

Minutes

Local Development Framework Panel

17th June 2009

Present:

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

Councillor D Mann was also in attendance.

8 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

INFORMATION: There were no interests declared.

9 MINUTES

DECISION: The Minutes of the meetings of the Local Development Framework Panel held on 14th and 20th April 2009 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

10 QUESTION TIME

INFORMATION: There were no questions asked, or statements made.

11 CORE STRATEGY

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to a report summarising the representations of objection and support in respect of the One District - One Vision Core Strategy which had been submitted during the period of public consultation in November and December 2008. The report covered the representations relating to Parts 5 and 6 of the Core Strategy which had not already been considered by the Panel. Members were requested to approve changes to the wording of the Core Strategy.

DECISION: That the following amendments be made to the relevant sections of the Core Strategy:-

Part 5 –The Four Priority Themes for the Braintree District

Paragraphs 5.1 - 5.3

Policy CS1 – Promoting Accessibility for All

Paragraphs 5.4-5.5 and Option CS1 ALT 1- 5

DECISION:

That the four priority themes in Paragraph 5.1 should be bullet points rather than numbered to show that there is no hierarchy within the priority themes.

That Policy CS1 be approved, subject to the following amendments and to be in line with the comments of GO-East, with the emphasis being on projects to be carried out, rather than statements of intent.

That references to demand management and travel plans be included within Policy CS1.

That Policy CS1 includes recognition that whilst the Council wishes to maximise the use of non-car travel modes, this may not be practical/possible in more isolated rural locations.

Policy CS2 – Natural Environment

DECISION:

That the following additional information be included in Policy CS2:-

- Specific reference to flood risk and the sequential test
- To encourage improvements to green infrastructure
- Details of how the natural environment will be protected/enhanced
- Protection and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity.
- The Council will promote wildlife enhancements which will contribute to the habitat and species restoration targets set out in the Essex Biodiversity Strategy.

Policy CS3 – The Built Environment

Paragraphs 5.7-5.8 and CS3 ALT1 and ALT2

DECISION:

That a reference to the protection of the setting of historic or important buildings be included.

That a reference to creating good quality built environments in commercial and business districts and public realms, as well as residential areas, be included.

In discussing this matter, it was agreed also that reports should be submitted to Members on suggested definitions for the word 'setting', plus information on the BREEAM definitions.

1. Developing the Economy

Paragraph 5. 9 - Future development of the economy of the District

Paragraph 5.10 – What are key economic issues and challenges for the District?

Paragraph 5.11 - Need to plan for 14,000 new jobs, regeneration of sites, safeguarding existing employment sites, business/innovation park

DECISION:

- That an 'Employment and Centre Hierarchy' policy be included within the Core Strategy.
- That an updated reference to the Economic Development Strategy be included.
- That bullet point 3 be amended to '*secure mixed-use regeneration of major sites in main town centres and in the Key Service Villages of Silver End and Sible Hedingham*'.
- That reference to the wider strategic opportunities for Braintree District, including its proximity to Stansted and improvements to the A120, be included.
- That further reference to promoting 'home working' be included.
- That Paragraph 5.10 be amended to read, '*provide approximately 14,000 new jobs*'.
- That the most up to date statistics be used to reflect the current economic profile of the Braintree District taking into account migration.

In discussing this matter, it was agreed also that the 'wider strategic opportunities for Braintree' referred to under the fourth bullet point should be expanded.

POLICY CS4 – The Proposed Core Planning Policy in relation to the Development of the Economy of the Braintree District

DECISION:

- That further reference to the 'Three Towns, One Vision' regeneration proposals be included.
- That links be established in the preamble to the policy relating to the proposed employment land allocation/distribution and how this will reduce out-commuting and broaden the skills of the workforce.
- That the wording 'support for existing businesses to expand' be included.

Policy CS4 ALT1

No changes

Policy CS4 ALT2

No changes

2. Distribution of Employment

Paragraphs 5.13 to 5.23 and Policy CS5 were discussed at the Local Development Framework Panel meeting on 20th May 2009.

3. The Rural Economy

Paragraph 5.26

Policy CS6 – Proposed Core Planning Policy in relation to the Rural Economy of the Braintree District

DECISION:

- That reference to the 'Infrastructure Study' which will demonstrate delivery of the employment growth sites be included.
- That reference to the promotion of 'home working' be included in CS6.
- That bullet point 1 be amended to include '*and would meet identified local need*'.
- That bullet point 2 be amended to include '*support appropriate diversification of rural business other than agricultural holdings*'.
- That bullet point 2 be amended to include 'outdoor recreation'
- That bullet point 3 be amended to read '*encourage and facilitate development which would provide sustainable forms of transport, minimising impact on the local environment and road network*'.
- That reference be made to the 'Essex Rural Commission' findings to support the evidence base.
- That the possibility of having a target for the use of previously developed land be investigated.
- That '*will be supported by encouraging and facilitating*' be removed to provide text as wholly '*criteria based*' and positive forms of expression.

