

**LOCAL PLAN LEADERSHIP GROUP held at ZOOM - [HTTPS://ZOOM.US/](https://zoom.us/), on THURSDAY, 29 APRIL 2021 at 7.00 pm**

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

Guest (non-voting): Councillor J Evans

Officers in attendance: G Glenday (Assistant Director - Planning), J Hill (Planning Policy Officer), S Miles (Local Plans and New Communities Manager), L Mills (New Communities Senior Planning Officer) and C Shanley-Grozavu (Democratic Services Officer)

**1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no apologies for absence or declarations of interest.

**2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Councillor Evans and Councillor Reeve both requested that the attendance record be amended to reflect that they were present at the previous meeting.

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved, subject to the amendment of the attendance record.

**3 LPLG PREFERRED OPTIONS METHODOLOGY AND WORK PROGRAMME**

The Local Plans and New Communities Manager and the New Communities Senior Planning Officer presented a report which set out the proposed methodology for preparing the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan over the next nine months. The report also sought agreement to a provisional work plan of meetings until December 2021.

During discussion, officers outlined the process for developing the Strategic Objectives for the new Local Plan. It was confirmed that the objectives would be derived from a range of documentation including the National Planning Policy Framework, the Uttlesford District Council Corporate Plan and the Inspectors' findings on the withdrawn local plan and would be developed alongside members at an upcoming workshop. Following the workshop, the principles would be taken to the next meeting of the group for recommendation to Cabinet.

In response to members questions, the following was also clarified:

- Officers were engaging with various health providers, including the West Essex CCG.

- The frequency of Local Plan Leadership Group meetings would be amended to monthly, with some additional reserved dates.
- When drafting a Memoranda of Understanding, the Planning department will come to discussions with promoters of sites with an open mind but will be robust in negotiating to achieve the policy objectives of the Council.

#### 4 **FEEDBACK ON CONSULTATION ON THEME 5: LEISURE, CULTURE AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLES**

The Planning Policy Officer presented a report on the comments received on the fifth consultation theme of “Leisure, Culture and Healthy Lifestyles” which was discussed by the Community Stakeholder Forum on 27 January 2021. Following the Forum, the theme was open for public consultation and in the first four weeks, 25 responses had been received.

Members discussed the findings of the ongoing consultation and the following was noted:

- The report presents the responses received for the first 4 weeks of the consultation, however officers will continue to receive responses from all themes until 21st April. It was confirmed that a full summary would be brought to the Local Plan Leadership Group.
- The UDC Open Space Assessment Report provided a comprehensive evidence base and officers are seeking to expand this for the Local Plan.
- There was some limited work by the Business Development team to explore the arts and culture facilities in the area, but there was a need for a wider review of organisations across the district.
- Members raised concerns that the responses were biased towards older age groups, who were more likely to respond to the consultation. Officers confirmed that they conducted a targeted survey for young people in order to gain a more diverse reflection of response.
- There was a need to consider whether partnerships to promote leisure, culture and healthy lifestyles would be district-wide or if a concentrated approach was needed.

#### 5 **FEEDBACK ON CONSULTATION ON THEME 6: BIODIVERSITY**

The Local Plans and New Communities Manager presented a report on the comments received on the sixth consultation theme.

The sixth theme was on the topic of “Biodiversity” and was discussed by the Community Stakeholder Forum on 10th February 2021. Following the Forum, the theme was open for public consultation and in the first four weeks, 20 responses had been received.

Members discussed the findings of the ongoing consultation and the following was noted:

- Members felt that there was a need to create a vision of how the district fits around nature, rather than managing nature like an economic entity.

- There is an existing tension between biodiversity and agriculture, and the new Local Plan needed to find a balance between necessary commercial farming, biodiversity and food production. Members highlighted the need for ongoing engagement with external authorities, such as the National Farmers Union, to achieve this.
- Members requested that Officers consider how connectivity and wildlife corridors can be ensured when allocating land.
- Officers confirmed that they had been engaging with external stakeholders, such as the NFU, for their views on the new Environmental Land Management schemes so they can reflect this within the new Local Plan.

## 6

### **DECARBONISATION AND WATER RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

The Local Plans and New Communities Manager presented the report which sets out the issues relating to and the proposed scope of work to address how the Local Plan can address climate change mitigation, resilience, adaptation and achieving net zero carbon and water resource management in preparing the Regulation 18 Draft Local Plan. It was confirmed that it was the water companies' responsibility to provide a water supply, however it was the local authorities responsibility to ensure that the Local Plan is supported by appropriate evidence to demonstrate that the plan is deliverable.

Members discussed the challenges of providing a sustainable water supply for the future, given the long-term forecast of less rain in the region and an existing dependency on aquifers. In addition, they considered current thinking around supplying water in future and ideas included scaling down extraction to create a reservoir downstream, piping water from elsewhere and pumping water through sand dunes.

Members highlighted the need to raise concerns about water infrastructure early with providers, in order to ensure that the supply is provided for a deliverable local plan.

Officers noted the concerns and suggested that we await the output of the work before drawing any conclusions.

*Councillor Lees left the meeting at 20:13*

*The meeting ended at 20:20*