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LOCAL PLAN LEADERSHIP GROUP held at ZOOM, on MONDAY, 29 NOVEMBER 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, M Sutton and
M Tayler

Guest (non-voting): Councillor J Evans

Officers in attendance: T Coleman (Interim Director of Planning and Building Control),
C Edwards (Democratic Services Officer), J Hill (Planning Policy Officer), S Miles (Local Plans and New Communities Manager) and L Mills (New Communities Senior Planning Officer)

Also present: M Kingham, J Chillingworth and K Davies

Public speakers: A Dodsley and R Haynes.

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

There were no apologies for absence or declarations of interest.

2 **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2021 were approved.

3 **PUBLIC SPEAKERS**

Andy Dodsley spoke about the Landscape Sensitivity report. He had some questions about Easton Park and whether a listed building and a heritage asset needed to be added to the assessment. He also had concerns about the former Dunmow Airfield and Highwood Quarry in terms of intervisibility and a missing reference to the Local Wildlife Site, register reference ufd 194.

He asked for clarification from Officers regarding the drawn potential settlement boundary on page 17 of Appendix C.

The Chair thanked the speaker and said that the questions raised would be addressed fully at a later date.

The Local Plans and New Communities Manager said that the boundary drawn in the assessment of the landscape phase 2 work did not match the proposed sites and was determined with the Consultant taking into account the landscape in conjunction with the sites put forward. He also clarified that large sites had

been grouped when they were in close proximity, and this was for ease of working and did not mean one or both would necessarily be chosen.

Richard Haynes spoke about the landscape study carried out by LUC and the Oxford Archaeology study on heritage. He was concerned that these were not effective as a tool to determine appropriate areas for development. The LUC had said that there would be no assessment of views which would be devastating for places like Thaxted. He said the Oxford Archaeology study did not consider the setting of heritage assets.

He said that neighbourhood plans needed to be considered in the technical assessments as well as the Local Plan from 2005.

The Local Plans and New Communities Manager said he would go back to the consultants and would consider the points made.

The New Communities Senior Planning Officer said that the neighbourhood plans would be considered in the broader site assessments.

4

UTTLESFORD EMPLOYMENT NEEDS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT EVIDENCE

The Planning Policy Officer said that the report looked at the economic growth and employment need of the district, and that it followed on from 3 working papers presented earlier in the year. She said it looked at the employment structure of the district, a commercial market review, a business survey, the growth of Stansted Airport, the employment land supply and floor space required.

Matt Kingham from Icen Projects presented the report.

Councillor Caton asked what the skills and income levels would be at the Northside development as he was concerned that although it would provide jobs, the majority of employees would not be able to afford to live in the district. He was concerned about the additional pressure on affordable housing stock.

Mr Kingham said that it was likely to be low skill and low wage jobs with some managerial positions. He said he could circulate income details on projects of a similar style.

Members were concerned about Live/Work spaces as mentioned in the report as these had been unsuccessful in the past.

Mr Kingham said he could provide details of some successful schemes in North London, but agreed to revisit that emphasis in the report.

Councillor Light asked about Chesterford Retail Park (CRP) and the statement made that it was a key economic driver, she thought there was no real evidence behind this. She asked how many local people were employed at CRP and how much it contributed to the local economy.

The Chair asked the Planning Policy Officer to circulate some statistics after the meeting.

Councillor Pavitt said that apart from CRP there was nowhere else in the district that would benefit from the life sciences and bio tech companies' sector. He was concerned that this was because of the Council's interest in the research park.

The Local Plans and New Communities Manager said that CRP had a great deal of capacity for further growth. He said that the companies worked closely together and would benefit from the conglomeration.

The Chair said that the rationale for why other areas were not being considered needed to be clear within the report.

Councillor Reeve said that there was a good argument for start-up hubs to be built throughout the district not only for the life science industry but also for others including the emerging green economy. He said a second CRP should be considered,

In reply to a question from Councillor Reeve, the Local Plan and New Communities Manager said that there would be further work on establishing the need for extra housing in terms of the growth of jobs in the district, but the paper on housing requirements that came to the group in the Spring/Summer did start to cover this.

Councillor Merifield raised the large number of mobile businesses within the report and said if this increased there would be a lot of cars on the road. She said that CRP needed to encourage apprenticeships within the district. She said it was the whole district that was a draw for the visitor economy.

