

**LOCAL PLAN WORKING GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON  
ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN AT 9.30 am on 9 AUGUST 2013**

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

Also present: Councillors A Dean and J Parry.

Officers in attendance: M Cox (Democratic Services Officer), R Harborough  
(Director of Public Services), S Nicholas (Senior Planning  
Officer) M Jones (Principal Planning Officer) D Malins (Interim  
Housing Strategy Manager).

**LP1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Cheetham.

**LP2 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2013 were approved and signed  
as a correct record, subject to renumbering the minute numbers.

**LP3 MATTERS ARISING**

**i) Minute LDF73 – other business**

Councillor Watson mentioned the recent response from the Planning  
Inspectorate to a question from ‘We are Residents’ about the period covered  
by the local plan. This had stated that the starting point for the new plan  
should be 15 years, unless there were compelling reasons to depart from this.  
Councillor Watson suggested that this threw the current draft plan proposal  
into enormous doubt, and asked whether the council was intending to review  
the plan period and as a result the need to accommodate the additional  
houses required.

The Chairman said that there was a range of information to be considered in  
relation to this question. There was also the issue of the highways  
assessment that was now expected to be received in the next 5 -6 weeks. He  
suggested that the meeting of the working group scheduled for 6 September  
should be deferred and the issue of housing numbers and site allocations be  
considered when all the relevant information was available.

Cllr Watson felt that the working group was dodging an important issue but the  
Chairman said that the Council was not in a position to make a decision on  
this matter at this time.

LP4

## **EMPLOYMENT LAND MONITORING REPORT**

The Principal Planning Officer presented the information from the 2012 -13 Employment Land Survey. This monitored the planning permissions for non-residential use in the previous year. It recorded new permissions, outstanding employment space which had been completed and that which had been lost to other uses. Only use classes B1- B8, over a certain area floor space were included in the survey. The main conclusions were

- There had been a low take up of land reserved for employment in the 2005 plan and some of this had been allocated for residential in accordance with national guidance.
- It was proposed to safeguard most sites in the new local plan
- New allocations would more than meet the anticipated need for employment floor space during the plan period

The working group discussed the sites mentioned in the report, the safeguarding of employment sites and the need to consider employment alongside housing allocations.

Councillor Eden said that economic data used in the local plan preparation had identified health care as the largest category of employment in the district but this was not addressed in this report. As business use classes only accounted for a small part of the district's employment, he felt that the council should be more concerned with the availability and distribution of the other use classes. The Principal Planning Officer explained that this report was examining a particular category of employment land but it might be possible to look at other employment uses if required.

It was AGREED that the report be noted as part of the Local Plan evidence base.

LP5

## **DUTY TO COOPERATE - SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

The working group noted that South Cambridgeshire District Council had published its proposed submission Local Plan for consultation. Members had previously commented on the plan at the issues and options stage when concern had been expressed about the effect on the road network of the potential housing sites close to the northern boundary of Uttlesford. At this stage comments were limited to the soundness of the plan process and proposals.

The plan covered the period 2001 to 2031 and the report explained the numbers of houses proposed and the site distribution. As the plan made provision for its objectively assessed housing need within the district boundary, there were no cross border issues that required joint working arrangements under the duty to cooperate.

A Transport Strategy for Cambridge City and South Cambs was being produced alongside the plan. The draft strategy would have relevance for the district as the Saffron Walden to Cambridge Transport corridor was mentioned for improvements. The plan envisaged a comprehensive cycle/ pedestrian network linking Cambridge to neighbouring villages. Members were advised that Uttlesford's Highway Panel had recently allocated 10k for a feasibility study for a cycleway between Saffron Walden and Cambridge.

The report was noted.

LP6

## **STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT – UPDATE 2012**

The Interim Housing Strategy Manager presented a report which updated the findings contained in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) 2008. The study looked at existing housing stock, property prices and affordability, the role of the private rented sector in meeting housing need, the impact of Government policy changes since 2010, current housing need and future housing requirements to 2033.

There was no significant difference in trends since the report in 2008 but the following findings were highlighted.

- The majority of housing developed since 2011 was registered in Council Tax bands C to G.
- 10% of houses were sold for under £150k, 50% for more than £250k.
- The distribution of dwelling tenure was in line with 2008 findings.
- For market housing the dwelling type trend was 3 beds or larger, for affordable rented properties, the requirement was for 1,2,3 bedrooms.

Members asked how the population growth figures in the report equated with the Council's demographic study and its decision on the housing requirement. It was explained that this was a separate report concerned with the proportions of different house types rather than the numbers of houses required.

Members referred to the cross border development planned west of Bishops Stortford and the effect that this might have on Stansted and other nearby settlements. The Director of Public Services confirmed that there were on-going discussions being held with planning officers at East Herts DC.

The report was noted.

LP7

## **OTHER BUSINESS**

Councillor Eden raised the issue of the provision of affordable housing, the need to reduce costs which might be achieved by reducing the cost of construction. Members commented that the main issue appeared to be the high cost of land in the district and the limited supply of council own land.

Councillor Ranger said that under HRA self-financing the Council had the opportunity to build its own houses, and suggested, as a comparison, details be obtained of the construction costs for the properties recently built on Council owned land at Leaden Roding.

LP8

**DATE OF NEXT MEETINGS**

The next meeting would be held within the next couple of months. Members would be advised of the date in due course.

The meeting ended at 11.00 am.