Policy CS6 ALT1

No changes.

Policy CS6 ALT2

No changes.

Paragraph 5.29 – Priorities for Town Centres and Regeneration

No changes.

Paragraphs 5.30 - 5.31

No changes.

Paragraph 5.32 - Regeneration Initiatives

No changes.

Policy CS7 – Relation to Town Centres and Regeneration

Policy CS7 ALT2

DECISION:

- That bullet point 6 be amended to include *'promotion of mixed use development incorporating services and community facilities provision'*.
- That bullet point 4 (the designation and development of new employment locations) be removed as such proposals are confined to existing sites and growth locations.
- That a separate 'retail hierarchy' policy be produced for the Core Strategy to meet policy E5 of the East of England Plan requirement that the Core Strategy should include a proposed hierarchy of retail centres in the District.
- That the wording be amended to include *'SPDs may also be produced to set out requirements for some sites in more detail and to emphasise the importance of place making and quality development'*.
- That Paragraph 5.32, which defines the *'broad location information'* be included as part of the policy.
- That the revised section on 'town centres and regeneration' be reported back to the Local Development Framework Panel at a future date for approval.

Policy CS8 – Housing Provision and Delivery (Includes paragraphs 5.69, 5.72 to 5.76)

DECISION:

That a reference to the development boundary review be added to the preamble. That the reference to the East of England Plan be removed from the policy.

That the policy be split into parts covering each subject. The Spatial Policy part of the policy to be merged with Statement 1 and the table at Paragraph 4.42 to form an all encompassing spatial policy. A separate policy to be drafted for affordable housing and Gypsies and Travellers.

That the final part of the policy on design issues be included as a Development Control Policy.

That further work be undertaken to assess the viability of the Lifetime homes standards and the percentage of new build dwellings which should meet this standard.

Policy CS8 – (Affordable Housing) and paragraphs 5.40, 5.43, 5.44 – 5.45, 5.48 and 5.50

DECISION:

That wording be added to the preamble of the policy to reflect the use of viability modelling when determining suitable affordable housing contributions for sites. That reference to affordable housing provision to meet identified local need be added.

To note that a supplementary document will accompany the Core Strategy to outline the number of housing units to be produced by growth locations

and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment sites. This document will also outline the phasing of proposed development for these areas and sites.

That the Housing Trajectory up to 2026 be included within the Core Strategy.

Policy CS8 - (Gypsy and Travellers and Travelling Show-people) includes comments on paragraph 5.62-5.66

DECISION:

That a new policy for Gypsy and Traveller Provision, including a selection criteria for the allocation of sites to be used in the Allocations DPD and for determining any subsequent planning applications, be created. This should include travelling show persons' need. Further consideration will be needed to determine what criteria should be included within this policy.

That reference be made in the preamble to the delivery of Gypsy and Traveller sites through Section 106 Agreement contributions.

In discussing this matter, it was considered important to recognise the needs of such people who do not travel, but remain in one place, and it was agreed that details of the proposed criteria should be reported to a future meeting.

Alternative Policy Approaches

Option CS8 ALT1

No changes.

Option CS8 ALT2

No changes

Option CS8 ALT3

No changes

CS9 - The Proposed Core Planning Policy in relation to Services and Facilities (Paragraphs 5.79 to 5.95)

DECISION:

That the definition of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) be added to CS8. That details of how Braintree District Council will work with partners and what priorities it has for infrastructure development be added. That reference to the phasing of development to allow sufficient infrastructure to be provided be added.

To note that a definition of the types of infrastructure to be provided by the CIL will be drawn up following further discussion with service providers and presented to the Local Development Framework Panel at a later date.

That a reference to village community halls be added to bullet point 2 of Paragraph 5.79

Part 6 – Delivering the Strategy Paragraphs 6.1 – 6.58

DECISION:

- That Paragraphs 6.49 – 6.53 and 6.54 - 6.58 be merged to avoid repeating information.
- That a list of identified infrastructure required to support the growth plans laid out in the document be included.
- That a strategic housing trajectory be included in the document.
- That more detailed information on the Council's position on the Community Infrastructure Levy be included in the document.
- That the delivery plan includes details of dependencies and contingencies where appropriate.

