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LOCAL PLAN LEADERSHIP GROUP held at ZOOM - [HTTPS://ZOOM.US/](https://zoom.us/), on THURSDAY, 24 JUNE 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 (Vice-Chair), N Reeve and M Sutton

Guest (non-voting): Councillor J Evans

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

Also Present: C Beattie (AECOM) and A Peattie (AECOM)

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

Apologies for absence were received by Councillor Tayler.

There were no declarations of interest.

2 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

Councillor Caton queried the wording within Item 3 (Local Plan Strategic Objectives) around not encouraging volunteer shops as they did not create additional employment opportunities. Following discussion of the minute, the Chair requested that the wording be revised, to reflect that the Local Plan could not influence premises usage.

Councillor Light also said that she had mentioned the example of Debden village shop in the meeting, however Councillor Merifield said that this may not be a village shop anymore.

The minutes were approved, subject to the amended wording to reflect the content of the discussion in Item 3.

3 **LOCAL PLAN HOUSING NUMBERS**

The Local Plans and New Communities Manager presented a report on the draft housing requirement for the new Local Plan.

In response to questions from members, officers clarified the following:

- Wages of employees in the district impact the affordability uplift; this is a policy decision of government. Whilst officers did not know the specific impact of Stansted Airport, they said that if they generally offer lower wages, then this would affect the affordability uplift.

- The housing supply includes a buffer which will all be allocated onto deliverable sites. If they all come forward, the Council will over deliver on their requirement.
- Officers monitor Planning Permission annually and these statistics will be included within the five-year land supply statement.
- Where a local authority fails their housing delivery test, they are asked to create an action plan to address it. Currently, the Council contacts agents when they have not used their planning permission.
- The high number of self-employed residents in Uttlesford is considered a statistical anomaly and could be capable of demonstrating exceptional circumstances. However, it is difficult to collect reliable data of self-employed earnings to include in the calculations and so there is not sufficient evidence to justify exceptional circumstances.
- The 2014-based household forecasts that have been used to determine the minimum annual housing need figure of 706 dwellings per annum, as per the government guidance, however the affordability ratio is updated annually.
- There are permitted development rights to convert sites, such as office blocks, into residential spaces, although Uttlesford lack many of these site in the district.
- Further work will be conducted around employment in the district which will involve the Economic Development team and the employment consultants.
- It is not currently known how Covid-19 will be impacting the number of people moving into the area, from urban areas such as London.
- Care home places are included within the housing numbers.
- The housing number can also be influenced by supply side reasons, e.g. if the evidence suggests that supplies such as water cannot meet the demand. This evidence is underway.
- If the group did not recommend the numbers to Cabinet, then officers would have to return with another suggestion and planning justification. It was important for officers to have a target at this point in the process which they can then refer to when assessing to Calls for Sites submissions.

AGREED: To recommend to Cabinet the draft housing requirement for the new Local Plan and planning for 706 dwellings per annum.

It was noted that Councillor Light voted against the recommendation as the numbers were based on old statistics and are worse than last time.

4

EVIDENCE BASE UPDATE

The Local Plans and New Communities Manager presented an update on the current progress on eighteen separate studies that will inform the preparation of the new Local Plan.

In response to a question from Councillor Reeve, the Local Plans and New Communities Manager clarified that officers were developing the new Local Plan, using the existing national planning framework, but were conscious of the government's upcoming planning bill. An example of this was in undertaking their

work around heritage evidence whereby they were looking at the sustainable settlements in the district, alongside the Call for Sites submissions, whilst also considering potential new government thinking around protect, growth and renewal.

The Group noted the report.

5 **SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL UPDATE**

The New Communities Senior Planning Officer and representatives from AECOM presented an update on progress on the Sustainability Appraisal process.

It was confirmed that the Sustainability Appraisal would inform a range of documents including the Environmental Statement and Development Consent Orders. Emerging findings would be brought to future meetings of the Local Plan Leadership group for discussion, before they go out for consultation.

Members highlighted inconsistency in the names of some areas within the draft Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report, as well as further points for clarification including the M11 constraints and the green space in Hatfield Heath. The Chair requested that members contact the New Communities Senior Planning Officer if they have any further points of clarity.

The Group noted the report.

6 **WINDFALL ALLOWANCE**

The New Communities Senior Planning Officer presented a report on the methodology and evidence for an allowance for windfall sites to contribute to the overall housing supply.

In response to questions, officers confirmed that there was evidence to justify including a windfall allowance of 114 dwellings per annum in the overall housing supply as well as the housing trajectory and 5-year supply. Officers explained that in calculating an annual average, it was worth noting that the average number of dwellings permitted and built on windfall sites can vary depending on several factors, including whether rural exception sites are included in the data and the age of a Local Plan where allocated sites are more likely to have been built on.

It was noted that Windfall sites are not allocated, but should the Council seek to encourage more, then they could look to adopt a policy framework which is more permissive to smaller sites.

AGREED: To approve the Windfall Allowance paper as evidence to support the preparation of the Local Plan

UPDATE ON DUTY TO COOPERATE MEETINGS

The New Communities Senior Planning Officer presented an update on the how the Council is working with its Duty to Cooperate Partners in preparing the Local Plan.

Officers clarified that, despite East Herts District Council not featuring in the report, the Council were still regularly engaging with them through a Cooperative Sustainability Development Group, along with Harlow and Epping Councils.

The Group noted the report.

The meeting ended at 20:47