

**PLANNING POLICY WORKING GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on 26 APRIL 2016 at 7.00pm**

Present: Councillor H Rolfe – Chairman
Councillors S Barker, P Davies, A Dean, S Harris, J Lodge, J
Loughlin, A Mills, E Oliver and J Parry.

Officers in attendance: M Cox (Democratic Services Officer), R Fox (Planning
Policy Team Leader) and H Hayden (Planning Policy Officer).

PP75 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no apologies for absence or declarations of interest received.

PP76 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2016, were signed by the Chairman as a correct record, subject an amendment to add the word 'solely' to the 5th paragraph of minute PP70 to read, "Cllr Dean said that in terms of infrastructure, the council should be looking at what it wanted to achieve in the district and not solely using the plan as mitigation".

Councillor Lodge had circulated a document setting out a number of matters and raising questions, which he felt should have been included in minutes of the previous meeting. He said the working group minutes appeared to give a truncated version of the proceedings but he thought that a detailed record was important for the public examination. The Leader said there was no intention to exclude matters from the minutes, but they were a summary of the meeting rather than a verbatim record.

It was suggested that it would be helpful to attach an action list at the end of the minutes in order to track the issues raised.

The Planning Policy Team Leader said he would reply to the points raised by Cllr Lodge. A copy of the letter and the response would be attached to the minutes of this meeting.

PP77 BUSINESS ARISING

(i) Minute PP66 (ii) Public Speaking

The Planning Policy Team Leader confirmed that the information regarding the SHMA figures had been circulated to Mr McDonald.

(ii) Minute PP71 – Technical consultation on the implementation of planning changes

It was confirmed that there had been no additional comments submitted by members.

COUNTRYSIDE PROTECTION ZONE (CPZ) REVIEW

The Chairman welcomed Katrina Davis and Philip Smith, consultants from LUC to present the proposed methodology for a review of the Uttlesford Countryside Protection Zone.

Philip Smith explained that at the 1984 Airport Inquiries, Stansted had been described as 'an airport in the countryside'. In 1995, the CPZ had been introduced by UDC to limit the physical size of the airport and to maintain an area of open countryside around the airport.

The CPZ hadn't been reviewed since 1995. The aim of this study was to assess the extent to which the land within the CPZ was meeting its purposes and to enable the council to make an informed decision on whether to keep the CPZ and if any amendments should be made.

Katrina Davis explained the proposed methodology. The first stage was to establish the four main purposes of the CPZ. These were suggested as follows

- to protect the open characteristics of the CPZ
- To restrict the spread of development from the airport
- To protect the rural nature of the countryside (incl settlement) around the airport
- To prevent changes to the rural settlement pattern of the area by restricting coalescence.

The next stage was to define the parcels. These would comprise areas with similar land use and characteristics. Each parcel would be visited and rated with a high to low score for how it contributed to each of the four purposes. She presented some examples and explained that if a parcel didn't perform well against all purposes it could still be important for the CPZ.

The consultants would report back their findings and recommendations to the working group meeting on 9 June 2016, prior to its adoption into the Local Plan evidence base.

Councillor Cheetham, from Takeley Parish Council addressed the working group. She said that UDC had recognised that Stansted was an airport in the countryside and this had largely been maintained by the CPZ. This was a strong policy that had been defended at planning appeals. The parish council felt that, if anything the policy should be strengthened as there was nothing else in terms of planning policy for the airport, as the NPPF was a broad brush policy and not sufficiently robust. She said UDC had fought hard for this policy, which was why there was so much land available within in the Airport boundary for ancillary development. She hoped the consultants and the working group would take these points on board. She asked a question about how the scores would be weighed between the four main purposes.

In reply, Philip Smith said there was no intention to add up the scores for the different purposes as this could mask some important features. The results would be presented as layers of evidence. If a parcel showed a strong

performance against only one purpose, it was likely to be recommended to be retained.

In answer to a member question, Katrina Davis said that the CPZ was not required to be contiguous. The policy was a UDC creation and could be drawn to fit the needs of the district as long as it was defensible, with sound planning reasons.

