

# Minutes

## Local Plan Sub-Committee

17th February 2016

Present:

Councillors	Present	Councillors	Present
D Bebb	Yes	Mrs J Money	Yes
Mrs L Bowers-Flint (Chairman)	Apologies	Lady Newton	Yes
G Butland	Yes	J O'Reilly-Cicconi	Yes
T Cunningham	Yes	Mrs W Scattergood	Yes
D Hume	Yes	Miss M Thorogood	Yes

Councillors Bowers, Horner, Mitchell, Ramage and Schwier were also in attendance.

### 35 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

**INFORMATION:** The following interests were declared:

Councillor G Butland declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 5 – Garden Communities Update as a Member of Essex County Council.

Councillor Lady Newton declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 5 – Garden Communities Update as a Member of Essex County Council.

### 36 **MINUTES**

**DECISION:** The Minutes of the meeting of the Local Plan Sub-Committee held on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2016 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 37 **QUESTION TIME**

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

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

### 38 **GARDEN COMMUNITIES UPDATE**

**INFORMATION:** Braintree District Council was in the process of preparing a new Local Plan to help shape, enhance and protect the economic, social, natural and built environments within the District. Tendring and Colchester Councils were producing their Local Plans to a common timetable with Braintree. Together with

Essex County Council the local authorities had committed to plan for current and future growth needs in North East Essex to 2032 and beyond. To aid co-ordination and the legal requirement of the Duty to Co-operate, the Councils were working on a Memorandum of Understanding and a joint approach to strategic plan-making. This included exploring the concept of Garden Communities to potentially deliver part of the growth required within the North East Essex area. In addition, as part of the Local Plan processes, a common evidence base had been developed. This included evidence on housing, the economy, transport and the natural environment.

In accordance with this strategic approach, each Council's Local Plan Issues and Options consultations had included the potential for new settlements. To aid the consideration of Garden Communities, the local authorities had jointly appointed Garden City Developments CIC (GCD), a not for profit community interest company, to promote and establish partnerships with third party landowners and option holders to investigate the feasibility of Garden Communities.

A Garden Community may contribute to achieving a proportion of the assessed housing needs of the District. However, it was not the only solution and other sites would also be required to make the Council's 'preferred options' consultation robust. A Garden Community would need to be of sufficient scale to be viable and therefore development was likely to extend throughout and beyond the emerging Local Plan period.

Each local planning authority had committed considerable expenditure for their plan making processes; supported as appropriate by Essex County Council. However, the strategic scale and specialist nature of Garden Communities required dedicated resources and specialist advice to investigate and potentially develop proposals. In recognition of this and in promotion of the Garden Communities movement, the Government had awarded the North East Essex authorities dedicated funding of £640,000 to explore the potential of such settlements. This funding would not commit the Council to including a Garden Community in its preferred options consultation.

**DECISION:** That the progress made in relation to the consideration and assessment of Garden Communities as part of the Local Plan process be noted.

That the award of £640,000 of grant assistance from the Department of Communities and Local Government be noted.

## 39 **DRAFT TREE STRATEGY DOCUMENT**

**INFORMATION:** The Tree Strategy aimed to provide a comprehensive approach to the management and maintenance of trees in the geographical area administered by Braintree District Council.

The strategy had been prepared as a two part document.

Part 1 provided a policy framework which supported the Council's Core Strategy and Part 2 detailed practical guidance and implications of trees and development.

A draft version of the document had been subject to consultation with comments by Town and Parish Councils, community tree wardens and specialist interest groups during October 2015. This Agenda report provided a summary of the salient points within the strategy and the responses to the consultation.

**DECISION:** That the Tree Strategy be approved as a planning guidance document.

40 **BRAINTREE DISTRICT COUNCIL – STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET  
ASSESSMENT UPDATE - AFFORDABLE HOUSING NEEDS**

**INFORMATION:** As part of the new Local Plan, Braintree together with the local authorities within its Strategic Housing Market Area (Chelmsford, Colchester, and Tendring) had commissioned an update to the assessment of affordable housing need. Whilst the previous work undertaken had been relatively recent, new Government guidance on the assessment of housing need had been released and the latest assessment had taken into account new methodology, producing a robust assessment of affordable housing need.

For Braintree District, the findings of the assessment were that there should be 218 new affordable homes in the District per year. Based on the figure for objectively assessed housing need of 845, this represented 25.8% of the total new homes. Of the 218 homes, the assessment suggested that 216 of these should be affordable/social rent and two should be shared ownership. The assessment also provided evidence on the size requirements of homes for both the open market and affordable sectors.

**DECISION:** That the Strategic Housing Market Assessment update on affordable housing need be approved as part of the evidence base for the Local Plan.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and closed at 6.54pm.

Councillor Mrs W Scattergood  
(Vice-Chairman in the Chair)