

LOCAL PLAN WORKING GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN at 2.00pm on 31 MARCH 2014

Present: Councillor J Ketteridge – Chairman.
Councillors S Barker, J Cheetham, K Eden, K Mackman, and J Rose.

Also present: Councillors C Cant, R Eastham and J Redfern.

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

LP38 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Godwin, Menell, Oliver, Ranger, Rolfe and Watson.

LP39 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2014 were approved and signed as a correct record.

LP40 HIGHWAYS IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Council had commissioned a further Highway Assessment to evaluate the impact of the additional housing sites proposed for the local plan and to identify any mitigation measures.

The sites had been assessed at weekday peak hours within each key area. There had also been an assessment for two future years, 2018 and 2031 taken against a base year of 2012. The report also considered the impact of the proposals over the wider area and the strategic road network. The report set out the key findings for each area and the mitigation measures proposed.

Members discussed the proposals for Great Dunmow and asked whether the impact of the new Dunmow bypass had been taken into account. Councillor Barker said that Essex Highways were planning a traffic study to establish the change in traffic flows. The issue of signage and renumbering of the new road would also be addressed.

Councillor Eden commented that the Saffron Walden link road appeared to be key to alleviating the traffic problems in the town but this was not planned to be provided until 2031. He asked how this could be delivered at an earlier date.

The Assistant Director Planning and Building Control said the study made a technical assumption about the delivery of housing sites and when they would come forward. In reality the process was determined by when the planning application was received and the houses were built. Therefore the supporting infrastructure may well be provided at an earlier date.

In answer to a question from Councillor Eastham, officers said that the provision of the infrastructure was tied up in the legal agreement which included trigger points for when particular aspects should be delivered. The S106 obligations were registered as a land charge. The council was therefore in a strong position to ensure that all matters were implemented. Councillor Cant hoped it would all come on track as expected and would not result in the same delay as the building of the Dunmow bypass.

Councillor Barker thought it would be helpful for local members and members of the Planning Committee to have site of the S106 heads of terms at an earlier stage. This might lead to greater cooperation and support for the application.

Councillor Rose commented that the highway proposals for the Elsenham application were the least well developed and he noticed that a travel plan was not yet available. He was informed that the travel plan would form part of the planning application but this had not yet come forward. There were still a wide variety of mitigation options for the Elsenham site and a more detailed study was required.

In answer to a question from Councillor Eden, members were informed that in terms of the provision of public transport, large scale developments were often required to fund a bus service for 5 years. The idea was to pump prime the service and if it proved to be viable it would continue in the longer term.

The report was noted.

.LP35

UTTLESFORD LOCAL PLAN VIABILITY REPORT

The working group considered the viability assessment which was required as part of the local plan. This was a study of the deliverability of the local plan in terms of the viability of the proposed sites. The Council had appointed BNP Parabis to advise on this work.

The viability of 14 major proposed developments was assessed. The report set out the key findings of the report. It was noted that the majority of schemes were viable at current market values.

Councillor Cheetham asked for further information about the four sites, which were not currently viable, and was advised as follows:

- Helena Romana School - this proposal was still at an early stage.

- Elsenham sites 2 and 3 – both of these sites had planning permission going forward for development.
- Elsenham main site – the assumption on house prices was lower, than in other parts of district. This reflected current market conditions which were likely to improve over time. However the developer was happy to bring forward the planning application based on the current information.

Members asked whether the lack of viability would delay the development of a site. They were advised that this was unlikely to be an issue as sites were required to come forward over the whole the plan period. The information would be kept under review.

The report was noted

.LP36 **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME REVISION**

The working group received the latest revision to the Local Development Scheme. The scheme set out the timetable and programme for the production of the new and revised documents that comprised the Local Plan and was required to be sent to the Inspector as part of the submission.

The latest revision had reflected the minor change to the timetable and the expected publication of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.

It was noted that two further changes were required. The first was to allow for a full 6-week consultation period, which meant extending the timetable to early June. The second was to delay the publication of the Gypsy and Traveller Allocation Development Plan to June, because of the local elections taking place in other parts of the county.

AGREED to recommend to Cabinet, the revised Local Development Scheme with the following additional amendments to the timetable.

- Publication of the local plan and pre-submission consultation -April 2014 – June 2014
- Gypsy and traveller allocation development plan Document – June 2014.

LP37 **PRE -SUBMISSION CONSULTATION DOCUMENT**

The working group received the Pre Submission Local Plan which would form the basis of the pre-submission consultation. The plan set out the planning policies and site allocations that the council intended to submit for independent examination later in the year.

The consultation would take place over a 6-week period from April – June 2014. This consultation was concerned with whether the legal requirements had been met and whether the plan was sound. The response would be more

formal and require answers to technical questions which were set by the Government.

The Chairman reported a letter from Great Dunmow Town Council, which questioned the inclusion of the two Ongar Road sites in the document, as these not been included in previous consultations. Members were informed that the sites had been included because they had been granted planning permission on appeal.

Members welcomed the document and the clarity of the associated maps and plans. It was important to have the plan in place to control future development in the district. Also, the local planning policies would help guide decisions on future applications in the district.

The Assistant Director Planning and Building Control paid credit to his team for their considerable efforts to get the document to this stage in a very short period of time.

AGREED to recommend to Cabinet that

- 1 The plan as proposed to be published under the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 Regulation 19 is sound; and
- 2 It is agreed that the document as proposed to be published is the document that it is intended the Council will submit under Regulation 22 to the Planning Inspectorate, subject to any further changes arising from the Regulation 19

The meeting ended at 3.30pm.