

Uttlesford Locality Board: Minutes

Uttlesford District Council, 10 October 2016

Attendees: Peter Fairley (ECC), Cllr Susan Barker (UDC/ECC), Roger Harborough (UDC) Cllr Howard Rolfe (UDC), Dawn French (UDC), Cllr John Spence (ECC), Jamie Carswell (ECC), Alison Fiala (ECC), Joseph Chell (ECC), Cllr Ray Gooding (ECC)-Chair, Kerry Vinton (UDC), Cllr Lesley Wells (UDC), Cllr John Lodge (UDC/ECC) Adrian Webb (UDC), Cllr Simon Walsh (ECC) and Cllr Simon Howell (UDC)

Apologies: Cllr Julie Redfern (UDC)

- 1. Welcome and Introductions** Cllr Gooding welcomed all present.
- 2. Minutes of Previous meeting** The minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2016 were agreed.
- 3. Housing and Public Sector Land**

Cllr Spence went through the presentation on the Convening, Enabling & Facilitating - A Housing Growth Strategy for Essex given to the Essex Leaders and Chief Executives, explaining rationale for Essex County Council relating to housing growth. Cllr Spence reaffirmed the rationale was not in any way an attempt to stand in the pathway of the roles of local authority partners, but to enable and facilitate the delivery of local authority housing and infrastructure plans.

The strategy document underlined the population growth of Essex with its expected increase from 1.7 to 2.1 million between 2011 – 2031. Recognising there was already a significant housing deficit across the county, the wish list is to have housing for all, but not at any cost, nor at the expense of the integration of communities, and only where there was infrastructure to support the housing. During the same period of time there was an expected increase in people over 65yrs rising from 80,000 to 131,000 escalating the need for accommodation for independent living.

The rate of housing growth over the last decade had been 5,500 per annum (pa); on predicted population growth 9,000 houses pa would be required to meet the need. ECC would support local authorities in achieving this target by providing an improved planning service and convening with construction industry on how to overcome the skills deficit.

Jamie Carswell was invited to go through the strategy document in more detail. Members noted the objective housing need figures shown in the ECC strategy document were incorrect, as the SHMA had identified a requirement of 568 homes pa.

The Growth Infrastructure Framework (GIF) had been commissioned to map out the total infrastructure requirements across all Essex districts, details would be made available to Leaders and Chief Executives in the next three months.

Members asked if ECC were lobbying government in order to put pressure on developers who were delaying the release of land for housing projects and asked how ECC would tackle the construction skills shortage. Cllr Spence

confirmed ECC continued to lobby and have met with the industry on more than one occasion. Cllr Gooding added developers had a responsibility to provide the training in the industry i.e. through well supported apprenticeships schemes. Members were made aware the Construction Training Board was also onsite and more would be done with FE Colleges in order to bring up skills.

Jamie Carswell introduced the Hillhouse Project - a multi-partner project involving ECC, Epping Forest District Council and NHS England.

It was confirmed the NHS had supported the planning application and there would be a new primary care facility within the scheme.

Cllr Spence said Anglia Ruskin was working on plans for a new medical school.

The presentation concluded with a summary of future opportunities for Uttlesford.

Cllr Rolfe asked ECC to help join up the infrastructure and remarked on the capacity issues around M11 junction 8. Cllr Spence added the GIF will help prioritise infrastructure both across Essex and nationally.

4. Education in Uttlesford

Cllr Gooding referred to Education Excellence Everywhere White Paper discussed at the last meeting, adding there was now a Green Paper with headlines around grammar schools; it also highlights the benefits and opportunities for schools when working together.

Alison Fiala was invited to present on the Uttlesford District - Education Overview. She explained that as a local authority ECC had three priorities (1) every child should be in a 'Good' school as a minimum (2) schools work in partnership and (3) disadvantaged children get the best education to close the gap between them and others in order to get them ready to start secondary school.

It was made clear the information within the presentation could not be compared with previous years due to changes in the assessment process.

In context 10% of Essex schools were in Uttlesford.

