

**PLANNING POLICY WORKING GROUP held at COUNCIL OFFICES
LONDON ROAD SAFFRON WALDEN on 17 MAY 2017 at 6.00pm**

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

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

Public speakers: Councillor Audritt, Councillor Barron, J Evans, P Gadd, N
Gregory and D Hall

PP63 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.

PP64 MINUTES

In response to a question from Councillor Lodge regarding PP56, the Chairman said the Sustainability Appraisal had always been intended to be on the agenda for the June meeting, although the minutes mistakenly said it would be seen at the next meeting. The only item missing from the agenda was the delayed Saffron Walden Highways report.

In response to a question by Councillor Lodge, the Planning Policy Team Leader said written answers had been prepared on questions regarding water pressure and he would be happy to provide these to members via email.

With these amendments taken into consideration, the minutes of 6 April 2017 were approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

PP65 ACTION POINTS

Action point PP53 said the Gypsy and Traveller Report would be included in the agenda for this meeting. The Planning Policy Officer said the report was not complete, and because it was not being written by Uttlesford District Council, officers were unable to ensure it was finished for this meeting. This report would be available for the meeting on 22 June.

Action point PP54 said officers would investigate whether rural exception sites were included in the figures of other authorities. The Planning Policy Team Leader said this varied in different authorities, but he was concerned inclusion of the figures would artificially inflate windfall allowance figures. He would prefer not to include the figures in case it opened them up to be challenged.

Action point PP56 said the evidence bases for the 2016 spatial strategy would be made publically available. The Planning Policy Team Leader said all the complete evidence bases were now accessible on the Council's website.

Action point PP58 said officers would look into introducing the Air Quality Report into the current meeting. The Planning Policy Team Leader said aspects of air quality would instead be referenced in the Transport Study in this meeting.

PP66

TRANSPORT STUDY

Item 4 was heard first.

David Hall spoke on this item.

The Principle Planning Officer introduced the report. He said the intention was to report the final study to the Planning Policy Working Group on 22 June. The study was being done in stages to examine the likely transport impacts of different spatial distribution options and would present a comparison of the transport implications.

The M11 Junction 8 Assessment had identified an interim improvement. Additionally, ongoing work was being pursued by Essex County Council, Hertfordshire County Council and Highway England to identify further major improvements.

The South Cambridgeshire Junctions Assessment came about because Uttlesford District Council was asked by Cambridgeshire County Council to investigate the impact of potential local plan growth on certain junctions in South Cambridgeshire. Uttlesford District Council had carried out this assessment and were waiting on a response from Cambridgeshire County Council. This response would be discussed at the meeting on 22 June.

In response to the comments by David Hall, the Principle Planning Officer said that all the roads mentioned as concerns regarding transport capacity had been assessed, but it had been concluded that they would not have exceeded their capacity empirically. No concerns had been raised by Highways England, Essex County Council and Cambridgeshire County Council about Junction 9. There would need to be mitigation at Junction 10 and the BP Roundabout at Sawston.

The Principle Planning Officer said the Planning Department had asked Cambridgeshire County Council to examine a bid it had made for a major A505 corridor study, which would look in some detail at a range of local and strategic measures.

The Chairman said issues of accessibility and pressure of local roads were paramount, and the site would not be put forward unless all bodies were satisfied that accessibility would not be an issue for the nspector.

In response to a question from Councillor Mills, the Chairman said it would be helpful to have the major points of the Transport Study available before the publication of the document.

Members said it would be necessary for members to see the whole document, and that a full day workshop might be required to discuss it.

PP67

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Councillor Audritt and Councillor Barron spoke on this item. Copies of their statements are appended to these minutes.

The Chairman said responses to Councillor Barron's questions would be included in the minutes.

Troy Hayes introduced the report. He said its purpose was to demonstrate that the Local Plan was deliverable through to 2033, though the current paper was only a summary of the entire report.

Key issues to be investigated included that of Junction 8 on the M11, waste water infrastructure, education provision, the need for a new country park and lack of access to natural green space.

In response to questions from members, Tory Hayes said as the proposal for the plan became clearer, then potential strategies for investigating localised issues could be addressed. The current document only gave a snapshot in time of potential issues. It did not give any conclusions for resolving infrastructure problems and further levels of work would need to be undertaken.

The Chairman said it was inconceivable that new settlements would be developed if they were not sustainable.

