the Liberal Democrat Group had not withdrawn from the Local Plan Working Group they would have known the answers to these questions. He hoped the council meeting would not get bogged down with such detail when it discussed the plan at its upcoming meeting.

RESOLVED To recommend to Full Council that

- 1 The plan as proposed to be published under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 Regulation 19 is sound; and
- 2 It is agreed that the document as proposed to be published is the document that it is intended the Council will submit under Regulation 22 to the Planning Inspectorate, subject to any further changes arising from the Regulation 19

CA97

FLOODING – REPAIR AND RENEWAL GRANT SCHEME

The Chairman agreed to consider this item on the grounds of urgency as a decision was required before the next available meeting.

The Cabinet was advised that the Government had put in place a grant scheme for businesses and homeowners affected by flooding since 1

December 2013. The council would administer the scheme locally whilst the Government would fund the cost of grants approved by the council.

RESOLVED

1. To agree the principle of operating the grant scheme for repairs and renewal work to flooded businesses and homes.
2. To authorise the Director of Public services to determine the arrangements for claiming financial support and to administer the scheme

The meeting ended at 7.30 pm.

PUBLIC STATEMENT

Mr Mike Hibbs

My name is Mike Hibbs and I am speaking on behalf of the Uttlesford Liberal Democrats.

“The Uttlesford Local Plan which you are considering this evening is not fit for purpose. It fails a number of criteria required under the Town and Country Planning Regulations.

There is a requirement to involve stakeholders and the community in the preparation of the Local Plan. It is clear that the District Council has completely ignored all the hundreds of detailed comments to the last consultation. The vast majority of the comments were critical – and rightly so! Uttlesford has not listened to the responses to the consultation. There is still no indication as to how the necessary infrastructure is to be provided. The Local Plan notes that many of the infrastructure issues are ‘critical’ but there do not appear to be any answers in the document. Where are the jobs, the schools, the health centres, for this huge increase in housing across the District? No consultation on the necessary infrastructure has taken place with local communities. Compliance with the Statement of Community Involvement is therefore fundamentally flawed.

We are told that Councillors have been fully involved in the development process – and yet the Local Plan Working Group, meeting earlier today, had no option other than to rubber stamp the proposals. Members who have raised legitimate concerns about the lack of transparency in the Local Plan process have been ignored. The majority of Councillors have not had an opportunity to have their say in the development of the Local Plan.

The report says that the Strategy should be considered against reasonable alternatives, based on proportionate evidence. No reasonable alternatives have been put forward, and the evidence is inadequate. The documents state that there have been budgetary restraints and that there have been insufficient staff to do the work. It seems wholly inappropriate to adopt the Local plan before this work has been carried out.

In particular, the Plan should include a full Highway Impact Assessment so that the increase in traffic can be safely accommodated. The original Highway Impact Assessment was commissioned by Uttlesford District Council in 2013 with a very narrow remit to assess the implications of the Local Plan at key junctions. The authors of the report state that their calculations are based on existing data and only consider the impact of traffic flows on some road junctions, with a view to reducing congestion and hence pollution. In view of the changes to the Local Plan, Essex County Council has prepared a revised Highway Impact Assessment. It does not appear to be available to the General Public, nor is it listed in the papers for this meeting. This assessment is already out of date. The proposals contained in the report for Elsenham are soon to be revised. The proposals for Saffron Walden appear to depend on

the Compulsory Purchase of land, which may or may not be successful. It is difficult to have any confidence in this document.

The evidence base for the Local plan is fundamentally flawed and it should not be adopted.”

Reply by Councillor Barker – Portfolio Holder Environment

Councillor Barker said there had been extensive consultation with stakeholders. All comments had been considered. Details of the required infrastructure for all the proposed new developments were set out in the report. All the background reports, including the Highways Impact Assessment were publically available on the Internet. The Local Plan Working Party had considered all stages of the process and all members had been invited to attend these meetings. She would be happy to follow up any particular comments with Mr Hibbs outside of the meeting.