

**PLANNING POLICY WORKING GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on 6 APRIL 2017 at 7.30pm**

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

Also present: Councillors K Artus, P Fairhurst, M Foley and J Redfern.

Officers in attendance: A Bochel (Democratic Services Officer), R Dobson
(Principal Democratic Services Officer), B Ferguson (Democratic
Services Officer), R Fox (Planning Policy Team Leader), G
Glenday (Assistant Director Planning) and G Holmes (Planning
Policy Officer).

Public speakers: P Gadd and M Young

PP50 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Harris.

Councillor Barker declared an interest as a member of Essex County Council.

PP51 MINUTES

Councillor Rolfe asked whether the minutes of the previous meeting were considered accurate.

Councillor Lodge said many of the documents had followed the initial publication of the agenda.

Councillor Rolfe acknowledged this as a fair point and said officers would work to minimise this. However it was in the nature of the Planning Policy Working Group work for documents to be finalised at the last minute.

Councillor Lodge referred to his previous request for his letter of 25 November 2016 to be appended to the previous minutes. He said this had not been done.

Officers confirmed that the letter had been attached to the minutes of the 10th January as agreed at the meeting of 22 February 2017.

Councillor Lodge said in view of the policy that there were now no matters arising on agendas, he wished to refer to various points he had mentioned in his more recent letter to Councillor Rolfe.

Councillor Rolfe said he had replied to the letter and that it could be considered at the Leaders' Forum as an agenda item for future meetings.

Councillor Dean queried the whereabouts of a decision list which it had been agreed would be issued from the last meeting.

The Planning Policy Team Leader said that the decision list was included at the foot of the minutes.

In response to questions about the time during which minutes would usually be made available, the Principal Democratic Services Officer said minutes would be produced within 10 working days of a meeting.

Councillor Lees asked whether the further work on water and sewerage would be included in the project plan.

The Planning Policy Team Leader said the further work which would be required would depend on allocations made.

Councillor Lodge raised a point of accuracy, in that Minute PP44 referred to a 'comprehensive sustainability appraisal'. This should instead be 'comparative sustainability appraisal'. Other than that point, he felt there were omissions from the action plan.

Councillor Rolfe said as far as the Working Group and the Council were concerned, there was a very extensive forward meeting plan.

Subject to the correction to Minute PP44, the minutes were agreed and signed by the Chairman as a true record of the meeting on 22 February.

PP52

FEEDBACK FROM PROMOTERS OF NEW SETTLEMENT SESSIONS IN MARCH

The Working Group considered a report on feedback from promoters of new settlements at presentations held in March 2017.

The Chairman said a correction would be made to a reference in Appendix 2 to 'Great Easton' instead of the 'Easton Park', and apologised for that oversight.

The Planning Policy Team Leader said that the reports were there as a comparative record of the seven presentations held for members, and the Chairman added that the reports were available on the Council website for those who wished to view them.

PP53

GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT UPDATE

Members considered a verbal report on assessment of gypsy and traveller accommodation.

The Planning Policy Officer reported on a joint Essex-wide assessment of such accommodation, which took into account the updated evidence base and considered definitions.

He summarised the definitions applicable, and how these related to the approach of this Working Group. He confirmed Uttlesford District Council could accommodate the number of gypsies and travellers recognised in the report

without needing to find additional sites. He apologised that the report had been delayed and said it would be provided for the next meeting.

PP54 2017 WINDFALL ALLOWANCE

Michael Young spoke to the meeting in relation to the 2017 windfall allowance. A copy of his statement is attached to these minutes.

Members considered the report on the 2017 windfall allowance.

Councillor Barker said she would have liked to have included figures for rural exception sites in the report, but she understood that until the sites had been delivered they had to be excluded.

The Planning Policy Team Leader thanked Mr Young for his complimentary remarks about the report. Regarding Mr Young's suggestion that the way in which this allowance was addressed elsewhere was different, he said he would conduct some comparative research.

Councillor Dean referred to a table of historic delivery rates excluding rural exception sites set out in the report. He asked whether there was a risk of repeating past mistakes through inclusion of speculative figures.

The Planning Policy Team Leader said whilst the figures in the table were speculative, the distinction was between those which were welcome and those which were not welcome, and the absence of a plan would not impact on this information as set out.

RESOLVED to note and support the windfall allowance.

PP55 STRATEGIC LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (SLAA) UPDATE

The Planning Policy Officer introduced a report on the Strategic Land Availability Assessment. He said 300 sites had been considered for housing development proposals against three criteria: suitability, availability and achievability. Those classified between A and C3 were likely to come forward as part of the Local Plan. The next stage was to decide which sites to develop for the Local Plan.

The Chairman asked whether these proposals were available to the public, along with their A-E classifications, as set out in the report.

The Planning Policy Officer said some proposals were awaiting the outcome of appeals. The exercise was purely to look at the constraints on the sites. Feedback would be given to the next meeting of the Working Group.

The Chairman asked that any additional sites coming into the public domain also be categorised in this way.

Councillor Mills asked whether figures provided in the report excluded the seven main development sites already identified.

The Planning Policy Officer confirmed this was the case.

Councillor Lees said that the figure of sites classified as A-C3 still only reached 4177, while the Council would have to provide many more.

The Planning Policy Team Leader said that these figures did not include new settlements and already approved planning applications.

Councillor Lees asked why sites found unsuitable during a public enquiry were listed as potentially suitable in the report.