It was explained that the landscape character information set out in the officer's report had provided a starting point to identify the parcels but it was up to consultants to define the specific parcels, once the site visits had taken place.

Cllr Lodge said he was aware of increased activity to the east of the airport and asked how business development would be affected by this study. He was informed that the proposed north side business park, and the site for the tertiary college were not within the CPZ area, and there was sufficient available land for this purpose.

In relation to the brief for this study, Cllr Lodge questioned whether the terms of reference should have been seen by members in advance. He was advised that this meeting gave the opportunity to comment on the parameters of the review. Cllr Dean asked why the evaluation criteria had given only a 10% weight to the methodology. It was explained that there was a logical progression, as if the consultants could provide good value for money and understood the requirements of the review, then a sound methodology should follow.

AGREED that the working group endorse the stage 1 methodology that UDC will use to undertake the CPZ review.

PP79

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The working group considered the representations received to the recent consultation on the Statement of Community Involvement. This statement set out the council's approach to public consultation and involvement in the preparation of the Local Plan. Responses had been received from seven organisations. The report set out the comments and explained where changes had been made to the document.

In answer to a question, Members were updated on the current situation with the Gypsy and Traveller study. The Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment was currently being reviewed to take into account the changes in the Gypsy and Traveller definition set out in the Housing and Planning Bill. The results of the study would inform the number of pitches required in the district and the council would then assess how to deal with this within the Local Plan.

Cllr Dean referred to the comments of the Essex Wildlife Trust who were disappointed that there was no section linking the Local Plan with any Environmental Strategy and felt that the council's approach was biased toward development. Cllr Dean said environmental considerations should be a golden thread consistently running through the policies in the Local Plan. The Leader

agreed and said that the Economic Strategy was also a key aspect of the plan and the policies and strategies should be consistent.

Members asked questions about the allocation of employment sites in the district and how this process would be carried out. The Planning Policy Team Leader said the council was waiting for the results of the of the Employment Study, which would provide a qualitative and quantitative review of the employment sites, whether they were adequate, in the right place and what else was required. This together with the Economic Strategy would inform the employment policies in the Local Plan. It was confirmed that the employment sites put forward in the draft plan would be subject to member approval.

Cllr Lodge said he was disappointed that only seven organisations had responded to the consultation.

AGREED to recommend to Cabinet that the Statement of Community Involvement be adopted subject to the changes as set out in the report of representations.

PP80

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES - UPDATE

The working group was advised that the Development Management (DM) polices to be included in the Local Plan were currently being drafted by the planning policy team, working with development management, building control and conservation officers. These policies would guide future decision making on planning applications.

The policies being reviewed were those contained in the withdrawn plan. These had been taken as a starting point as the Planning Inspector didn't have any major issues with the policies proposed. The policies were being considered on a chapter by chapter base and the PPWG would receive these in two parts at the June and July meetings.

The Development Manager attended the meeting and explained the approach to this exercise. He said he would welcome suggestions for new policies from members, although he explained that for these to be considered there should be a clear evidence base of need.

Cllr Lodge said he would like to see policies in relation to the provision of sports pitches and allotments. Cllr Barker suggested new policies, to provide broadband conduit for all new developments and appropriate storage capacity for recycling facilities.

Councillor Barker said there was poor mobile phone coverage in some parts of the district and it would be useful to establish the location of the main black spots. She suggested asking residents for this information through an article in Uttlesford Life.

The Development Manager said he would be holding a workshop for the Planning Committee. As these members had experience of implementing the policies, they would provide valuable input into this process.

As members would be required to review a number of lengthy documents during this process, they asked for the information to be presented in a manageable format. Officers said the report would set out the existing policies and track change any amendments and additions. The Leader said that members of the working group could request papers copies of the agenda for these meetings.

PP81

LOCAL PLAN PROJECT PLAN

The working group was advised of progress on producing the project plan and programme management for the Local Plan preparation. This would comprise a project programme, risk register, project documentation and governance programme. The document was expected to be signed off by the Chief Executive and would shortly be circulated to all members.

