

Summary of officer advice regarding site allocations, about which issues were raised at Cabinet - 12 June.

The advice given is in the general context of a hybrid spatial strategy that focuses the majority of development at Saffron Walden, Great Dunmow and new garden communities, with the focus of development in the rural areas in key villages (including Newport) and development in type A villages (including Debden) limited with the emphasis being on enhancing and maintaining the distinctive character and vitality of local rural communities.

The advice given is in the general context of the need to meet a housing requirement of around 14000 homes and to maintain a five year land supply with a 5% and 20% buffer option, which smaller sites make a valuable contribution to as they are deliverable earlier in the plan.

Debden – Land west of Thaxted Road, Debden (DEB1):

Members of the public and the ward councillor raised issues regarding the cumulative scale of recent committed and proposed development in relation to the village, flooding, access to services, traffic, parking, proximity to ancient woodland and lack of infrastructure.

The allocation in the regulation 18 plan was for 25 dwellings on 0.8 hectares of land. The allocation in the proposed regulation 19 plan is for 45 dwellings on 1.5 hectares of land. The majority of the additional land in reg 19 was in the call for sites but the western edge needs to be reduced to align with the development boundary and the brook to the south provides a natural boundary.

The classification for the site is B.

From the SHLAA assessment, the site is within 500m-1,000m of an Ancient Woodland and a planning application should be able to mitigate the impact on it but not necessarily the view of it as articulated by one member of the public.

The site does not lie within an EA flood zone.

The site is more than 800m from significant shopping facilities and the GP surgery. No additional shops or healthcare provisions are proposed but in respect to healthcare, the IDP has been prepared with the input of the WE CCG, who have not expressed any concerns.

There is no viable route to strategic road network. The call for sites information states that the site could be safely accessed by pedestrians and vehicles via Thaxted Road, Debden. Traffic and parking issues would be matters for the planning application to address and are considered capable of mitigation.

Officers' recommendation is that it is a suitable site for allocation.

Elsenham – Land south of Rush Lane (ELSE1)

Parish Councillor Dr Mott argued that the inspector had rejected the strategic site in Elsenham during the 2014 examination and a subsequent application had been refused in 2016; in his view both these decision centred on challenges on the local road network. He further commented on the infrastructure requirements.

The allocation for 40 dwellings is significantly lower than these previous cases and the IDP has been prepared with the input of the WE CCG, who have not expressed any concerns.

This was included in the regulation 18 consultation plan and responses have been fully assessed, providing no reason to revisit the allocation.

Officers' recommendation is that it is a suitable site for allocation.

Site of former Bardfield House, Church End, Great Dunmow

GDT Councillor Armstrong objected to the inclusion of this site on the basis it is not allocated in the GDNHP and he considered this sent the wrong message about the regard for NHPs. He felt strongly that the development boundary should be defended.

This site was promoted through the call for sites. There has been a previous application on the site that was dismissed at appeal.

Whilst the NHP is respected the local plan must assess the needs of the district as a whole and has to look at everything again.

Officers' recommendation is that it is a suitable site for allocation.

Land south of B1256 (Stortford Road) and west of Butleys Lane, Great Dunmow (GtDUN4)

GDT Councillor Armstrong objected to the inclusion of this site on the basis it is not allocated in the GDNHP and he considered this sent the wrong message about the regard for NHPs. He also considered that the assessment of air quality implications was inconsistent.

This was included in the regulation 18 consultation plan and responses have been fully assessed, providing no reason to revisit the allocation.

Whilst the NHP is respected the local plan must assess the needs of the district as a whole and has to look at everything again.

Officers' recommendation is that it is a suitable site for allocation.

Land to the south of B1256 Little Canfield (LtCAN1)

GDT Councillor Armstrong objected to the inclusion of this site on the basis that planning permission was recently refused.

No weight was attached to the emerging plan proposals when committee considered the application. The employment study indicated a strategic issues relating to needing a broader portfolio of sites. The site appraisal process identified this as a suitable employment location before the council considered it as an option for an alternative street services depot location.

Officers' recommendation is that it is a suitable site for allocation.

Land at Bricketts, London Road, Newport

This expanded allocation (consisting of 1.2 hectares and 24 dwellings) is proposed as a small extension to an existing allocation with planning permission that was included in the reg 18 plan (consisting of 1.2 hectares and 11 dwellings), reflecting the natural boundary with the paddock. Noise and air quality matters raised by Cllr Hargreaves would be capable of mitigation at the planning application stage.

Cllr Hargreaves specifically referenced its exclusion in the NQRNHP, which is currently out to regulation 14 consultation.

The site would extend the ribbon development further south away from the village centre and its associated facilities.

Officers' recommendation is that it is a suitable site for allocation.

Old Chalk Farm, Chalk farm Lane, Newport

Cllr Hargreaves specifically referenced its inclusion in the NQRNHP, which is currently out to regulation 14 consultation.

The classification for the site is E. The site is available and development is achievable subject to achieving a suitable access road. The site is considered unsuitable as development on this site would not contribute to sustainable patterns of development, primarily due to its location away from the development boundary of the village.

Officers' recommendation is that it is not a suitable site for allocation.

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