Councillor Rolfe said that applicants often adjust applications to fix problems identified in previous enquiries.

The Planning Policy Team Leader added that the SLAA only determined 'in principle' suitability for a site, without taking into account the sustainability proposal and planning history.

PP56

REASONABLE ALTERNATIVES METHODOLOGY

Paul Gadd spoke on the Reasonable Alternatives methodology and other items. His statement is appended to these minutes.

Responding to a suggestion by Paul Gadd that pre-determination of spatial strategy had taken place before the assembly of supporting evidence, Councillor Rolfe said that there had been no pre-determination and most independent observers would agree that no decisions had been made. The Council was trying to produce a positive plan which was based on evidence and there was no element of private discussion.

In response to a further comment from Paul Gadd that he was not aware of the source of the 2016 spatial strategy figures, Councillor Rolfe said evidence bases for the 2016 spatial strategy would be made available in due course. He had responded to Councillor Lodge's letters regarding scrutiny, and further discussion of whether any issues should be included as agenda for the next meeting was a matter for Councillor Lodge to bring to the Leaders' Forum if he wished.

The Planning Policy Team Leader presented the topic paper on the identification of Reasonable Alternatives for the Local Plan. He said the paper looked at where development could take place and how housing could be provided, without pre-determination. A sustainability appraisal would then assess what the best spatial strategy would be and would appraise potential sites. The Reasonable Alternatives paper suggested that two or three new settlements would supply the housing growth required, but that this did not amount to a recommendation for any spatial strategy. The sustainability appraisal would be presented to the working group in due course.

Councillor Lodge said whilst he was encouraged with the approach Troy Consultants had taken regarding alternative sustainable strategies, he was disappointed with progress and was concerned that work would not be done within the timeframe required.

The Assistant Director Planning said all background information on the sustainability appraisal would be put to the next meeting of the Group.

Councillor Barker said regarding allocations to towns and villages that officers had included those considered sound by the Inspector.

Councillor Mills reminded members that as a council they had collectively voted for a hybrid. He was encouraged that a variety of options were on the table and they would all be considered.

Councillor Dean said he too was conscious of the impending timetable, but to his knowledge there had been no pre-determination in private meetings, but that there was still more work to be done.

Paul Gadd asked if he could access information about the sustainability appraisal because he had not seen any mention of it.

Councillor Rolfe said officers would take up that point.

Councillor Lodge asked the chairman to clarify that the sustainability appraisal would be on the agenda for the next Planning Policy Working Group meeting. Councillor Rolfe said that it would.

PP57 **PROJECT PLAN: KEY MILESTONES**

The Planning Policy Team Leader presented the Key Milestones. He said that the only addition to the plan was a development management policy briefing for members on 9th May.

PP58 **FORWARD PLAN**

Councillor Barker said that because there would be a large agenda for the Planning Policy Working Group meeting on 17th May, it would be good to start at 6pm. Members agreed to change the start time to 6pm.

Members asked about progress on the Transport and Air Quality reports.

Councillor Rolfe said that the Transport report would be ready for the end of April and that officers would look into progress on the Air Quality Report. Members were content with the agendas for the next 2 working group meetings.

PP59 **EVIDENCE BASE UPDATE**

The Planning Policy Team Leader gave a brief update on the report. The latest update was that the sustainability appraisal would be available in June.

PP60 **ACTION PLAN FROM PLANNING ADVISORY SERVICE REPORT – VERBAL UPDATE**

The Assistant Director Planning gave a brief verbal update on the Planning Advisory Service. He said the plan had been merged into the Forward Plan and the Project Plan, but there was nothing specific which needed to be discussed.

PP61

DUTY TO COOPERATE

Councillor Rolfe introduced the report.

The Planning Policy Team Leader apologised for the late distribution of appendices to the report. The approval of the Memorandum of Understanding by the authority was a welcome key milestone.

He said that the only information he would add to the report was that there had been a further meeting with ACOM in relation to Braintree District Council, to look at broadening the scope of the existing study relating to the West of Braintree site, and positive progress was made on ensuring the evidence base was fully in place.

Councillor Barker said that she would add that she would be meeting with Braintree in the upcoming weeks for a duty to cooperate meeting

Councillor Lodge asked about co-operation with South Cambs on the North Uttlesford garden village.

Councillor Barker said she was due to have another meeting about it soon.

Councillor Lodge asked about progress of plans for extension of the A120.

The Chairman said that there were 5 different routes being discussed as part of the consultation for a dual carriageway between Galley's Corner and the A12, the outcome of the consultation would have to be considered and then planning permission would have to be given. Other possible works would be part of the Transport Assessment.

PP62

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chairman said the date of the next meeting would be on 17th May at 6pm.

The Chairman thanked members of the public for attending and for listening in.

The meeting ended at 20:50.

Action points

PP52	To correct reference of 'Great Easton' to 'Easton Park'
PP53	To include in the agenda for the next

	meeting the report on Gypsy and Traveller accommodation
PP54	To investigate whether rural exception sites were included in the figures of other authorities.
PP56	To make evidence bases for the 2016 spatial strategy publically available in due course
PP56	To include in the agenda for the next meeting the sustainability appraisal, including background information regarding it
PP58	To change the time of the next meeting to 6pm
PP58	To include in the agenda for the next meeting the Transport Report, and to look into introducing the Air Quality Report at the meeting