

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING GROUP held at
COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN AT 9.30 am 8
FEBRUARY 2013**

Present: Councillor J Ketteridge – Chairman.
Councillors S Barker, K Eden, E Godwin, K Mackman, J Menell,
E Oliver, V Ranger, J Rose and D Watson.

Also Present: Councillor J Redfern.

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

LDF51 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Cheetham and H Rolfe.

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

LDF52 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2012 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

LDF53 DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY SITES – DEVELOPMENT BRIEFS

The Assistant Director Planning and Building Control reminded the group that a number of sites had been allocated in the draft plan as development opportunity sites. Carter Jonas had been commissioned to carry out studies to assess the commercial viability of these sites. Following this Essex County Council's Urban Design Team had been appointed to work with the District Council and parish/town councils to develop development briefs for the site. The work had now been completed and the final reports for the following areas were attached for member consideration.

- Council depot and car park site New Street - Great Dunmow
- Site to the rear of Cambridge Road/Chapel Hill – Stansted Mountfitchet.
- Emson Close/Rose and Crown Walk – Saffron Walden
- Fire Station and Laundry site - Saffron Walden.
- Post Office Car park site, High Street – Great Dunmow

It was emphasised that these reports formed part of the background studies to the Local Plan and only indicated one possible option for how the site could be developed.

In relation to the Council Depot site at Great Dunmow, Councillor Ranger asked that all the options for that site were considered - releasing to third parties, the Council developing the site itself and temporary uses for the vacant site. The Assistant Director confirmed that this was the only site where the District Council had a landholding interest, hence it had greater control of how it could develop, but the use of the site would ultimately be a Cabinet decision.

Councillor Eden spoke in relation to the Saffron Walden sites, which he commended as having broad appeal. He thought the approach taken in relation to these sites was a good one in helping to promote early discussion at a local level. It was noted that in relation to the site at Stansted the Parish Council was already engaged in early discussion with the landowners as to the future use of the site.

Members had a general discussion around the proposals and noted that further dialogue would continue with the key stakeholders before firm proposal came forward.

AGREED that the design briefs for the development sites were noted.

LDF54

DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITY SITE SAFFRON WALDEN

The Working Group had previously recommended that the 'Post Office site' Saffron Walden be considered as a development opportunity site. A study had been commissioned to assess the commercial deliverability and consider the viability and the type of development which could be delivered.

The report concluded that a minor refurbishment of small units to the rear Of the site might be viable but a more extensive redevelopment including the listed building would not. This was because of concerns over the residual value of the existing building.

Members were disappointed with the conclusion in the report, as this was a large and well-located site. Officers advised that if the site was not allocated in the Local Plan, this did not preclude future developed of the site.

AGREED not to proceed with the inclusion of the Post Office site as a development opportunity site.

DUTY TO CO-OPERATE – PLAN PROPOSALS FROM NEIGHBOURING AUTHORITIES

The Principal Planning Officer presented a report advising of recent consultations on Local Plan documents by two neighbouring authorities and drew attention to the main issues affecting Uttlesford.

South Cambridgeshire DC and Cambridge City council

The consultation was split into two parts - Part 1, a joint development strategy for the wider Cambridge area, site options and/or employment on the edge of Cambridge and a possible new community stadium. Part 2 included more detailed matters for each authority. As the plans were in an early stage, there were no specific issues for Uttlesford, but of interest were the initial proposals for the sites nearest to Uttlesford e.g. Camborne, Sawston.

Councillor Eden was concerned that this Council's proposed Local Plan did not take sufficient account of the effect of the growth proposals in neighbouring authorities. For example, increased employment sites and opportunities in the Cambridge area would have an effect on the transport patterns and the resulting infrastructure requirements for Uttlesford. He questioned whether the evidence base was available for informed decisions to be made.

