

Minutes



Local Development Framework Panel

22nd June 2011

Present:

Councillors	Present	Councillors	Present
D L Bebb	Yes	Lady Newton	Yes
G Butland	Yes	Mrs W D Scattergood	Yes
A V E Everard	Yes	C Siddall	No
M C M Lager	Yes	Miss M Thorogood	Yes
J T McKee	Yes	R G Walters	Yes

Councillor R Wright was also in attendance.

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

INFORMATION: There were no interests declared.

2 MINUTES

DECISION: The Minutes of the meeting of the Local Development Framework Panel held on 6th April 2011 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3 QUESTION TIME

INFORMATION: There were no questions asked or statements made.

4 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

INFORMATION: Mrs E Dash, Planning Policy Manager, gave a short presentation on the Local Development Framework and the current status of the Braintree District Local Plan Review. Members of the Panel had regard also to a document published by the Planning Advisory Service entitled 'How Planning Works – An Introductory Guide for Councillors'.

In discussing this item, reference was made to the Coalition Government's planning reforms being introduced through the Localism Bill which sought to improve timescales, promote growth and strengthen community-led planning by enabling residents to take a greater role in identifying local issues. The Localism Bill would also abolish Regional Spatial Strategies and local authorities would be responsible for determining their own targets for new housing.

In discussing this item, Members of the Panel acknowledged that all Members of the Council should receive training in the planning process and the proposals being put

forward in the Localism Bill, and it was suggested that the Member Development Working Group should be requested to arrange this.

DECISION: That the presentation and Planning Advisory Service document be noted.

5 CORE STRATEGY – PROGRESS REPORT

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to a progress report on the preparation, examination and adoption of the Core Strategy.

Members were advised that the Core Strategy was currently being examined by an independent Planning Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. The examination would determine whether the Core Strategy was legally compliant and sound. A Core Strategy Hearing had been held from 18th May 2011 to 26th May 2011.

The Inspector's final report was expected in August 2011. The report would set out the Inspector's conclusions on the Plan's compliance, together with binding recommendations on changes to the Core Strategy. It was anticipated that the report would be submitted to the Local Development Framework Panel in September 2011 and that the Core Strategy would be adopted by the Council on 19th September 2011.

It was noted that the process could be delayed by the publication of Government planning policy statements and, in particular, an announcement about a new streamlined national planning framework.

In discussing this item, Members considered two composite schedules dated June 2011 detailing 'minor' and 'significant' changes to the Core Strategy. Particular reference was made to the wording of SC20 paragraph 6.32, which was unclear and it was agreed that, if necessary, it should be amended.

DECISION: That the progress report on the preparation, examination and adoption of the Core Strategy, and the schedules of minor and significant changes dated June 2011, be noted.

6 SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT - DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENTS

INFORMATION: Members received a verbal progress report on the preparation of the Site Allocations and Development Management - Development Plan Documents.

Specific reference was made to the Site Allocations Document and how Parish Councils should be involved in its preparation. It was proposed that a letter should be sent to each Parish Council advising them about proposed development sites within their Parish. The Parish Councils would be invited to comment on the proposals and to suggest changes to village envelopes. It was also proposed that Officers should attend Parish Council meetings in the 'key service villages'. District Ward Members would also be advised about the process and it was suggested that updates should be submitted to Members of the Local Development Framework Panel on a monthly basis.

It was proposed that an additional meeting of the Panel should be arranged for November 2011 to discuss the Site Allocations Document. A seminar would also be arranged to enable Members of the Planning Committee to consider the Development Management - Development Plan Document.

DECISION:

- (1) That the progress report on the preparation of the Site Allocations and Development Management - Development Plan Documents be noted and the proposed arrangements for consultation with Parish Councils, District Ward Councillors and the Local Development Framework Panel be approved.
- (2) That an additional meeting of the Local Development Framework Panel be arranged for November 2011 to discuss the Site Allocations Document.
- (3) That a seminar be arranged to enable Members of the Planning Committee to consider the Development Management Document.

7 BRAINTREE BRANCH LINE IMPROVEMENTS – FEASIBILITY STUDY

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to a progress report on improvements to the Braintree branch railway line.

Members were reminded that in July 2010 Network Rail had been commissioned to undertake a feasibility study into increasing the frequency of services on the line. The study had concluded that, in principle, the provision of a 30 minute train service between Witham and Braintree would be feasible by the introduction of a static loop. However, this was subject to significant issues / constraints, namely recasting the railway timetable; resolving congestion associated with trains being stationary at Witham (Platform 4); resolving congestion resulting from use of the 'down' mainline freight loop; and support for the project being obtained from eg. the Department for Transport and National Express East Anglia.

The options considered and their estimated cost were 'speed increase' - £0.3million; 'static loop' - £9.4 million; 'static loop at White Notley station' - £16.55 million; and a 'dynamic loop' - £70 million.

Reference had been made in the study to the possible provision of a new railway station at Beaulieu Park, Springfield. The study had concluded that the station could have an impact on the viability of the proposed Braintree service improvements and vice versa.

Network Rail had advised that a further study by independent consultants would be required to determine the socio-economic benefits of a passing loop.

In discussing this item, a Member expressed concern about increased freight transport on the mainline being to the disadvantage of passenger services. It was agreed that further information on this point should be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel.

DECISION:

- (1) That the findings and estimated costs contained in Network Rail's final report be noted and points 3 and 4 of the conclusion supported, namely:-
 3. Resolution of congestion resulting from use of the 'down' mainline freight loop.
 4. Support for the project being obtained from eg. the Department for Transport and National Express East Anglia.

- (2) To continue to request that the project is included in future franchise bids.
- (3) That Officers be authorised to investigate the costs and benefits of undertaking a socio-economic study and to report these to the Local Development Framework Panel for Members to determine whether the study should be financed from Growth Area Funding.

EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

DECISION: That under Section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 (A) of the Act.

Although the following item was taken in Private Session the Minutes do not contain any confidential information and are therefore admissible in the public domain.

8 **GROWTH AREA FUNDING – UPDATE**

INFORMATION: Members of the Panel were reminded of the amount of capital and revenue funding which had been awarded to Braintree District Council from the Growth Area Fund to support the delivery of new housing and employment and associated infrastructure. Priorities for the expenditure and allocation of the funding had been agreed by the Panel at previous meetings and an update report on the programme was attached as an Appendix to the report.

It was reported that capital funding had been re-allocated to finance the extension of enterprise units at Springwood Drive, Braintree in order to provide support facilities including a training room and meeting space for businesses. In addition, revenue funding had been re-allocated to a viability study for a site at Sible Hedingham. Members were requested to approve these changes.

DECISION:

- (1) That the progress report on the Growth Area Fund programme be noted.
- (2) That the re-allocation of capital and revenue funding, as detailed in the report and outlined above, be approved.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and closed at 7.30pm.

Councillor R G Walters

(Chairman)