The data within the presentation revealed attainment was high in Uttlesford, but progress measures in writing were not as high as other districts. There was some controversy around the exemplification and moderation of writing as it was the one element schools moderated themselves, with ECC moderating 25% of schools across the county. The measure used was a national measure of the outcome of how all children have achieved at the end of key stage 1 and could be an indicator of work that needed to be done around writing progress, particularly around certain groups i.e. special educational needs (SEN).

The lowest and highest ranking data was shared with all districts in order to share good practice and the district's schools recognised the reciprocal need to work in partnerships. ECC supported this approach.

Members asked if it was the same schools who were not reaching the district average outcomes, it was confirmed that a number of very small schools in the district did distort the data, as did transient families.

Members asked if small schools were under achieving, did they need to be considered for closure. ECC were currently looking at small schools in terms of sustainability and how schools could work together in terms of economies of

scale. Cllr Gooding added parental perception of small schools was education would be tailored to meet the need of their child and questioned whether small schools could provide the breadth every child requires.

ECC continue to look at schools curriculum ensuring it is rigorous, robust and had enough coverage of the topics, and that schools use testing early in order to build on stamina, speed and accuracy.

Jo Chell presented on the Schools Places Overview, with a caveat that the data was not final he added many of the plans had been progressed with schools and had either decisions or were working on detailed designs for expansions.

Primary - Jo explained how schools were clustered into planning groups, a requirement by the DfE, excluding three schools Gt Chesterford, Ashdon and Chrishall. A number of the groups had been historical, some had changed over time, and all were reviewed annually. With the long term forecast comes a caveat predictions were on known housing at the moment, beyond the next four years it is on statistical trends for birth rates.

Members were informed a free school application had been approved in Saffron Walden, the opening of which had not yet been determined by the DfE. Discussions with DfE were ongoing regarding lowering the admissions numbers for free schools, as surplus places can be damaging for schools.

Members asked how Section 106 monies applied for in order to provide temporary/permanent class rooms addressed the demand for extra school places in the Takeley area and added their concerns for the community if a new school was to be built in the parish. ECC would work with all primary schools to help them identify solutions or projects when faced with new planning permissions which would potentially increase pupil numbers.

Secondary – ECC had almost completed a viability study for Helena Romanes which covers several options for expansion.

Any new settlement decisions would significantly change the requirements for the secondary schools forecasts.

5. Feedback from Key meetings

Cllr Rolfe reported the Essex Partnership Board and Health & Wellbeing Board re-examining themselves having become a presentation venue. Cllr Rolfe's view was to have the Health & Wellbeing Board consumed by the Essex Partnership Board, he added a leadership Group has been set up to train the next generation of leaders.

At the London Stansted Cambridge Consortium a presentation was delivered on designs for Bishop's Stortford, taking them beyond planning and more about urban design.

There was an update on the growth commission and a presentation from Sarah Whitney, Metro Dynamics about accessing public money.

Dawn French updated the Board on matters discussed at the Essex Leaders and Chief Executives meeting, mainly covering the Essex Police & Crime Commissioner draft plan, and the business rates consultation.

Cllr Walsh reported the recycling site rules came into play at the end of October 2016, to regulate the amount of trade waste which was not meant to be received there and could breach their licence, which would result in some vehicles being turned around.

Cllr Gooding spoke about the increase of cost of home to school transport at Joyce Franklin. The policy was reviewed in 2013, having been in place since 2015. Cllr Gooding confirmed bus operators had increased their fares. He clarified the misnomer of subsidising non-entitled children to travel to school and added there has been some increase in the places ECC for entitled children. Conversations with Joyce Franklin were ongoing; one solution was to consider whether the school could itself run the bus service.

It was suggested that devolution in Essex might open up opportunities to offer subsidies for children travelling to school on commercial bus routes.

Cllr Barker remarked on the school application process and the requirement for parents to read and understand the transport policies and how it offered parents the option to speak to an officer as part of the application process.

The next meeting would be held on 12 December at the UDC offices.