

Minutes

Local Development Framework Panel

25th July 2007



Councillors	Present
Miss L Barlow	Yes
G Butland	Yes (from 6.30pm)
N R H O Harley	Yes (from 6.30pm)
M C M Lager	Apologies
N G McCrea (Chairman)	Yes
H J Messenger	Yes
Lady Newton	Yes
Mrs W D Scattergood	Yes
Miss M Thorogood	Yes
R G Walters	Yes (from 6.20pm)

In welcoming everyone to the meeting, the Chairman was pleased to introduce Mr D Cookson who was currently working as a consultant for the Council in the preparation of the Local Development Framework.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

DECISION: There were no interests declared.

4 **TERMS OF REFERENCE AND WORKING ARRANGEMENTS**

Consideration was given to the Local Development Framework Panel's amended Terms of Reference which has been discussed by the Local Government Reform Cabinet Sub Group at a meeting on 10th July 2007. The Terms of Reference had been recommended for approval by Council on 30th July 2007.

The main change to the Terms of Reference proposed that the Panel should be autonomous, subject to any policy decisions or changes affecting the policy framework being recommended to Council for a decision following consultation with Cabinet and the Local Committees.

DECISION: That the amended Terms of Reference be noted.

5 **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK – GENERAL PROGRESS REPORT**

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to a general progress report on the preparation of the District's Local Development Framework and the status of the various documents and studies which formed part of this.

DECISION: That the action taken and the proposals for the Local Development Framework be approved.

6 **CORE STRATEGY – PREFERRED OPTIONS DOCUMENT**

INFORMATION: Members discussed a report on the proposed scope, structure and content of the Braintree District Core Strategy Preferred Options document. The report assessed present good practice nationally and it recommended how this could be used to produce a sound document.

Members were reminded that the Core Strategy was a very important document which would set out the Council's overarching planning strategies for the next 15 years and beyond. The initial round of public consultation for the Core Strategy had been completed and this had sought wide-ranging views on the long term planning issues facing the District and possible options for tackling them. Consultation on an Issues and Options Document had taken place during April 2007 and a number of responses had been submitted. These had been summarised and were the subject of a separate item on the Agenda.

The Local Development Framework system required planning authorities to prepare and to consult widely on a series of Preferred Options. It was important that such options should be well founded and based on evidence, consultation and sound planning judgement. A brief outline of the recommended approach to be taken in the production of the Preferred Options document and its content had been prepared and this was attached as an Appendix to the report. The main objective of the process was to provide a clear, concise document setting out the main options which the Council considered should be pursued to Submission Document stage. The themes of the proposed document had been chosen to give a broad overview of the future development needs of the District whilst keeping the number of policy areas to a minimum. The Local Development Framework Panel would be required to discuss the Core Strategy in detail, to consider the responses received following consultation, and to review reports on the studies making up the evidence base, subject to any proposed changes to policy being reported to Cabinet and recommended to Council for approval. The proposed timetable for the process was set out in the report and this anticipated that the final Preferred Options Document should be published for consultation in December 2007.

DECISION:

- (1) That the proposed scope, structure and content of the Braintree District Core Strategy Preferred Options Local Development Plan document, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.
- (2) That the process and timetable for the preparation of the Preferred Options document, as set out in the report, be approved.

7 **CORE STRATEGY – ISSUES AND OPTIONS DOCUMENT – RESPONSES TO CONSULTATION**

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to a report on the main points made following consultation on the Core Strategy Issues and Options document. A summary of the responses submitted was attached to the report.

In discussing this item, Mr P Crofts Corporate Director, was pleased to report that the Council had recently been awarded a planning delivery grant of £362,000. This was the highest grant awarded in Essex and one of the highest awarded throughout the Country and it was due to the hard work of staff in the Planning Service. Members of the Panel congratulated the Service on this excellent achievement.

DECISION: That the responses received following consultation on the Core Strategy Issues and Options document be noted and taken into account in the preparation of the Preferred Options document.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and closed at 7.55pm

N G McCREA
(Chairman)