The Chairman encouraged communities to maintain a dialogue with Uttlesford District Council and the planners. He said the Council wanted to support communities to make settlements sustainable, environmentally friendly and to integrate them well.

PP68

HIGH LEVEL LOCAL WILDLIFE, HIGH LEVEL LOCAL LANDSCAPE AND HERITAGE IMPACT ASSESSMENT TOPIC PAPERS

Councillor Barker said the Impact table on pages 30-31 did not list Great Dunmow and Little Easton as one of the wards assessed on impact. It was agreed to amend this.

Neil Gregory and John Evans spoke on the High Level Local Landscape topic paper.

Paul Gadd spoke on the Heritage Impact Assessment topic paper. A copy of his statement is appended to these minutes.

The Planning Policy Team Leader introduced the reports.

In response to comments made by John Evans, the Chairman said the Council recognised its responsibilities for areas within Uttlesford in the Local Plan process.

In response to the comments made by Neil Gregory, the Planning Policy Team Leader said the topic papers took on board the Neighbourhood Plan Historic Environment Assessment and Landscape Character Assessment as part of the evidence base, but those documents were commissioned to inform the creation of the Neighbourhood Plan, while the topic papers were used to assess the potential impact of new settlements on landscape and heritage assets.

In response to comments by John Evans, the Planning Policy Team Leader said that the AECOM work he was referring to had been commissioned by Braintree District Council. However Uttlesford District Council had now commissioned work with Braintree District Council in order to consider the West Braintree Garden Settlement.

In response to comments by Paul Gadd, the Planning Policy Team Leader said more detailed assessments on the subjects included in the topic paper could begin once the Regulation 18 consultation had started and the Council had in principle decided which new settlements it would prefer to see in the plan.

The Planning Policy Team Leader said while the three topic papers on the agenda had been composed by officers at the Council, the Council had also commissioned an Independent Landscape Assessment, to examine the conclusions of the officers.

In response to comments by Paul Gadd, the Planning Policy Team Leader said any development in Saffron Walden which might impact upon its historic character would be examined when the Regulation 19 consultation had started.

The Planning Policy Team Leader said the Local Plan was not to be submitted for approval in its current form, and the working group was an opportunity to look at the issues in greater depth before a final version was decided upon.

In response to comments made by Paul Gadd, the Planning Policy Team Leader said officers would be engaging with Historic England for the Historic Environment Study for Saffron Walden, in order to seek advice for development in the area.

The Chairman said he wanted to re-emphasise that the current consultation was a Regulation 18 consultation rather than a Regulation 19 consultation. The conclusions of the Regulation 18 Local Plan were only recommendations. The response to the recommendations and further material evidence would determine what went into the Regulation 19 proposal.

In response to a question from Councillor Lodge, the Chairman said a number of points in the Heritage Impact Assessment would require more detailed examination if they were to become part of the Regulation 19 proposal. The aim was to recommend the construction of settlements but not to commit to building those settlements.

Councillor Dean pointed to inconsistencies in the reports. He gave an example on page 60 of the agenda pack, which said that it was necessary to create 'cohesive garden villages of quality' in North Uttlesford. Councillor Dean said that principles such as this should apply everywhere in Uttlesford, and officers should examine how they presented information.

Councillor Barker said some of the documentation was problematic because members and the public did not have the same information available for all of the sites. It would be helpful if basic information about all sites was presented in an accessible manner, to ensure that members' decisions could be reinforced with sound reasoning and evidence. The Planning Policy Team Leader said that the Sustainability Appraisal would address this issue.

In response to concerns raised regarding the threat to visual characteristics of the Great Chesterford area, the Planning Policy Team Leader said the department had asked those working on the settlement proposal at Great Chesterford to re-address the landscape issues with the site.

PP69

EMPLOYMENT TOPIC PAPER UPDATE

The Planning Policy Officer introduced the report. He said a list of concerns the Council had with the January Employment Topic Paper had been sent out to AECOM. AECOM had now replied to address those issues and the Planning Department was in the process of reviewing the document.

The Planning Policy Officer also said that Hardisty Jones Associates had been asked by the FEMA authorities to undertake an update of employment land needs, including a critical review of EEFM due to variances between the 2014 and 2016 projections. The figures to be included in that report still needed additional discussion before they were finalised.

The Chairman said he was encouraged that the amount of employment land appeared to have significantly increased and that it had appropriate access.

