

Minutes



Local Development Framework Panel

22nd September 2010

MINUTE EXTRACT

19 CORE STRATEGY SUBMISSION DRAFT

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to a report on the representations which had been submitted on the Core Strategy Submission Draft following public consultation.

Members were advised that the Core Strategy Submission Draft had been published for public consultation on 10th May 2010. The period for the submission of representations had been extended to 8th July 2010 to enable comments to be made on the proposed abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS). A total of 1128 representations had been submitted by 347 people. Appendix 2 to the report set out a summary of the representations submitted, including those relating to the abolition of the RSS; growth locations; and alternative sites. The Officers' recommendations in respect of each representation were also set out in Appendix 2. Those recommendations which proposed changes to the Core Strategy were also included out in Appendix 1 of the report. As required by The Planning Inspectorate, these had been categorised as 'focused changes' and 'minor changes'. It was proposed that the changes would be published for consultation between 8th October 2010 and 19th November 2010. It was not proposed that any of the growth locations identified in the Core Strategy should be changed, or removed.

A report to the last meeting of the Panel had set out the Government's guidance on the abolition of the East of England Plan – the Regional Spatial Strategy and the implications of this for the Core Strategy. The Panel had agreed to continue with the preparation of the Core Strategy and had rejected the option of increasing the housing requirement for the District. The Council was now required to determine whether to continue with the proposed housing provision contained in Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy and which was based on the RSS assessment, or to decrease the housing provision.

The East of England Plan had required 7,700 dwellings to be provided in the Braintree District over the period 2001 to 2021 and a minimum requirement of 385 dwellings per year. However, the number of dwellings provided over the period 2001 to 2008 had exceeded this figure and the remaining housing requirement for the period 2009 to 2026 now amounted to 4,637, representing an average of 272 dwellings per annum. This was a low annual figure compared to past levels of growth in the District. Furthermore, the number of additional dwellings completed over the past year had been as anticipated and it did not affect the overall housing requirement.

Whilst the RSS had been abolished, the population growth and housing need evidence base which had supported the calculation of the housing requirement was still relevant. In particular, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008 indicated that an annual supply of 673 new affordable homes was needed in the District. It was proposed that 30% of the growth locations identified in the Core Strategy would contribute to this need. However, it was also considered that there was a need to achieve a better balance between housing and local jobs and to deter commuting out of the District. It was acknowledged also that house building supported the local economy and the regeneration of previously developed land, and that a reduction in housing provision could have an adverse affect.

It was proposed that the provision of a minimum of 4637 dwellings in Braintree District for the period 2009 and 2026, as set out in Policy CS1, should be retained in the Core Strategy as this was based on sound evidence of housing need.

In discussing the report, the Corporate Director made specific reference to a representation submitted by Countryside Properties (Special Projects) Ltd regarding Chapter 6 – Economy, Paragraphs 6.11 – 6.23, Policy CS4, Map 5 and the inclusion of B8 uses on employment land to the west of the A131 Great Notley (Appendix 2 pages 90 and 91). It was noted that on 14th April 2010 the Local Development Framework Panel had agreed to exclude B8 uses from the site. However, the Council had subsequently sought independent advice which corroborated the view of Countryside Properties that the exclusion of a B8 use would be a hindrance to the effective/efficient delivery of the site. It was proposed that the recommendation should be amended from 'No Change' to 'restrict the overall quantum of B8 use to no more than 40% of the total floor area and restrict the largest unit size to 7,500 sq m'. It was also suggested that the following amendments should be made to the proposed focused changes namely, Chapter 5 Housing, Paragraph 5.26 – to include a reference to the definition of affordable housing as being that set out in PPS3; Chapter 5 Housing, Paragraph 5.29 – the sentence '(A pitch normally accommodates two caravans)' to be retained; and Chapter 6, Economy Table 1 Employment Land – '2010' to be highlighted and '2009' to be added with a strike through.

Reference was made to the Coalition Government's Localism Bill and proposals to engage more with communities on local planning matters. It was noted that more details regarding the Bill were awaited and that the Bill was unlikely to become law until 2011. In considering the report, Members were mindful of the need to look to the future and the provision of affordable housing for the District.

DECISION: That it be **Recommended to Council:-**

- (1) That the proposed housing provision of a minimum of 4637 dwellings in the Braintree District between 2009 and 2026, as set out in Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy, be retained.
- (2) That the focused changes and minor changes to the Core Strategy as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved and published for the purpose of consultation in accordance with the procedure referred to in Appendix 1, subject to the recommendation relating to the representation submitted by Countryside Properties (Special Projects) Ltd regarding Chapter 6 – Economy, Paragraphs 6.11 – 6.23, Policy CS4, Map 5 and the inclusion of B8 uses on employment land to the west of the A131 Great Notley being amended from 'No Change' to 'restrict the overall quantum of

B8 use to no more than 40% of the total floor area and restrict the largest unit size to 7,500 sq m'. The following amendments to the proposed focused changes were also agreed namely, Chapter 5 Housing, Paragraph 5.26 – to include a reference to the definition of affordable housing as being that set out in PPS3; Chapter 5 Housing, Paragraph 5.29 – the sentence '(A pitch normally accommodates two caravans)' to be retained; and Chapter 6, Economy Table 1 Employment Land – '2010' to be highlighted and '2009' to be added with a strike through.

- (3) That the Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy be reviewed to take account of the focused changes.
- (4) That the progress of the Localism Bill be monitored and representations made, as appropriate, to ensure that local opinion is at the heart of local planning.

DECISION:

- (1) That the Statement of Community Involvement be amended to refer to the Local Development Framework Panel rather than the District Development Committee.
- (2) That the Sustainable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) report, which forms part of the evidence base, be amended to advocate Natural England's request for 8 hectares of SANG per 1000 people to offset new development and conclude that this is achievable.