

Committee: Planning Policy Working Group

Agenda Item

Date: 16 December 2016

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Title: Evidence Base Review and Work Programme

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Summary

1. This report sets out the current status of various studies which will underpin the evidence base for the Local Plan.

Recommendations

2. To note the officer update.

Financial Implications

3. All commissioned reports can be met from the Planning Policy budget and if necessary from the Planning Reserve.

Background Papers

4. None

Impact

- 5.

Communication/Consultation	No formal consultation on this document although it is available as part of the committee papers.
Community Safety	N/A
Equalities	N/A
Health and Safety	N/A
Human Rights/Legal Implications	N/A
Sustainability	N/A
Ward-specific impacts	All
Workforce/Workplace	N/A

Situation

6. This report outlines progression on the various reports and studies which were summarised at the Working Group Meeting of 26 November. It also sets out the main findings of the Commercial Workspace Review.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

7. The Council has appointed JBA consulting to undertake a Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) refresh of their original study of 2008. The study will reflect changes in policy and legislation, bring the planning context and flood risk information up to date and aid the development of the Local Plan. It will also provide specific flood risk information and advice for each of the areas of search under consideration in the Issues and Options Paper
8. A draft report has been received and a meeting held with the consultants, the Environment Agency and Essex County Council, as lead Local Flood Authority, to comment upon it. It is anticipated that a final version of the report will be received by the end of this month. Its findings will be presented to the next meeting of this Group.

Green Belt Review

9. Arup have been appointed to carry out this work. The review is subject to a separate item on this agenda.

Transport Assessment

10. An inception meeting has been held with the consultants WYG to agree the parameters of the study.

Employment Land Review

11. AECOM have been appointed to undertake the Employment Land Review.

Commercial Workspace Study

12. The Commercial Workspace Study was commissioned to provide insight into the supply and demand for commercial workspace in Uttlesford from 2015 to 2020. The objectives of the study were to Identify the existing and potential demand in commercial workspace from Uttlesford based businesses; sectors that the District could attract and; to Identify any existing and forecast gaps in the supply of commercial workspace.

Key study findings

13. The study has found that employment stock in Uttlesford is generally of a small to medium scale and tightly held. There is very limited workplace stock currently being marketed, with a particular shortage of industrial space. The local economy is characterised by small to medium enterprises servicing the needs of the local market.
14. The consultation with the local commercial agents corroborated the findings of a tight commercial market. Agents were generally of the view that further stock

in Uttlesford is required to meet market demands and that growth was being constrained due to a lack of supply. The industrial markets in Saffron Walden and Great Dunmow were considered particularly tight.

15. Surveying the local businesses found those businesses that did express a desire to relocate had reported difficulties in finding adequate premises.
16. There are some significant projects that have been approved in Uttlesford, including TriSail Towers, Ashdon Road Commercial Centre and Mantle Estates at Great Dunmow, which if developed would increase choice and capacity in the market.

Recommendations

17. Drawing upon and updating the analysis of the Employment Land Review (2011), this study has found that the most pressing concern with regards to further workspace coming available over the next 5 years is not the lack of supply of employment land but rather the delivery of approved employment projects in a timely manner.
18. Further stock is likely to be required that would become available to the market in the medium term to meet further needs of these district.
19. It is recommended that Council continues with the policy outlined in the Draft Local Plan with regard to the restrictions upon non-aviation uses on Stansted Airport Land. That is, the North Side commercial area should have the restrictions relaxed to enable a wider range of regional operators to locate close to the airport, but the restrictions remain in place elsewhere on airport land.
20. It is not recommended that further dedicated research space be developed outside of the Chesterford Research Park site. It is considered that this site is well positioned for such operators wishing to locate to Uttlesford and that there is sufficient capacity in this location to cater for future needs for the foreseeable future.
21. Start-up space is recommended for Saffron Walden and Stansted Mountfitchet.

Review of the Countryside Protection Zone

22. The Council is preparing to commission a review of the current Countryside Protection Zone. The policy has been in existence for some time and it is opportune to review the boundaries of the Zone to ensure that they are robust and still fit for the intended purpose.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
That the Council prepares an unsound plan	1 – The Council is preparing a Plan which is	2 – The adoption of the Plan is delayed whilst	That the Council ensures that the Plan meets the requirements of the

	positively prepared; justified; effective and consistent with national policy	additional work is undertaken.	NPPF and is justified by evidence.
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1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.