In response to a question by Councillor Dean, the Planning Policy Officer said that Hardisty Jones' work only anticipated a small rise in the number of jobs compared to work based on the 2014 figures. The significantly increased figures only related to estimates in the amount of space required for employment.

In response to Councillor Mills' question as to whether members could have an update on the targeted amount of new build houses and the amount the authority had already authorised and built, the Planning Policy Team Leader said that a presentation to members was being prepared and would set out such information to members.

In response to a question from Councillor Barker, the Planning Policy Team Leader said that the East of England Forecasting Model had not been used for forecasting housing growth, but had been used for forecasting employment growth. This was because the Department for Communities and Local Government advised that the Council use the Office of National Statistics population suggestions in the figures for estimating housing growth.

The Planning Policy Officer said Hardisty Jones' methodology had already been tested nationally and the final report would show exactly how the figures had been taken into consideration.

PP70

DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Planning Policy Team Leader introduced the report. He said the statement was last reviewed at the beginning of 2016, and the department was now carrying out a further review, taking into account changes to legislation and the need for more efficient and focused engagement with stakeholders. The Department intended to go out for consultation for 6 weeks, and was seeking feedback from PPWG members.

In response to Councillor Davis' question as to what constituted success in terms of engagement, the Planning Policy Team Leader said no specific targets had been set, but with around 3000 responses to previous consultations, he believed the department was managing to engage with the community. Councillor Davis suggested the responsibility to engage with ward residents about the consultation process was something that should be communicated to all members.

The Chairman said he would like to build in a way to consult with the local community about what residents and parish councils would see as red lines which would make proposed development unacceptable and if development was to go ahead, what the community would want to get out of it. He said final decisions on planning applications would lie with the Planning Committee.

PP71

DUTY TO COOPERATE

The Planning Policy Team Leader introduced the report. He said over the last few weeks the department had been communicating with Braintree District Council about its Local Plan and the potential West of Braintree Garden Community.

In response to a question from Councillor Dean, the Planning Policy Team Leader said Braintree District Council had examined how the potential site would work if Uttlesford District Council decided not to go ahead with its involvement in the project.

In response to questions from members, the Planning Policy Team Leader said there had been minutes taken of meetings with representatives of Braintree District Council and with Essex County Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and South Cambridgeshire Council together with the Council's highways consultants but they might need to be signed off by other authorities. The Chairman said the minutes of those meeting would be circulated with the minutes of this meeting.

PP72

EVIDENCE BASE

Paul Gadd spoke on this item. A copy of his statement is appended to these minutes.

In response to comments by Paul Gadd, the Chairman said the highways study for Saffron Walden had been delayed, but that it would be made available, and that the Sustainability Appraisal had always been intended to be on the agenda for the meeting on 22 June.

In response to comments by Paul Gadd, the Planning Policy Team Leader said the Sustainability Appraisal had been carried out at various stages during the creation of the Local Plan, so there was no danger that it was going to be a retrofit at the end of the process. Additionally, various commissions and briefs contained commercially sensitive information, and so the authors of those documents were reluctant to make them publically available.

Councillor Lodge expressed surprise that the terms of reference had not been made available despite having been told that they would be.

The Chairman said the Council would look into whether the terms of reference could be provided and respond publically.

PP73 FORWARD PLAN

The Chairman said the Transport Report would be made available as soon as possible. It would be considered whether a special meeting would be necessary to consider the report.

PP74 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chairman said the date of the next meeting would be 22nd June.

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

The meeting ended at 20:25.

Action points from the meeting on 17 May 2017

PP66	Discuss Cambridgeshire County Council's response to the South Cambridgeshire Junctions Assessment at the meeting on 22 June. To provide, if possible, the Transport Report to members in advance of the agenda publication for the PPWG meeting on 22 June. To consider whether it is necessary
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	to hold a meeting specifically to consider the Transport Report.
PP67	To add Great Dunmow and Little Easton to the Impact table on pages 30-31.
PP67	Publish responses to questions raised by Councillor Barron in the minutes.
PP69	Prepare a presentation for members to set out figures for the number of new build houses that had been authorised, and the remaining number to be constructed by 2033.
PP70	To engage with local communities on 'if scenarios' in terms of development.
PP71	Circulate the minutes of the meetings of UDC officers with representatives of Braintree District Council and of Essex County Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and South Cambridgeshire Council
PP72	Investigate sending out the terms of reference and respond publically on that point.