

LOCAL PLAN WORKING GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 2.00pm on 13 MARCH 2014

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

Also present: Councillors C Cant and J Redfern.

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

LP31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Godwin and Ranger.

LP32 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2014 were approved and signed as a correct record subject to an amendment to the final paragraph to read as follows.

‘Some members questioned the benefits of the proposal for Uttlesford but there was support for the proposed new junction.

LP33 BUSINESS ARISING

i) Minute LP24 – Consultation on options for a new access from the M11 for Harlow (Junction 7A)

The Assistant Director Planning and Building Control reported that the council’s comments had been submitted but due to an error with the consultation process the consultation had been restarted.

ii) Minute LP30 – Developers Contribution Guidance

The Assistant Director Planning and Building Control reported that following the comments made at the last meeting, the Cabinet had recommended that the developers contribution should apply to single dwelling as well as to developments of 2, 3 or 4 dwellings.

As this had not been the recommendation in the report there had been no evidence base to support this decision. The consultant had therefore been asked to carry out a further financial viability assessment and had concluded that a contribution to a single dwelling would only be viable in certain circumstances and it would be necessary to continue with individual viability assessments for each application. This was contrary to the aims of the

scheme which had been to simplify the process and avoid the cost and administration of these assessments.

He also reported further new information in the form of a Government National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) as well as a Government announcement that self-builders would be exempt from paying the Community Infrastructure levy (CIL).

The Cabinet decision was therefore at odds with this new information. It had thrown up a number of issues for officers to deal with and was likely to impact on the performance of determining minor applications.

Councillor Cheetham said the working group had suggested the change to the scheme on the grounds of fairness on the basis that anyone who developed land would achieve financial gain.

Councillor Watson said that the minutes misrepresented the meeting as all members had not been in support of applying the contribution to a single dwelling. The Vice-Chairman said that at the meeting when she was Chairing she had asked each member individually and there had been clear support for this proposal.

It was agreed that some action should be taken in the light of the new information as the issue was not as black and white as first thought. Some members thought that single dwellings should be excluded all together, particularly self builds which should be encouraged. Others suggested a compromise scheme to ensure that developers did not submit single applications on larger sites and protection for those who built and occupied the dwelling themselves.

AGREED that officers review the scheme and prepare a revised report to be circulated to working group members for comment prior to consideration at Cabinet on 27 March.

.LP34

SHLAA UPDATE

The working group received a report for information on the key findings of the Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) 2013. This was updated from the previous year's document and took account of the annual residential Land Availability Survey 2012-13 and other additional information received during the year.

The document considered 320 sites and included 7 additional sites received on the 2013 consultation on additional housing numbers and sites. These were:

GtCHE7(a) – land between Walden Road and Newmarket Road Great Chesterford

GtDUN39 – Helena Romanes School Site Great Dunmow

LtDUN1(a) – West of Little Dunmow and North of Flitch Way, Little Dunmow

LtEAS1(a) – Land west of Great Dunmow, Great Dunmow/Little Easton

STA20 – Land west of High Lane, Stansted Mountfitchet
STA21 – Gorsefield Study Centre, Stansted Mountfitchet
STA22 – 2 Lower Street (has not been included in SHLAA previously)

In answer to a question, it was confirmed that the SHLAA showed there was more than sufficient future available land. Although the sites in the document would not necessarily be allocated in current or future plans, it was kept up to date and was part of the evidence base demonstrating deliverability of potential housing sites.

.LP35

5 YEAR LAND SUPPLY UPDATE

The working group received an update on the position with the council's 5 year land supply and noted it could now demonstrate a deliverable supply of housing land with a current surplus of 45 dwellings. This was however a rolling target, reviewed in April each year and it was anticipated there would be a shortfall in provision in 2014/15. This would be dependent on the amount of housing commenced or built in 2013/14, which would be confirmed in June.

Councillor Ketteridge commented that the public thought the 5 year land supply was a solution to preventing house building, but in reality the council was only on the cusp of this figure and could still in the future be in the position of considering applications for sustainable development outside development limits.

Councillor Eden asked if the estimate of housing delivery took account of whether the economy was performing well or badly. The Assistant Director explained that during the last few years, through the downturn, there had been a high level of house building because the council was implementing decisions from the 80s and 90s. At the moment all the big sites had been completed but the next large sites were yet to be delivered. He explained that the council required a steady supply of smaller sites coming forward as well as the large sites in order to maintain the numbers.

.LP36

DUTY TO COOPERATE: BASILDON COUNCIL GYPSY AND TRAVELLER POLICY

The working group was advised that Basildon Council had recently published its revised core strategy preferred options report for consultation.

The council had commissioned an independent Gypsy and Traveller Local Needs Accommodation Assessment (GTLNAA) which concluded that over the 20 year plan period a further 121 pitches would be required.

The assessment had also looked at the Dale Farm site and the evidence of stakeholders that there were 86 families on the site when it was cleared, which would require a further additional 155 pitches. Basildon Council argued that it was unreasonable to expect any one Local Planning Authority to provide sites for every Traveller household that decided to relocate to its area. Its core strategy was therefore proposing to provide a minimum of 30 pitches up to

2016 and the additional 155 pitches would be provided outside of the Borough through continued cross boundary working with the local planning authorities within Essex.

The Assistant Director said that Basildon had not demonstrated that it wasn't able accommodate the need within the Borough, nor had it met with other authorities to discuss the issues.

Members felt that each authority should provide for the need in their own area and the consultation response should reflect a strong objection to this proposal.

Members were informed of progress with the Essex wide needs assessment. It had been found that the ECC waiting list had inflated the numbers, this list had been reviewed and the numbers had reduced considerably. This report would hopefully be received in a few months and would provide the evidence base of the need but it was up to each district to decide how this would be delivered.

AGREED that a representation be made in response to the Core Strategy Revised Preferred Options Report strongly objecting to Core Policy 5: Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Needs on the grounds that the Council must undertake an assessment of land to demonstrate that there is no capacity within the Borough to meet this need. Furthermore there is no evidence of effective joint working on a cross boundary strategy to meet these unmet requirements and therefore the Duty to Cooperate has not been met.

LP37

DRAFT FURTHER ALTERATIONS TO THE LONDON PLAN

The Principal Planning Officer presented for information the draft further alterations to the London Plan that had been published for consultation.

Although the consultation didn't include anything that directly affected Uttlesford, a key point to note was the significant gap between the identified need and the likely supply of housing. There has been no discussion about how this shortfall might be met. Options could include a review of the green belt boundary or an approach to Local Authorities outside the Green Belt under the duty to co-operate. This could become an issue by 2019/20 when the London Plan was due to be reviewed.

AGREED that the Council responds to the consultation expressing considerable concern that the full objectively assessed housing needs of the London market area are not being met. This recommendation is made subject to any issues arising from the briefing officers are attending on the 28th March 2014 which may require further consideration in discussion with the Chair of the working group.

The meeting ended at 3.30pm.