

Minutes

Local Development Framework Panel

2nd September 2009

Present:

Councillors	Present	Councillors	Present
G Butland	Apologies	H J Messenger	Yes
A V E Everard	Apologies	Lady Newton	Apologies
N R H O Harley	Yes	Mrs W D Scattergood	Yes
M C M Lager	Yes	Miss M Thorogood	Yes
N G McCrea	Yes	R G Walters	Apologies

Councillor D Mann was also in attendance.

Action by

22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

INFORMATION: No declarations of interest were made.

23 MINUTES

DECISION: The minutes of the meeting of the Local Development Framework Panel held on 29th July 2009 was confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

24 QUESTION TIME

INFORMATION: There were no questions asked or statements made.

25 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME – PROPOSED REVISIONS

The Panel received a report on the proposed timetable for the preparation and adoption of the Core Strategy Development Plan. This will update the Local Development Scheme and assist preparation of the Core Strategy, including Development Control policies and the Allocations document. Consultation will be required with GoEast (on one section) and the Planning Inspectorate to the draft timetable. Further supplementary evidence based work has to be completed before December 2009, and will include how Braintree District's growth will affect local areas, e.g. the Colne and Stour estuaries (the next LDF meeting). Other areas in the timetable involve

- A Housing Viability Study
- Infrastructure Requirements – for the growth proposed and the cost
- Infrastructure awareness – a requirement from developers on Core Strategy sites and brown field sites
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) Preparation

- A Highways Study commissioned by Essex County and Braintree District Councils, to produce an assessment to the effect of growth on road junctions
- Sustainability Appraisal
- The final stages of the Core Strategy (including the Growth Location at Great Notley later in the meeting), with a submission draft to the LDF in December. After publication of the Strategy a public consultation period will take place to ensure the document is sound, and to submit suggested changes by end of April 2010
- Following a planning enquiry in summer 2009, the Planning Inspector's decision (if finding the document sound) could allow adoption by the Council by December 2011.

Members were advised that sections of work on the Development Control policy would be received by the Panel from January 2010 onwards, and that publication of the draft Allocations document would take place after the Core Strategy has been proven sound.

With regard to the provision of evidence it was noted that the same evidence, whether landscape issues, water or highways, feed into the process irrelevant if approaching from the 'top' or 'bottom' (local evidence) of the procedure.

It was noted that conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) would be received from EERA (or their successor) in a 'turn-round' period of a matter of weeks.

Under infrastructure requirements it was clarified that only junctions would be included in the process, with no strategic improvements e.g. widening of the A12.

Further discussion ensued on the aspect of 'soundness' and how 50 other members of the Council can reach an informed decision at adoption by Council. The ten members of the Panel are the Council's experts on Local Development Framework (LDF), with officers providing guidance, advice and support. The relevant documents and minutes from the LDF Panel, plus attending Panel meetings give other Members opportunity to gather information.

Members agreed that a report on 'soundness' should be received by the Panel before December 2009.

Mrs E Dash

The Chairman considered that the Allocations document, that requires consultation with Parish Councils, should be brought forward in the timetable. This will ensure the process is completed by May 2011.

Mrs E Dash

DECISION: That the timetable for the preparation of the Core Strategy be approved.

26 STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT – SUPPLEMENT

Members were advised of changes in the process for preparing Development Plan Documents (DPD) and the requirements for consultation. The report will become a supplement to the Braintree District Council's Statement of Community Involvement, and explains how the Council intends to engage the community and stakeholders in the preparation of the DPD under the revised Regulations.

The two significant changes are

- The removal of formal consultation on the preferred options means there are now fewer stages in the DPD preparation, with sufficient public consultation.

- The draft DPD will be published for a period of six weeks consultation, prior to submission to the Secretary of State for examination. The public will have opportunity to make representation on alternative sites.

The Panel considered that the various methods of public consultation, e.g. Village Design Statements (VDS), Parish Plans and Parish Appraisals, are confusing to the public. It was noted that the VDS is accepted as material evidence, whereas the Council does not approve the other methods. A brief discussion ensued to the 'weight' given to various Parish Appraisals that state no development is the choice of their local community, and whether it should be included in the supplement. It was also recognised that the Rural Community Councils for Essex do give other consultation methods sufficient 'weight', and this creates misunderstandings. Officers agreed to provide helpful guidance for the public on this issue that will still encourage Parish and Town Councils to submit their views to assist the Development Control decision.

Mrs E Dash

With regard to Appendix 2 of the report, the list of Consultation Groups, it was clarified that taxi groups are involved in the process.

DECISION: That the supplement to the Statement of Community Involvement be approved.

27 EMPLOYMENT GROWTH LOCATION – LAND WEST OF THE A131, GREAT NOTLEY

The Panel considered a report to the size of the proposed employment growth location at Land West of the A131 at Great Notley – an item deferred from the previous meeting of the LDF. The draft Core Strategy had set out a proposed area of 12.5ha on the advice of Essex Highways due to the potential impact on the local road network.

Members supported the proposals stated in the report, and displayed during the presentation, for the growth location to be increased to 18.5ha. The capacity to increase the employment site had been demonstrated, including access at the Cuckoo Way roundabout.

With regard to the final paragraph on Page 17 of the report it was noted that the 'Draft Core Strategy states that the provision of a minimum of 3ha of employment land throughout the Plan period is per annum'.

The Planning Policy Manager advised that the view of Councillor Everard on this item was that maximum screening between the Country Park and this employment location should take place, and to the south of the site, with structural landscaping being provided. Members also supported this view.

DECISION: That the proposed employment growth location on land west of the A131 at Great Notley should be increased in size from 12.5ha to 18.5ha.

28 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Peter Crofts, Corporate Director, advised that the Council could delegate authority to the LDF to respond to the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) on the Review of the Regional Plan. Members were willing to accept this responsibility in the absence of any Cabinet or Council meeting in the consultation period.

However, the Chairman did indicate that an extension to the consultation period may be possible.

29 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members were advised that it would be necessary to hold an additional meeting of the Panel to consider issues in the Local Development Scheme.

DECISION:

- (1) That the next meeting of the Local Development Framework Panel be held on Wednesday 30th September 2009 at 6.00pm (as scheduled).
- (2) That an additional meeting of the Local Development Framework Panel be held on Monday 2nd November 2009 at 6.00pm. ***Post Meeting note: This meeting has been rearranged for Wednesday 18th November 2009, at 6.00pm.***

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and closed at 7.00pm.

N G McCrea

(Chairman)