The Leader said that the next key stage in the Local Plan preparation was to agree the development strategy. He said it was important that all Members were involved in this process, were provided with relevant information and given enough time to understand the issues. On this basis the group leaders had agreed the following timetable

28 June 2016 – facilitated workshop for all Members

12 July 2016 – special meeting of the PPWG

14 July 2016 – Cabinet meeting

26 July 2016 – Full Council to agree the preferred option.

A similar timetable would be required for the consideration of the detailed site allocations later in the year.

PP82

DUTY TO COOPERATE

The working group received a report on recent duty to cooperate meetings.

The Planning Policy Team Leader gave a verbal update on a recent meeting of the Cooperation for Sustainable Development Board that he had attended with Councillor Barker.

There had been a presentation from the Princess Alexandra Hospital, which had exposed issues for the provision of health care in the district. There was a discussion with Highways England, where members had again stressed the need to sign up to transport measures in order to deliver the growth. The Board had also considered the strategic options for the distribution of overall housing in the SHMA area.

The key issue for this group was to update the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), particularly in relation to transport and strategic housing. The authorities had agreed to take the quota for the 46k houses required for the

SHMA area. For the Local Plan to be found sound it was important for the Inspector to see delivery across the whole area.

It was noted that East Herts had given the green light to the new development north of Harlow, which would help with achieving the combined number.

The Chairman reported a letter received from the A1307 parishes forum, which had raised concern at the lack of coordination of local plans that affected villages in South Cambs and Uttlesford, in terms of the lack of cross boundary traffic provision for new developments.

The Planning Policy Team Leader said UDC and South Cambs DC historically had a close liaison, including the signing of a Statement of Common Ground. South Cambs had nearly completed its Local Plan and had provided for its own housing numbers within its boundary. However, regular officer meetings were still taking place to agree some cross boundary issues in relation to transport and infrastructure.

Cllr Loughlin asked about the current situation with Epping Forest DC and its ability to meet its housing requirement, given the large proportion of green belt in its area. The group was advised that Epping Forest was currently undertaking a Green Belt review and as yet, there was no indication that it would that it would have to look to provide housing outside its boundary.

Cllr Lodge commented that the council's work on the Duty to Cooperate had only just passed at Examination. He questioned the work currently being undertaken, as the minutes of the meetings were rather vague. Cllr Barker said there were many meetings taking place, and these were now being properly recorded. The Leader added that the district was in a better position as it had an up to date SHMA commissioned by all four authorities, but it was still critical to have the MOU in place.

The Chairman said that highway provision was fundamental to this process. The four council leaders and the local MP had sent a further letter to the Highways Agency, stating that they were not happy with the response received regarding the M11, junction 8 improvements.

The Planning Policy Team Leader responded to a recent statement by planning consultant Nathaniel Litchfield and Partners, that UDC was at risk of its local Plan being called in by the Inspector. He said this was a very technical document, and the council was currently checking the accuracy of the figures, but also the comments had been based on the Government paper that was still out for consultation. To reassure the working group he said that officers had met recently with representatives from the DCLG and discussed the proposed programme for the preparation of the Local Plan. This had been regarded as sensible and pragmatic and as long as the council adhered to the timetable there would be no grounds to call in the plan.

The meeting ended at 8.30pm

ACTION POINTS

Minute PP76 - Minutes	RF to respond to Cllr Lodge's comments and attach reply to the minutes.
Minute PP79 - Statement of Community Involvement	<p>To refer the Statement of Community Involvement to Cabinet on 26 May.</p> <p>Officers to ensure that the Environmental Strategy and Economic Strategy are consistent with the policies in the Local Plan.</p> <p>To update members with progress on the Gypsy and Traveller plan when more information is available.</p>
Minute PP80 – DM Policies	<p>Members to contact officers regarding suggestions for new or amended DM policies.</p> <p>To include an article in Uttlesford Life seeking information on mobile phone coverage blackspots in the district</p>
Minute PP81 Project Plan	RF to circulate the Project Plan to PPWG members
Minute PP82 Duty to Cooperate	<p>Officer continue to report issues arising from the Duty to Cooperate meetings, and in particular</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Progress on signing the MOU. • Information on the M11 junction 8 improvements.