

LOCAL PLAN WORKING GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 9.30am on 7 FEBRUARY 2014

Present: Councillor J Ketteridge– Chairman.
Councillors J Cheetham, K Eden, J Menell, E Oliver, H Rolfe, and D Watson.

Also present: Councillor Jones

Officers in attendance: M Cox (Democratic Services Officer), H Hayden (Planning Officer) and A Taylor (Assistant Director Planning and Building Control).

LP23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

An apology for absence was received from Councillors Barker, Godwin, Mackman, Ranger and Rose,

LP24 CONSULTATION ON OPTIONS FOR A NEW ACCESS FROM THE M11 FOR HARLOW (JUNCTION 7A)

Members received a report regarding a proposed new junction for Harlow off the M11. Harlow currently only had one connection to the strategic network, to the south at junction 7, which was at capacity at peak hours. The proposal was for a new grade separated junction (7A) midway between junction 7 and 8.

The new junction featured in the South East Economic Plan as a key factor in maximising the potential of the Harlow Enterprise Zone and would support construction of nearly 3500 new homes in the Harlow area. The cost would be in the region of £57- 65m and could start in 2017/18 to be completed in 2020/2021.

On balance, the proposal appeared to be beneficial to Uttlesford's residents and workers by reduced travel time, less congestion and improved access to the Harlow area. It was also likely to relieve the 'rat runs' that had developed in the district but the proposal could put more pressure on junction 8.

Councillor Jones suggested that an east bound spur off the roundabout would open up the area south of Sheering and provide development opportunity with good road and rail links. Members asked for clarification as to whether an east bound road link off the roundabout had been considered. The Assistant Director Planning and Building Control said this provision would be unlikely unless to facilitate development.

Members discussed the proposal and generally agreed that the advantages outweighed the disadvantages.

AGREED

- 1 to write to the Essex County Council expressing support for the M11 junction 7A at Harlow
- 2 to ask ECC for clarification on whether an eastern spur road had been considered.

A number of members had been unable to attend this meeting due to the adverse weather. The Chairman adjourned the meeting - to be arranged for a future date.

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THE MEETING WAS RECONVENED ON FRIDAY 14 FEBRUARY 2014 AT 2.00PM

Present: Councillor J Cheetham– in the chair.
Councillors S Barker, E Godwin, K Mackman, E Oliver, V Ranger, H Rolfe, J Rose and D Watson.

Also present: Councillor C Cant

Officers in attendance: M Cox (Democratic Services Officer), R Harborough (Director of Public Services), S Nicholas (Senior Planning Officer), H Hayden (Planning Officer) and A Taylor (Assistant Director Planning and Building Control).

LP25 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Eden, J Menell and J Ketteridge.

LP26 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 2013 were approved and signed as a correct record.

LP27 **CONSULTATION ON ADDITIONAL HOUSING NUMBERS AND SITES NOVEMBER 2013 – REPORT ON REPRESENTATIONS**

The Committee considered the report of the representations that had been received in response to the recent consultation on additional housing numbers and sites. 3800 comments had been received from 1276 people. The report summarised the representations and set out officer's views and recommendations.

Members raised the following issues.

There had been a variety of responses regarding the timescale of the plan. It was explained that the requirement was for a 15 year plan post adoption. The UDC plan period started from 2011, which would require a 19 year plan if it was adopted as intended in 2014. It was explained that the council was working toward a 20 year plan, which provided an additional year in case of any slippage and gave certainty that the plan would be delivered. The working group commented the timescale calculation was confusing for the public.

There were many references in the responses to the importance of adequate school provision for the proposed developments. It was confirmed that the relevant bodies were already engaged with the process. Discussions had taken place with Essex County Council about future provision and a number of meetings had been held with school head teachers in the district. Members were concerned about serious shortage of space in cross border schools.

Members asked if they could be provided with an overview of secondary provision in the district, what was needed and where, and the money that was available. Officers agreed to provide this information.

Councillor Watson commented that most responses were against the recommendations. He expected that majority of new residents would be commuters and the proposed development were in the wrong place for this. In reply the Chairman said that any proposal to build substantial development would elicit objections. The council had taken a considered approach in its development proposals, supported with sound evidence base, but development could only take place on land that was available and deliverable.

Members questioned whether the council was adhering to its policy of 40% affordable housing on larger developments. The Assistant Director Planning and Building Control said that 40% was always the aim but it was a balancing act and other issues needed to be considered , including the viability of the development and the provision of alternative infrastructure or facilities.

The report was noted.

LP28

ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT

The working group received for information the 2013 Monitoring Report which covered the period from April 2012 – March 2013. Members were advised of the key findings in the report.

The data relating to the Gypsy and Traveller sites was discussed. The Assistant Director of Planning and Building Control said that the Gypsy and Traveller needs assessment study would hopefully be available in March/April and would be used as evidence base. The work on the allocation of sites would start later in the year.

Questions were raised at statements made in the report about access to services. Members were reminded that the information related to the developments approved in 2012/13.

The report was noted

LP21

DUTY TO CO- OPERATE

Members received a detailed report updating the work currently being done under the Duty to cooperate to engage with other local planning authorities, public bodies and others. The report brought together all the recent activity in this area.

The Assistant Director of Planning and Building Control highlighted a number of areas and explained that whilst discussions continued with other border authorities, the only formal arrangement was with East Herts because of the key cross border issues resulting from its proposed development plan. A draft memorandum of understanding was being prepared.

It was noted that the council also had a duty to cooperate obligation with Harlow and Epping Forest as part of the West Essex Strategic Partnership. A further memorandum of understanding was being prepared in relation to delivering need as part of the strategic housing market area.

The working group noted the report and agreed that officers should continue to work on a Memorandum of Understanding with East Herts.

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DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS GUIDANCE

The working group received a report on the 6 month review of the Developer Contribution Guide that had been approved at Cabinet in June 2013. Officers had recommended the following changes.

- i) Para 6.10 – Monitoring clauses

It was proposed to introduce monitoring clauses for each phase of a development. This would apply to large developments. This amendment was supported

- ii) Para 2.7 affordable housing financial contributions on sites of 1 – 4 units

The scheme currently required a viability report for each application. This was a time consuming and costly process and there was no certainty for the developer about how much they would have to pay.

The amendment suggested that the 2013/14 and 2014/15 build cost of an affordable unit should be set at £125,000 and the financial contributions for between 1-4 dwellings should be as follows.

- 4 unit development 80% of build cost
- 3unit development 60% of build cost
- 2 unit development 40% of build cost

It was also proposed not to collect a financial contribution from developments of one dwelling, as the financial contribution was seen as a disadvantage to individuals who were building their own house, not for profit

The working group asked a number of questions around the affordable housing contribution. The Assistant Director explained that the aim of the changes was to simplify the process, remove the requirement for a viability report on every application and to set out clearly the council's requirement so that developers could prepare their submission accordingly.

Members were strongly of the opinion that the policy should not differentiate between the numbers of properties, and there should also be a financial contribution for single dwelling developments

AGREED Cabinet be informed that the working group supports the amendments to the scheme, but suggests an amendment to include a financial contribution for single dwelling developments at 20% of the build price.

The meeting ended at 4.15pm