

Minutes



Local Plan Sub-Committee 6th November 2017

Present:

Councillors	Present	Councillors	Present
D Bebb	Yes	Mrs J Money	Yes
Mrs L Bowers-Flint (Chairman)	Yes	Lady Newton	Yes
G Butland	Yes	Mrs W Scattergood	Apologies
T Cunningham	Yes	Mrs G Spray	Yes
D Hume	Apologies	Miss M Thorogood	Yes

Councillors Barlow, Bowers, Elliott (from 6.47pm) and Schwier were also in attendance.

The start of the meeting was delayed by five minutes due to a technical problem with the webcast.

21 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

INFORMATION: The following interests were declared:

Councillor Mrs L Bowers-Flint declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 5 - Colchester and Braintree Borders Garden Community - Issues and Options Development Plan Document; and Agenda Item 6 - West of Braintree Garden Community - Issues and Options Development Plan Document as a non-remunerated Director of North Essex Garden Communities Ltd.

Councillor G Butland declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 4 – Public Question Time as the person who spoke at the meeting was known to him. Councillor Butland declared a non-pecuniary interest also in Agenda Item 5 - Colchester and Braintree Borders Garden Community - Issues and Options Development Plan Document; and Agenda Item 6 - West of Braintree Garden Community - Issues and Options Development Plan Document as a non-remunerated Director of North Essex Garden Communities Ltd.

Councillor T Cunningham declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 5 - Colchester and Braintree Borders Garden Community - Issues and Options Development Plan Document; and Agenda Item 6 - West of Braintree Garden Community - Issues and Options Development Plan Document as he had been engaged by the Campaign Against Urban Sprawl in Essex (CAUSE) prior to the Essex County Council Elections in 2017 for which he had been a candidate.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, Councillors remained in the meeting, unless stated otherwise, and took part in the discussion when the Items were considered.

22 **MINUTES**

DECISION: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Local Plan Sub-Committee held on 2nd October 2017 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

23 **QUESTION TIME**

INFORMATION: There was one statement made. Details of the person who spoke at the meeting are contained in the Appendix to these Minutes.

Principally, these Minutes record decisions taken only and, where appropriate, the reasons for the decisions.

24 **COLCHESTER AND BRAINTREE BORDERS GARDEN COMMUNITY - ISSUES AND OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT**

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to a report on the Colchester and Braintree Borders Garden Community - Issues and Options Development Plan Document and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The documents would be subject to public consultation between 13th November 2017 and 8th January 2018. Members of the Local Plan Sub-Committee were advised that public consultation on the Issues and Options Document was not a statutory requirement. However, the Council considered it important to engage with the public and local communities from an early stage in shaping the development of the garden community and to ensure that related matters regarding infrastructure, particularly improvements to the A12 and A120, were considered. It was emphasised that the issues and options set out in the document were potential, broad proposals and that these could not be taken forward before the outcome of the Public Examination of Section 1 of the draft Local Plan was known.

The development of a garden community on the Colchester Borough/Braintree District border had been identified in the joint Strategic Section 1 of the draft Local Plans prepared by Braintree District Council, Colchester Borough Council and Tendring District Council. Policy SP9 of the joint draft Local Plan required the preparation of a Strategic Growth Development Plan Document, which would provide a framework for the subsequent preparation of more detailed master plans and other design and planning guidance for the site.

The draft Local Plans for Braintree and Colchester were currently at submission stage and they would be examined by an independent Inspector appointed by the Government. The proposed consultation on the master plan for the garden community would advise the Inspector how and where general policies could be delivered. The final Plan, once prepared, would include a shared vision and strategy for the delivery of a new garden community and detailed policies to guide

land-use proposals and to secure the timely delivery of development and infrastructure in the short, medium and long term.

A joint Issues and Options Development Plan Document had been prepared by Braintree District Council and Colchester Borough Council and this was attached at Appendix 1 to the report. The four 'North Essex Authorities', incorporating Braintree, Colchester and Tendring Councils and Essex County Council, had adopted a North Essex Garden Communities Charter containing ten place-making principles in accordance with which the development would be designed and delivered. The Charter and joint Section 1 of the Local Plans had guided the content of the Issues and Options Document.

The area of land identified in the Issues and Options document as the location for a new garden community on the Braintree/Colchester border had been refined following evaluation and consultation and it would be refined further as work on the Development Plan Document progressed. It was anticipated that a development could potentially deliver 24,000 homes and a community of an estimated 55,000 people over the long term of 30 years or more. This would be dependent on major infrastructure investments, including roads, railways and public transport being implemented over an extended period of time. The Concept Framework contained in the document set out two possible interim stages of development.

An SA and SEA had also been produced which provided a high-level evaluation of the potential social, economic and environmental impacts of development. The SA/SEA was attached at Appendix 2 to the report as an electronic Appendix. Comments were also being sought on the SA/SEA during the consultation period.

Consultation regarding the garden community would be an on-going process and Community Enablers had been appointed to help the community engage in the process over the long term.

