

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING GROUP held at
COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 2.30 pm on
22 NOVEMBER 2012**

Present: Councillor J Ketteridge –Chairman.
Councillors S Barker, J Cheetham, J Menell, V Ranger and D
Watson.

Officers in attendance: M Cox (Democratic Services Officer), R Harborough
(Director of Public Services), M Jones (Principal Planning
Officer) and A Taylor (Assistant Director Planning and Building
Control).

LDF37 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Eden, Godwin, Oliver
and Rolfe.

LDF38 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 November 2012 were signed by the
Chairman as a correct record.

LDF39 BUSINESS ARISING

i) Minute LDF34 (i) – Gypsy and traveller sites

Members referred to the recent gypsy and traveller seminar, and asked how
this matter would now be progressed. The Assistant Director Planning and
Building Control said that the results from the call for sites would be reported
to the LDF meeting on 14 December. The next stage would be to commission
the Essex wide Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment in
the new year and it was expected that all the relevant information would be
available later in the year to inform decisions on draft site allocations.

LDF40 GREATER ESSEX DEMOGRAPHIC FORECASTS

The Assistant Director Planning and Building Control presented a report which
updated progress with the Demographic Study. The meeting recalled that in
order to replace the demographic forecast services provided by EERA the
Essex Planning Officers Association (EPOA) has commissioned Edge
Analytics to prepare a range of population, household and labour force
forecasts to produce scenarios for population growth within specific areas. In
April 2012 the Cabinet had adopted the Economic Scenario as the most
appropriate basis on which to develop the new Local Plan.

The forecasts were to be delivered through an agreed programme of work conducted in 4 phases. The phase 3 report, incorporating details of phase 1 and 2, was published in July 2012. This report had revised the forecasts with the most up to date information and it was now necessary for Cabinet to reaffirm the adoption of this scenario.

It had been expected that phase 4 would include new demographic forecasts. However, as the relevant data was not yet available there was no basis to amend the assumptions in the existing model. The revised mid-year population estimates (ONS and CLG) for 2002-2010 were expected in Spring 2013 and the 2012-based sub-national ONS population and CLG household projections not before 2014.

It had therefore been decided that phase 4 of the project would be a descriptive account of the current situation. This would enable the Phase 3 forecasts to be placed in the context of the new demographic evidence that had emerged since preparation of the forecasts. This report was expected to be received in draft in December and to be formally published in January 2013.

It was recommended that the economic scenario continue to be supported as the appropriate forecast for the preparation of the plan. The Council had provided additional support and momentum behind local economic development. The economy within the district was fairly robust, as demonstrated by the East of England Forecasting model outputs.

The report set out the Local Plan timescale. This was in line with the NPPF, which stated that the local plan should “be drawn up over an appropriate time scale, preferably a 15-year time horizon”. The current Local Plan has an end date of 2011 and it was considered appropriate to start the new Local Plan from that date to provide continuity and to ensure a continuous Local Plan coverage. This would provide an end date of 2026 for the new Local Plan.

The report then considered the effect of the updated data on the district housing requirement. Under the economic scenario the 2013/14 – 2025/26 locally derived requirement had increased to 415 pa (from 338pa). After taking account of completed dwellings and approved permissions, this would leave a District housing requirement for the duration of the plan of 3228.

Councillor Watson read a statement from Councillor Eden, who was unable to be present at the meeting.

In the statement Councillor Eden expressed his concern at the recommendation. He considered there was no rationale for starting the plan in 2011, or for linking the new and the previous plan chronologically. He referred to the NPPF which stated that local plans should take account of longer term requirements, and be kept up to date. He did not feel that the draft plan took account of these longer term requirements, and was concerned that if the plan was not compliant with the NPPF it could be found unsound. He stated that he believed the housing requirement in draft local plan was inadequate and that the plan period should be extended. His view was that a

single settlement would be the most appropriate strategy for the longer term to accommodate growth and ensure delivery.

