

LOCAL PLAN LEADERSHIP GROUP held at ZOOM - [HTTPS://ZOOM.US/](https://zoom.us/), on MONDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2020 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor R Pavitt (Acting Chair)
Councillors G Bagnall, M Caton, P Lees, M Lemon, S Merifield, N Reeve, M Sutton and M Tayler

Guest (non-voting): Councillor J Evans

Officers: G Glenday (Assistant Director – Planning), S Nicholas (New Communities Senior Planner), J Reynolds (Locum Lawyer), L Bowser (Principal Planning Officer, New Settlements)

Others present: Councillor C Day (observing)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Light and Freeman.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

3 PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The Chair explained that the deadline for the consultation response to the White Paper was Thursday 29th October at midnight. The meeting should therefore only consider anything still to be addressed and the implications of the response.

A discussion was held and the following points were highlighted:-

Members were impressed with the report and the responses.

Lois Bowser, Principal Planning Officer, New Settlements attended the meeting and had compiled the document with the Planning Policy team.

Councillor Lees noted that some questions had no response. The Assistant Director, Planning and Principal Planning Officer, New Settlements explained that this related to generic questions not aimed at Local Authorities. These could be added if members wanted to, however it was decided this was not necessary but needed to be clarified.

Councillor Caton was pleased that the report was now more focused on residents who have modest incomes. He raised two points:-

- The inconsistency with previous discussions, as the report now seemed to imply that infrastructure would be set on a national basis as opposed to a local basis.
- Asked for a reference to social housing in addition to the term 'affordable' housing, in question 4, point 3 to be added.

Councillor Evans said he would take the points made to a meeting being held the following day so that issues could be addressed and dealt with before the deadline.

In reply to a question from Councillor Bagnall, he said it was not known which Town and Parish Councils had responded to the consultation. A copy of the Uttlesford District Council draft response had been circulated.

Councillor Tayler asked for the definition of sustainability to be reconsidered (question 16) to include the additional factors of the retention of landscape and views; the retention of farmland and the setting of heritage costs. Councillor Evans agreed to review the definition.

Additionally Councillor Reeve asked for both aspects of sustainability in planning terms to be reviewed so that both employment and social factors were included.

In response to Councillor Reeves' concern, which related to the timescale of a national design guide, Councillor Evans said there was an Essex design guide in place, which could be built on. The Assistant Director, Planning said this related to question 17 and the response had stated that the national design guide code should be an advisory element only.

Councillor Merifield was pleased that the issue of Land Banking was raised in the report which she felt was a very important issue, as well as the need for the threshold on affordable housing being kept at 40%.

The Chair asked for a timescale for the report to be implemented. The Assistant Director, Planning said it was unlikely that all items would be completed. Some items could be carried out within six months but it was difficult to tell with other competing priorities for the Government.

Councillor Bagnall asked for clarification regarding the nearly automatic path to permission for developers under the zoning system. The proposals needed to be clearer to demonstrate that the Council were not supportive of zoning. Councillor Evans undertook to look at the wording but said zoning had some good points and bad points, and each potential development should be considered on its own merits.

Councillor Caton raised a concern regarding question 6, and the Countryside Protection Zone around the airport if the Council was not allowed to have local protection zones. He said there must be some flexibility of local planning policy to develop and control. He said the report did not contest strongly enough the government view that the planning system changes are good.

The Assistant Director, Planning suggested the addition of Stansted Airport Countryside Protection Zone as an example to show the unique issue and agreed to look at the wording again to make sure it was robust.

Councillor Merifield said the opening statement emphasised that the new system must not favour the more affluent at the expense of those with average or modest incomes.

Councillor Merifield suggested that Uttlesford is an area of outstanding heritage and thought this was not stressed in the report. Councillor Evans agreed, he said there were no questions in the paper about heritage or landscape but thought more weight would be given to them in the new government MPPF which would include further protections.

Councillor Reeve agreed, and said there were a high number of grade II listed buildings within the district.

Councillor Evans said debates were also carried out at a County level, and the majority of districts had subscribed to a shared draft letter written by the Chairman of the Essex Portfolio Holders. The letter will be addressed to Mr Jenrick MP and was in line with the report UDC were submitting independently. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government Parliamentary Committee, had recently carried out a consultation and asked for responses, however it was not widely publicised. Councillor Evans said this would be circulated to members for information and response if they chose.

The Chair thanked all attendees and closed the meeting at 20:02.