Mr Kingham said there was likely to be more of an emphasis on people working from home within the district which was driven by the pandemic and would be likely to continue and increase. He said that it was a good idea for CRP to link with local schools and Essex universities and the Southeast Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP).

Councillor Sutton said that the majority of jobs that were forecast were likely to be focused on the bigger sites like Stansted Airport and CRP and that should be taken into consideration when deciding where to build new houses.

Councillor Tayler said that more people were building home offices in the garden, and this would continue to increase. He said that the high levels of growth in science and bio tech companies in Cambridge would have an effect on the Uttlesford area and this needed to be considered and the opportunities that this brought to the district recognised.

Councillor Evans said that there was potential for the Northside development to have some scientific workspaces built.

The Planning Policy Officer said that the issue with building science laboratories was the large difference in cost as they would need to be of a high specification and only suitable for certain locations.

The Group noted the report.

5 **STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT UPDATE**

The New Communities Senior Planning Officer said the report had been compiled by consultants JBA and highlighted all types of flood risk throughout the district. This provided evidence to make informed decisions as to where and how developments took place.

Jo Chillingworth from JBA Consultants presented the report. She set out the next steps which involved looking at the flood risk percentages compiled using data from the 'call for sites' boundaries. Once the sites had been shortlisted a decision would be made as to whether a more detailed Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) needed to be carried out.

Councillor Pavitt said the report highlighted the need for policies in order to better understand where the development sites should be situated. He said there was a case for excluding development near main waterways because of flood displacement, to protect the function of rivers to be nature's corridor and because of the Council's function as a custodian to protect and restore chalk streams. He said the report focused on enabling development but did not cover these points.

He said that page 280, 5.1 Historical Flooding was missing data he said that this needed to be captured from the Parishes and Members as it was important to have as accurate data as possible.

Ms Chillingworth agreed but said there was more detailed information on historical flooding events in Appendix F.

There was further discussion as the report data in appendix F only went up to 2016 and although further data was awaited from Essex County Council it was agreed that the Parish Councils would be able to provide more information on historical flooding. It was also acknowledged that this would rely on responses from the Parishes and consistency of data provided.

Councillor Pavitt also raised the Cam and Ely Ouse on page 300 which was a duplication of the data above.

He finally asked if the areas in flood zone 3B, functional flood plains had been assessed recently to consider climate change. Ms Chillingworth said that they had been mapped but it was the Council's decision whether to develop on these sites which were not too widespread within Uttlesford's district.

In response to a question from Councillor Merifield who asked if a policy could be developed in terms of flooding from street drains which were not cleared

properly. The Local Plans and New Communities Manager said that a policy could be developed but it would need to be proportionate to the development and could not fix past problems.

The Group noted the report.

6 **LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY - PHASE 2**

The Local Plans and New Communities Manager said that the phase 2 report looked at the landscape around new settlements.

Katrina Davies from LUC presented the report. She said the aim of the study was to assess the 12 potential new settlement locations in the context of the rural character of the district on a strategic level. It provided a commentary on the sites without comparing them to each other.

Areas of discussion included: -

- The parcels of land had been submitted by different promoters and were therefore assessed according to what had been submitted.
- The consultants had not been asked to look at other districts.
- Carver Barracks had been included because it was the largest brown field site in the district, there was no indication from the Ministry of Defence that they wanted to sell the land.
- The visual representations did not reflect the differences in topography throughout the district.
- Councillor Caton raised a concern about the inconsistency of sites, for example, at Ugley, which was immediately adjacent to Stansted the coalescence of the site was not being taken into consideration. The Local Plans and New Communities Manager agreed to provide a response after the meeting.
- Councillor Tayler said that the views from the perspective of walkers were important alongside the private views of residents and asked if he could have further discussion with the Local Plans and New Communities Manager and the New Communities Senior Planning Officer, this was agreed.

Councillor Freeman left the meeting at 9:06pm

7 **DEVELOPMENT OPTIONS PROCESS**

The Local Plans and New Communities Manager presented the report. He said it detailed the next step of the process for identifying development options for appraisal, which was an important stage of the Local Plan process.

He said that therefore the next meeting on the 9th December would be a workshop for evaluation and discussion of the generation of reasonable alternatives. This would be restricted to Local Plan Leadership Group Members. The Chair said he would have discussions after the meeting regarding Members who were unable to attend and wanted to send substitutions.

The meeting ended at 9.21 pm