Councillor Watson had severe reservations about the report. He said it did not include paragraph 22 of the NPPF in full. The conclusions did not accord with its advice. In particular he questioned the legality of reducing the timescale of the plan by putting the start date back to 2011. He said the plan should run 15 years from the date of adoption - so from 2013/14 to 2028/29. The back dating of the plan had materially affected the planned housing provision. If the plan period had run to 2028/29 a single settlement would be a more appropriate strategy.

He was not aware that other local authorities that had adopted the proposed approach and requested that the issue of the Local Plan timescale be referred to the Assistant Chief Executive – Legal.

The Director of Public Services said a 15 year plan was not a statutory requirement. This was a matter of planning policy expressed in the National Planning Policy Framework and it was a planning judgment as to whether the draft plan had been prepared on a sound basis and conformed to the NPPF. Previous policy had been explicit that a plan should run for 15 years from the date of adoption, but this was no longer what the NPPF said. Most members agreed that it was logical for the end date of one plan to be the start date for the next.

The Assistant Director Planning and Building Control said that advice on the preparation of the Local Plan had been sought from the Planning Advice Service and the Planning Inspectorate. Local plan proposals needed to be based on evidence that supported the rationale behind the proposals. The working group was informed that the decision on this matter would need to be made by Cabinet and was reassured that all reports for Cabinet were required to be signed off for finance and legal implications by the council's S151 and Monitoring Officers before they were submitted to the meeting.

AGREED that the Phase 3 Demographic Forecasts be noted and, pending approval by Cabinet, Officers will use this approach in the preparation of the new Uttlesford Local Plan.

LDF41

WATER CYCLE STUDY

The Principal Planning Officer presented a report on the phase 2 water cycle study, which had updated the conclusions of the outline study completed in 2008. The study would form part of the evidence base for the Local Plan and was required to ensure that issues with water supply, water quality, sewerage and flood management could be addressed to enable growth during the lifetime of the Local Plan and beyond.

A copy of the executive summary had been circulated. It had been found that all the strategic development sites could be supplied with water without the need for major infrastructure upgrades.

In terms of waste treatment works, issues had been identified in Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow, Newport and Great Chesterford. Upgrades in some of these areas were planned but in other areas an assessment of the viability of upgrading or installing new sewers would be required. The key message from the study was that there should be early discussion with the Water Authority to ensure that impact assessments were carried out.

Members felt that energy efficiency was an increasingly important issue and asked officers to investigate the possibility of including grey water recycling and other water efficiency measures in new developments.

The working group noted the study.

LDF42 DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY SITES

The working group had previously recommended that development opportunity sites in Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and Stansted Mountfitchet should be included in the pre-submission consultation draft. A study had since been commissioned to assess the commercial deliverability of these sites and the resulting report was circulated. The next stage would be to prepare a site brief for each site in consultation with local members and town and parish councils.

Councillor Ketteridge suggested the Saffron Walden Post Office site as a possibly development opportunity site as it was a large site, which had both front and rear access and was in a prime location for retail development on the High Street.

Members made various comments regarding the site proposals and welcomed the advice in the report that coordinated proposals for the opportunity sites would bring benefits that a piecemeal approach would not achieve.

AGREED to note the report and that the Post Office site in Saffron Walden be added to the list of development opportunity sites and Carter Jones be commissioned to carry out a further assessment regarding the viability of this site.

LDF43 UTTLESFORD LOCAL PARKING STANDARDS

The Working Group had asked officers to look at the possibility of introducing local parking standards. These were considered necessary because Uttlesford was primarily a rural area and had restricted access to public transport, so the majority of journeys were undertaken by private car. Therefore in planning new development there should be adequate provision of parking spaces.

The local standards would be in addition to the 'Parking Standards Design and Good Practice 2009' that had already been adopted by the Council. A document for consultation had been prepared that suggested the following local standard, which was welcome by the working group.

- For 3+ bedrooms there should be a minimum of 3 spaces per dwelling.

AGREED that Officers should undertake consultation prior to recommending to Cabinet that the local standards are adopted as a material planning consideration.

LDF44

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next scheduled meeting was on Friday 14 December at 9.30am. An additional meeting would be arranged to consider the response to the site allocations once the highway assessment was available.

The meeting ended at 4:30pm.