Independent Review of Uttlesford Local Plan

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Aims

- That PAS starts by looking at the Inspectors Examination Conclusions in his letter to the Council dated 19th December 2014 and that the PAS will:
  - I. summarise the issues the Inspector raised, to ensure there is a common understanding;
  - **II. provide a high level review of the work carried out on the plan to date, including technical work, engagement with stakeholders and governance arrangements;**
  - III. highlight, by way of examples from elsewhere in the country, where the issues raised have commonality with current practices;
  - IV. consider how the council can move forward, making recommendations as appropriate

Running order

- Timeline
- Inspectors' letter
- Sustainability Appraisal (SA)
- Site selection process
- Engagement and the Duty to Cooperate (DtC)
- Summary and recommendations

Timeline

- Structures in place – Membership/attendance
- Evidence led? – Narrative appears inconsistent
- Dealing with national policy changes
- Dealing with local opposition
- Timescales for delivering Plan

Inspectors' Letter – Main Matters

- OAN – Market signals, employment assumptions London (a future consideration)
- Elsenham – Scale, connectivity, deliverability, transport evidence

Inspectors' Letter – Other Matters

- Duty to cooperate – Met (narrowly)
- Sustainability Appraisal – Audit trail, transparency
- 5 year land supply – Robust
- Saffron Walden – Sound allocation, details unclear
- Great Dunmow – Generally sound, affordable housing
- Employment – ELR a "good example of its kind", sound policies
- Settlement classification – "generally soundly set out"

Inspectors' Letter – Conclusions

- Key pieces of work to carry out:
  - SHMA (to be compliant with NPPF and Practice Guidance)
  - Evidence of cooperation on strategic issues
  - Sustainability appraisal
- Remove allocations with permission

Inspector

- Tests of soundness
- Options:
  - Recommend withdrawal/found unsound
  - Suspend examination
  - Early review

Inspectors' reports

Contain useful learning:

- East Staffs – Employment and housing, 'return to trend'
- Uttlesford – Market signals, infrastructure impacts, inc cumulative
- Chiltern – Not enough evidence on need and delivery
- Cheshire East – Serious mismatch between economy and housing strategies, failed to establish baseline figure, market signals
- Eastleigh – Market signals, affordable housing
- Solihull – RSS figure/evidence, OAN must be policy-off
- Horsham – 'Old style' SHMA used, economic, importing housing
- Lichfield – Housing numbers should be 'minimum', plan period, review
- Mendip – Housing numbers should be 'minimum'
- Durham – Housing target too high, economic strategy questioned

Sustainability Appraisal Review

Uttlesford Sustainability Appraisal:

- Did not clearly tell the story of how sites were identified
- Did not effectively provide narrative around Elsenham as a site
- there were an excessive number of options for policies.

Site Selection

The process of Site Identification:

- Objectively Assessed Need (OAN)
- An Assessment of suitability, viability and availability

The Inspector raised a number of concerns:

- The call for sites must be the effective mechanism
- Elsenham as a site option

Engagement

The review of the ULP documentation included:

- Consultation on Local Plan Documents with key stakeholders and the community
- The Duty to Cooperate (DtC)

Key issues :

- The limited documented evidence of an engagement strategy and plan
- Ongoing engagement with key Agencies

Summary and recommendations

All is not lost!

Focus on the key areas identified by the Inspector:

- Approach to ULP coordination
- Site Selection Assessment process
- Sustainability Appraisal
- Engagement strategy
- Evidence base documents
- Options determination

Summary and recommendations

- Evidence
- Ownership
- Resilience
- Timeliness

Next steps

- Continue working on the local plan.....
- Consider mechanisms for critical friend support?
- PAS online resources?
- Review of strategic planning arrangements?
- External partnering arrangements?