During the consideration of this item, the Planning Policy Manager made reference to a communication which had been received from the Agent for land at Central Park, Halstead. This site was currently allocated for employment purposes, but it was noted that a planning application for mixed housing and employment use was due to be submitted.

12 **SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL AND STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT**

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to a report summarising the findings of the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Draft Core Strategy One District – One Vision.

It was reported that the SA/SEA had been produced by the Spatial Planning Group of Essex County Council acting as a consultant to Braintree District Council. The combined SA/SEA had been undertaken to assess and predict the economic, social and environmental effects that were likely to arise from the implementation of the Core Strategy and to inform the preparation of future stages of the Strategy.

DECISION: That the Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment of the Draft Core Strategy One District – One Vision be noted and the following action undertaken in response to the Appraisal and Assessment:-

1. Ensure that policies of the Core Strategy are 'locally distinctive' to the Braintree District and recognise the local policy needs of Braintree.
2. Undertake an 'Infrastructure' Assessment to identify how development will be supported, including timing and funding.
3. Establish the proposed phasing of development in the Core Strategy.
4. Include a policy that identifies a hierarchy of town and retail centres in the District.
5. Include clearer guidance on flood risk in the District and a commitment to sustainable drainage systems, energy efficiency and sustainable construction methods.

6. Identify targets and indicators for the delivery of policies within the Core Strategy and clarify the proposed monitoring framework.

13 OPTIONS FOR ALTERNATIVE GROWTH LOCATIONS

INFORMATION: Members considered a report on the options which the Panel would need to consider at its next meeting if the Council resolved to delete the proposed growth location north-east of Witham off Forest Road in the Parish of Rivenhall from the draft Core Strategy. Members were reminded that the Panel had recommended the deletion of this growth location and that this matter would be determined by the Council on 22nd June 2009. If implemented, the growth location would provide approximately 300 dwellings.

The Officers had re-examined the dwelling capacity of sites identified in the urban capacity study, the residential land availability study and as part of the draft Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, but it was considered that these could not make up a shortfall of 300 dwellings due to the adopted Core Strategy period being extended to 2026 and sites being developed at lower densities than predicted. Consequently, the District's housing requirement, as set out in the East of England Plan, would not be met.

Members were advised that if the Council resolved to delete the Forest Road growth location, the Panel would have to consider increasing the amount of housing provided at the remaining growth locations at land west of Panfield Lane, Braintree and/or at land at Lodge Farm, Witham, or to consider alternative growth locations identified in the One District - One Vision Technical Supplement as amber sites. These comprised land north of Conrad Road, Witham; land east of Broad Road, Braintree; land west of Pods Brook Road and east of Pods Brook Road, Braintree (the Flitch Way Settlement); and land west of Springwood Drive, Braintree.

DECISION: The report was noted.

14 PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 4 – PLANNING FOR PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES

INFORMATION: The Panel considered a report on draft Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 4 - Planning for Prosperous Communities which was currently subject to consultation.

The main purpose of the document was to bring together all planning policies affecting the economy, in particular PPS4 - Sustainable Economic Development and PPS6 - Planning for Town Centres, to set out the Government's comprehensive policy framework for sustainable development in urban and rural areas, including town centres. The policies set out in the new PPS would need to be taken into account by local planning authorities in the preparation of local development documents and in considering planning applications. The Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Culture would respond to the consultation following consideration by the Panel, the Leadership Group and the Economic Development and Transportation Partnership Board.

In terms of general economic development, the Statement confirmed and updated previous guidance requiring authorities to plan positively for economic growth and to take a positive and constructive approach to applications for economic development.

Regarding town centre and retail development, the revised Statement removed the needs test whereby proposals for retail development had to demonstrate a quantitative or qualitative need. Instead, a more sophisticated impact test would be required to measure the wider, positive and negative effects of retail and other town centre related development. This would require more factors to be examined in assessing proposals, including retail diversity, impact on town centre investment, scope for regeneration, job creation, impact on climate change and design. It was proposed that references to town centres should apply to all types of centre, including local service centres identified in development plans.

In discussing paragraph 4.7 of the Agenda report (local planning approach to rural areas), Members of the Panel agreed that the re-use of agricultural buildings for alternative business uses should be supported, and with regard to paragraph 4.8 (car parking for non-residential development) it was considered that setting maximum car parking standards was unreasonable as in some cases people had no alternative means of transport.

DECISION: That the comments set out in paragraphs 5 to 7 of the report be endorsed for inclusion in the Council's response to draft Planning Policy Statement 4 - Planning for Prosperous Communities, subject to the inclusion of the comments relating to paragraphs 4.7 and 4.8 of the Agenda report, as set out above.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and closed at 7.35pm.

N G McCrea

(Chairman)