The Assistant Director replied that the evidence base was already available in the completed background studies, e.g. the Employment Land Review and the Retail Study. The Highways Study would address transport patterns and the infrastructure required. Also, under the Duty to Cooperate neighbouring authorities were obliged to inform the Council of key proposals in their plans that were likely to affect Uttlesford. He said that although it was important to understand relationships with adjoining areas the Council had a duty to provide a plan for its own area.

The Working Group had concerns about the possible proposals for housing development south of Cambridge, especially the 520 homes in the Sawston area and the effect that this would have on the road network in the north of the district, particularly around junction 9 of the M11, where there was already traffic congestion.

Members felt that although there would be further opportunity to comment when the sites had been identified, they would like to put forward initial concerns at this stage.

AGREED that representations be made in response to the consultation expressing concerns about the effect on the road network of the sites identified in the SHLAA close the northern boundary of Uttlesford.

Braintree

It was noted that Braintree DC had already adopted its Core Strategy and was now consulting on the allocation of sites to meet the development needs of the District. Housing supply was not considered a cross border issue as Braintree was meeting its own identified needs. However, in relation to Gypsy and Traveller sites it was proposing that 7 of the 67 sites required, along with the 6 transient pitches and the 1 additional site for Travelling Showpeople, should be allocated through the determination of planning applications.

Although there was no suggestion that any unmet need would be found in adjoining districts, members said that they would prefer all the pitches to be allocated in the plan.

AGREED that representations be made in response to the consultation expressing a wish for all the required Gypsy and Traveller pitches for the Braintree District to be allocated within the Plan.

LDF56

COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY

The Working Group was advised that as part of the current Local Development Scheme, work was required on the Community Infrastructure Levy. The Council had appointed BNP Paribas, who were expert in this field, to advice on Local Plan Viability and the CIL.

It was noted that CIL would replace 106 Agreements as the main means of securing pooled financial contributions towards community infrastructure from April 2014. However, Council's could still use S106 contributions from up to 5 developments to fund a single piece of infrastructure if they met the three tests set out in the CIL regulations.

The advice had now been received and concluded that there was no compelling case for adopting CIL in Uttlesford at this time, for the following reasons:-

- The nature of the Council's housing trajectory, which lends itself to S106 arrangements.
- The Council can achieve what it wants through S106 agreements.
- Income would be low in the short/medium term as the Council could pool S106 contributions on strategic sites, which was the bulk of its housing supply. The CIL would not be financially viable.
- The Council could still pool contributions for up to 5 S06 sites
- The Council was not compelled to adopt CIL until 2014 – it could be adopted at any time after that.
- The CIL was still a new initiative with only a few authorities operating it, so it was likely that issues could still emerge.
- It would require a considerable input of Council resources, both time and money.

Members asked a number of questions on the report and considered that the expert advice should be taken on this issue.

AGREED

- 1 To note the advice of BNP Paribas.
- 2 To recommend to Cabinet through the production of the new development scheme that no further work on the CIL is carried out.
- 3 Officers to keep this decision under review and advise the LDF WG if consideration should be given to restarting work in CIL at any point.

LDF57

REPLACEMENT MINERALS LOCAL PLAN – PRESUBMISSION CONSULTATION

The Working Group received a copy of the pre submission draft of the Replacement Minerals plan for consultation. The plan set out the policy governing minerals development in Essex until 2029. There were two sites within the district at Little Bullocks Farm Little/Great Canfield. The Council had objected to the inclusion of these sites at the application stage, but having been re-scored they had still been included. Issues had been identified at both these sites which would be addressed through the application process.

Councillor Barker was concerned at the proposals for the site at Roxwell which due to its location would involve lorry movements along rural roads in the Uttlesford District. She would take this up directly with the County Council.

The working group noted the report.

LDF58

DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS

The next meeting of the working group would be held on Friday 8 March. The meeting to consider the draft allocations would be arranged once the final stage of the highway study had been received.

The meeting ended at 11.25 am.