

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING GROUP held at  
COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 10.00 am  
on 7 JULY 2009**

Present: - Councillor A J Ketteridge - Chairman.  
Councillors C A Cant and E J Godwin.

Officers in attendance: - R Harborough (Acting Director of Development),  
M Jones (Principal Planning Officer), S Nicholas (Senior  
Planning Officer), R Procter (Democratic Services Officer) and  
S Wood (Housing and Planning Policy Manager).

**LDF1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cheetham, Loughlin  
and Rolfe. There were no declarations of interest.

**LDF2 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 May 2009 were approved as a correct  
record and signed by the Chairman.

**LDF3 BUSINESS ARISING**

**i) Minute LDF45 – Member Workshop**

It was noted that the consultation was to be scheduled for the autumn, and  
that therefore a workshop to consider outcomes could take place only once  
that consultation had closed and the analysis was available.

**ii) Minute LDF46 – Gypsies and Travellers RSS Review**

The Acting Director of Development said the response had now been sent to  
the Secretary of State.

**LDF4 MEMBER WORKSHOP ON 8 JULY**

Officers provided a summary of presentations to be given at the workshop.  
Topics were the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, the Strategic Housing  
Land Availability Assessment, Gypsy and Traveller policy, and an update on  
work in progress.

In relation to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, officers said policy  
would be formulated from the detailed figures being made available to  
Members, and a further workshop would be arranged for September. A  
further viability study would be required.

There was brief discussion of the progress of the LDF. Councillor Ketteridge  
said he had recently attended a meeting of Essex district leaders. It was

apparent that this council alone had received a visit from the LDF inspector, and other councils were no further forward. Inferences could be drawn which were worrying.

Officers reported briefly on communications with officials at DCLG, following which announcement of the Eco-towns PPS was expected next week. Elsenham was not expected to be on the list of eco towns which were ready to move forward, owing to the unresolved issues relating to the site. Members welcomed this news.

The Acting Director of Development said he would be attending with the Chief Executive and the Housing Strategy and Planning Policy Manager a meeting with senior officials from GO East to continue the dialogue on progress of the core strategy and other elements of the LDF. This was an opportunity for officers to explain the issues and set out the reasoning behind the proposed timescale for their resolution. Members raised the concern that there could be sudden influx of major planning applications for strategic developments. Officers replied that they continued to meet developers promoting such schemes, but none had indicated imminent submission of an application. Members considered the implications of the expected change of government at the next general election, and the risks to a developer in submitting a major application until greater political certainty existed.

*Councillor Cant declared a personal interest as Chairman of the Stop Boxted Wood Expansion Campaign Group.*

In relation to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, officers explained what tomorrow's presentation would cover. Tables on key findings would be presented, showing conclusions on numbers and locations of houses required to meet housing needs in Uttlesford, having regard to existing infrastructure.

Members discussed the preferred option under the LDF. The political context was not likely to provide certainty for some time. Whilst targets could change, housing pressures would not do so. Forward planning gave the Council a degree of control, which was preferable to reacting ad hoc to developers' proposals. The issue of settlements coalescing, including the potential for this to happen across the district's borders, was of concern, as people living in Uttlesford tended to be proud of the rural nature of the district.

Members then raised concerns at how the cross-border housing nominations policy through the Stansted Area Housing Partnership was operating. Anecdotal evidence indicated there were cases where people from outside the district, having been housed in Uttlesford, would have preferred to remain in their district. Those in housing need in Uttlesford also would prefer to live in settlements to which they had a local connection, to be nearer their families. Officers observed that places such as Takeley did not have access to a good range of services and properties were turned down because they were too far from the local school. Members felt the points system for allocating affordable

housing needed review and the Housing Strategy and Planning Policy Manager confirmed that this work was just about to be carried out and would be analysed by the Housing Initiative Task Group.

There was brief discussion of the affordability of privately rented property, and of the high level of earnings needed to obtain mortgages to buy homes.

Regarding the presentation on Gypsy and Traveller Policy, officers reported that both Environment and Community and Housing Committees had approved the Council's response to the RSS review. Officers warned that it was possible that the additional 10 sites, or a greater number of sites, could be imposed on Uttlesford despite lodging objections. In any event, after 2011 the Council would need to make additional provision of 3% per year (compound rate).

The Acting Director of Development said planning for gypsy and traveller site provision was potentially highly resource intensive. Members discussed various aspects of this issue, and acknowledged it could give rise to significant difficulties, as had occurred already in neighbouring districts. Officers said the existing Little Dunmow site had problems with overcrowding, and confirmed that gypsy and travellers households who were housed in permanent accommodation usually wished to move back to mobile homes if they could.

Officers then updated Members on the following work in progress.

Water cycle: there had been confidentiality issues with the water company, resulting in a delay in finalising the report. The report was still subject to comments by the Environment Agency.

Highways study: ECC had once more promised a draft by the end of this week, and this study would be presented at a proposed September workshop.

Employment Land Review: Work had just started on an update of the report. The last review had taken place in 2006, and a refresh of the assessment of future need was required. This would mirror the approach used for the SHLAA. A report would be brought to the September workshop.

There was discussion of issues relating to employment land, such as the difficulty in letting units on industrial estates. Less local industry meant more commuters, giving rise to 'ghost towns' during working hours. Members were concerned to promote community spirit, which could be lost in larger settlements. Increasing numbers of families needed housing which permitted a space for working from home. Members would like to encourage knowledge based businesses, to suit those who worked from home and appreciated countryside and village life, and said the Council should try to foster this type of home working culture.

Problems associated with airport related jobs were mentioned including the import of labour from elsewhere, the number of airport jobs at or close to the minimum wage, and the intensive use of residential properties to house workers locally. Members raised the issue of meeting workers' requirements for local services such as healthcare.

Councillor Cant expressed concern that large scale development in villages resulted in difficulties with integration. Where only 6 or 7 houses at a time were built, integration was quickly achieved, but greater numbers took a long time to integrate, if indeed it ever took place. Where villages with a thriving community were subject to new housing development, this housing should be phased to give time for incomers to integrate. Councillor Godwin also wished for a range of housing to enable generations to mix.

The Chairman said new rules on retaining Council housing rental income raised the possibility of local authorities building small scale social housing developments themselves, year on year.

The Chairman noted the discrepancy in perspective between local people and strategic bodies, for example EEDA, regarding macroeconomic developments such as airports.

The Acting Director of Development said the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Panel had completed its work programme targets on time, but that all other studies involving input from partners were not on track. Those organisations which monitored progress with the LDF needed to understand that joint working was subject to constraints of all partners' priorities and resources.

**LDF5            SEPTEMBER WORKSHOP**

A further Members' workshop had been arranged for Tuesday 1 September at 6.30 pm.

**LDF6            PRE SUBMISSION CONSULTATION**

A consultation would be carried out in September/October to address outstanding areas on which consultation under the LDF was required. The exercise would also address consultation points identified by the Planning Inspector following his informal visit and in the representations by GO East on the preferred options.

**LDF6            DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting would be on Monday 24 August at 10 am.

The meeting ended at 11.00 am.