

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING GROUP held at
COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 9.30am
on 2 DECEMBER 2011**

Present: Councillor J Ketteridge – Chairman.
Councillors S Barker, C Cant, J Cheetham, E Godwin,
J Loughlin, J Menell, V Ranger, H Rolfe and D Watson.

Also present: Councillor J Redfern.

Officers in attendance: R Harborough (Director of Public Services), H
Hayden (Planning Officer), M Jones (Principal Planning
Officer), S Nicholas (Senior Planning Officer), P Snow
(Democratic and Electoral Services Manager), A Storah
(Planning Officer) and A Taylor (Assistant Director
Planning and Building Control).

LDF34 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

An apology for absence was received from Councillor E Oliver.
Although not a member of the Working Group, Councillor D Morson also
apologised for non attendance.

Members asked for guidance about the need to declare an interest in the
proceedings of the Working Group. It was agreed to note that every
member present had a personal interest in respect of their participation
in the meeting.

LDF35 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2011 were received
and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

LDF36 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute LDF28 – Historic Lanes Study

It was noted that this study would commence almost immediately and
would conclude by March 2012.

(ii) Minute LDF30 – District Retail Study

The Director of Public Services reported that a meeting had taken place
with Savills to consider progressing the study and that some delays had
been experienced.

LDF37

ESSEX PLANNING OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION DEMOGRAPHIC STUDY – FORECAST SCENARIOS

The Assistant Director Planning and Building Control presented the draft results of the demographic study. He emphasised that the study would remain confidential until it was available for publication in January 2012.

The technical study included data relating to Essex and other adjoining local authority areas. It had utilised data from the 2001 census, updated by the annual ONS forecast figures. The study would be completed in December and there would be a final update in June 2012 when it was expected to be able to incorporate the 2011 census data.

The study included detailed information about the demographic make up of the district and this had been checked against the council tax base. There were a range of projections for change which took into account the effects on the district of natural population change, net migration and international migration.

Members questioned the reliability of the projected figures for migration into the district. The Assistant Director commented that the company contracted to undertake the research was experienced in population modelling at a national government level and the figures produced were considered robust.

Questions were raised about the impact of the economic downturn. The Director of Public Services said that an analysis of how the housing market would perform over a ten year period indicated that prospects for the area remained buoyant.

Members noted the data relating to expected changes in the labour force. This led to a discussion about the nature and volume of jobs that might be provided within the district.

In conclusion, the Chairman reminded members that the figures in the study were purely indicative. Once the study results were published there would be a further opportunity for members to provide a formal steer to officers on how policy should develop.

LDF38

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND SITE ALLOCATIONS

The Principal Planning Officer reported on the need to take forward the consultation on development management policies. There would consequently be two documents out to consultation at the same time. A paper detailing the list of policies intended for inclusion had already been circulated to the Working Group.

In drafting the list, officers had tested it against a number of factors including how the core strategy related to the existing local plan, the

pattern of appeal decisions, and the national policy framework. Known gaps in the policy had been addressed and duplications removed.

In issuing the consultation document there would be a concentration on those policies that had either changed or were new and those likely to generate the greatest level of interest. The majority of policies would simply roll forward with appropriate wording changes to reflect national policy.

Members discussed the content of the working document. In response to a question on deleted policies, the Assistant Director said that it would be better for the supporting text to explain why policies were suggested to be deleted as this reflected current policy. However, it would be important to review consultation responses as well as the detail of the final National Planning Policy Framework on the basis that policies could be reinstated if appropriate.

The Working Group discussed a number of the proposed aspects of the consultation. These included:

- Affordable housing provision and the requirement for financial contributions in respect of developments.
- The Council's role in commenting on development affecting the highway.
- Policies relating to the provision of infrastructure including health and other community facilities.
- Protection of the countryside in relation to the Metropolitan Green Belt.
- Wind farms policy.

Officers confirmed that a number of these matters could be revisited before the consultation in June. It was agreed to make the final document as user friendly as possible to aim for the maximum public participation.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting for a short break before resuming to consider the proposed site allocations.

Upon resumption, the Senior Planning Officer explained the various elements of the consultation including a description of what the consultation involved, a summary of changes since the previous consultation, and a reiteration of the four options to accommodate growth. A suggested settlement hierarchy was incorporated.

Maps would be available indicating the various potential development sites identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). Potential employment sites were also indicated on these maps.

The Working Group discussed the format of the consultation in detail and made various suggestions for changes and improvements. The aim

should be to make the consultation as user friendly as possible so as to achieve mass engagement.

LDF39 SITES FOR GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS

The Working Group discussed the process for agreeing the allocation of sites for gypsies, travellers and travelling show people (as incorporated into the development plan consultation). A draft allocation would have to be agreed by June 2012, and this would have to demonstrate sufficient sites could be delivered within the first five years of the plan period.

Two sites had so far been put forward for consideration.

Members noted the report.

LDF40 SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL REPORT ON HOUSING/ EMPLOYMENT LOCATIONS

The Senior Planning Officer reported on the requirement for local authorities to carry out a sustainability appraisal of their local development frameworks. This was intended to ensure that the plans and policies contributed to sustainable development, allowing residents to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life without compromising the quality of life of future generations. It would involve identifying key social, economic and environmental issues and look at how the adoption of the LDF would influence them.

The first stage of this process had involved the production of a scoping report in October 2011. This document was now available and could be used in the assessment of development sites. The assessment would be available for use in connection with the development plan consultation in January 2012.

LDF41 CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS

The Assistant Director Planning and Building Control reported on the proposed arrangements. The key points were:

- It would run for six weeks from 20 January until 5 March.
- There would be a briefing for all councillors and parish councils.
- Adverts would be placed in the press two weeks before the consultation.
- Posters would be sent to all parish councils and libraries.
- Leaflets would be distributed at railway stations.
- Contacts would be made at schools aimed at parents.
- Day long consultation events would take place in various town and village locations where information boards would be displayed.

- There would be a presentation at the area forum meetings in February/March.

Members commented on the proposed arrangements and made various suggestions for ways of maximising participation and impact.

LDF42

FUTURE MEETINGS

The dates and times of future meetings were noted as follows:

Friday 6 January - 9.30am
Friday 3 February – 9.30am
Friday 2 March – 9.30am
Thursday 5 April – 9.30am
Friday 11 May – 9.30am

The meeting ended at 12.20pm.