In discussing this Item, a Member referred to the font size of the text contained within the Issues and Options Document and the contrast between the text and the background colour. It was agreed that the document should be easy to read and that its presentation should be reviewed to ensure that people could engage in the consultation process. An explanatory leaflet would also be produced.

DECISION:

- (1) That the Colchester/Braintree borders Garden Community Issues and Options Development Plan Document be approved for public consultation.
- (2) That the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment to accompany the Colchester/Braintree borders Garden Community Issues and Options Development Plan Document be approved for public consultation.
- (3) That the Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing, be authorised to make any final minor changes to the documents.

WEST OF BRAINTREE GARDEN COMMUNITY - ISSUES AND OPTIONS DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to a report on the West of Braintree Garden Community - Issues and Options Development Plan Document and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The documents would be subject to public consultation between 13th November 2017 and 8th January 2018. Members of the Local Plan Sub-Committee were advised that public consultation on the Issues and Options Document was not a statutory requirement. However, the Council considered it important to engage with the public and local communities from an early stage in shaping the development of the garden community and to ensure that the protection of existing communities was considered. It was emphasised that the issues and options set out in the document were potential, broad proposals and that these could not be taken forward before the outcome of the Public Examination of Section 1 of the draft Local Plan was known.

The development of a garden community to the West of Braintree had been identified in the joint Strategic Section 1 of the draft Local Plans prepared by Braintree District Council, Colchester Borough Council and Tendring District Council. Policy SP10 of the joint draft Local Plan required the preparation of a Strategic Growth Development Plan Document, which would provide a framework for the subsequent preparation of more detailed master plans and other design and planning guidance for the site. Two possible sites had been included within the Issues and Options document. Option 1 incorporated land within Uttlesford District, whilst Option 2 related to land solely within Braintree District. The development of a garden community to the West of Braintree had also been included within the Uttlesford Preferred Options Local Plan which had been published for consultation earlier in 2017. Policy SP8 of that Plan proposed a garden community which could provide 3,500 homes within the Uttlesford District over the long term, with 970 homes being delivered within the Plan period.

The draft Local Plan for Braintree was currently at submission stage and it would be examined by an independent Inspector appointed by the Government. The proposed consultation on the master plan for the garden community would advise the Inspector how and where general policies could be delivered. Uttlesford District Council was at an earlier stage in the Plan process, but it was anticipated that the Council would consult on its Submission Local Plan in early 2018 and that both the Braintree and Uttlesford Local Plans would be adopted in late 2018. The final Plan, once prepared, would include a shared vision and strategy for the delivery of a new garden community and detailed policies to guide land-use proposals and to secure the timely delivery of development and infrastructure in the short, medium and long term.

A joint Issues and Options Development Plan Document had been prepared by Braintree District Council and Uttlesford District Council and this was attached at Appendix 1 to the report. The four 'North Essex Authorities', incorporating Braintree, Colchester and Tendring Councils and Essex County Council, had adopted a North Essex Garden Communities Charter containing ten place-making

principles in accordance with which the development would be designed and delivered. The Charter, the joint Section 1 of the Local Plans and the Uttlesford Draft Local Plan had guided the content of the Issues and Options Document.

The area of land identified in the Issues and Options document as the location for a new garden community at West of Braintree was as indicated within the two Local Plans and it would be refined further as work on the Development Plan Document progressed. It was anticipated that a development could potentially deliver 10,000 – 13,500 homes and a community of an estimated 31,000 people over the long term of 30 years or more.

An SA and SEA had also been produced which provided a high-level evaluation of the potential social, economic and environmental impacts of development. The SA/SEA was attached at Appendix 2 to the report as an electronic Appendix. Comments were also being sought on the SA/SEA during the consultation period.

Consultation regarding the garden community would be an on-going process and Community Enablers had been appointed to help the community engage in the process over the long term.

In discussing this Item, a Member referred to a typographical error on page 9 of the document in the third bullet point of the first paragraph relating to National Planning Policy within the 'Background' section. The error would be corrected.

DECISION:

- (1) That the West of Braintree Garden Community Issues and Options Development Plan Document be approved for public consultation.
- (2) That the Sustainability Appraisal/Strategic Environmental Assessment to accompany the West of Braintree Garden Community Issues and Options Development Plan Document be approved for public consultation.
- (3) That the Head of Planning Policy and Economic Development, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing, be authorised to make any final minor changes to the documents.

The meeting commenced at 6.05pm and closed at 6.53pm.

At the close of the meeting, the Chairman announced that the next meeting of the Local Plan Sub-Committee scheduled for 23rd November 2017 had been cancelled. The next meeting of the Sub-Committee would be held on 11th January 2018.

Councillor Mrs L Bowers-Flint
(Chairman)

APPENDIX

LOCAL PLAN SUB-COMMITTEE

6TH NOVEMBER 2017

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Details of Questions Asked / Statements Made During Public Question Time

1 Statement Relating to Agenda Item 5 – Colchester/Braintree Borders Garden Community - Issues and Options Development Plan Document

Statement by Mr Tom Foster, Chairman of the Campaign Against Urban Sprawl in Essex (CAUSE), Little Greys, Maldon Road, Kelvedon