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LOCAL PLAN LEADERSHIP GROUP held at ZOOM - [HTTPS://ZOOM.US/](https://zoom.us/), on MONDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2021 at 7.00 pm

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

Guest (non-voting): Councillor J Evans

Officers in attendance: G Glenday (Assistant Director - Planning), S Miles (Local Plans and New Communities Manager) E Moon (Principal Urban Designer) and C Shanley-Grozavu (Democratic Services Officer)

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

Apologies for absence were received by Councillor Pavitt.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting on 8th February 2021 be agreed as an accurate record.

3 **THE NON-STRATEGIC POLICIES IN THE WITHDRAWN LOCAL PLAN**

The Local Plan and New Communities Manager presented a report the non-strategic policies in the withdrawn Local Plan. They explained that the withdrawn Local Plan had a number of non-strategic policies where there may be scope for reusing elements of these policies and the chair of LPLG had requested that the group consider these.

Members were reminded to keep an open mind as the first consultation on the Local Plan was ongoing and no decisions would be made on policies until the deadline for representations had passed.

The group discussed the non-strategic policies in the withdrawn local plan and fed back on the content and policy gaps. The following was noted:

- Officers confirmed that all policies would be reviewed in line with a refreshed evidence base and they agreed to bring a schedule to an upcoming meeting which would demonstrate how they anticipate they will refresh the evidence base since the last local plan two years ago.
- Members indicated that they would welcome updated housing policies, including encouraging the construction and protection of more bungalows, the removal of permitted development rights if it is in the community's interest and regulating HMOs.
- Members debated the need to incorporate Essex County Council standards, such as on garden and parking sizes, into the plan as they felt that some guidance did not work effectively in practice. Officers highlighted that some standards are nationally prescribed so must be

considered, and that the government were currently consulting on new design codes. It was agreed that the group would review current guidance to agree whether it is appropriate for inclusion in the new local plan.

- Members suggested asking for input from third tiers at the early stages of non-strategic policy development.
- Officers clarified that local housing need is calculated using a standard methodology by Planning Policy Guidance and National Planning Policy Framework. Whilst they act as a guide, officers would have to provide exceptional reasons, should they use an alternative methodology which provides a lower requirement.

During discussion, the group highlighted the importance of collaborative working between members and officers in order to create achievable policies. It was agreed that members would contact the Local Plan and New Communities Manager with their preferred policy areas in order to work with officers on developing policy once the consultation had closed. It was noted that the draft policies in the new local plan would go out for consultation in Spring 2022.

The Chair also requested that members who did not have a paper copy of the previously withdrawn local plan should contact the Local Plan and New Communities Manager who would arrange for one to be distributed to them.

Councillor Sutton arrived at 19:06

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FEEDBACK ON CONSULTATION ON THEME 2: CHARACTER AND HERITAGE

The Principal Urban Designer presented a report on the comments received on the second consultation theme.

The second theme was on the topic of “Character and Heritage” and was discussed by the Community Stakeholder Forum on 25 November. Following the Forum, the theme was open for public consultation and in the first four weeks, 27 responses had been received.

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

- There was a preference for putting housing near stations to reduce the use of the car. Members recognised the challenges that some residents have in accessing public transport but noted changing infrastructure needs, with the possibility of broadband becoming more important than public transport in the future.
- Members acknowledged the need for extending the public footpath network to better connectivity between villages. Whilst policies may be put on place to promote this, it was important for the Council to ensure these are put into practice, especially when assessing planning applications.
- Policies needed to reflect that different travel patterns and scenario are developing due to changing work patterns and technologies. An example of this was the decline in residents commuting to London and the rise of individuals working from home.

- Higher compact density housing was not necessarily a bad thing, and if done correctly, creates thriving communities.
- There was a need to develop age appropriate housing, based on the needs of the populations rather than the wants of the developer.
- Consultation responses indicated that there was support for minimum environmental standards with an expectation that these would be exceeded. Officers clarified that it would be difficult to implement standards which exceed the government's building regulations, but they can create an aspiration which they then encourage developers to achieve.

The meeting ended at 20:22