

Minutes

Local Plan Sub-Committee

11th February 2020

Present:

Councillors	Present	Councillors	Present
D Bebb	Yes	P Horner	Yes
K Bowers	Yes (from 5.03pm)	D Hume	Apologies
G Butland	Yes	Mrs G Spray (Chairman)	Yes
T Cunningham	Yes	T Walsh	Yes
A Everard	Yes (from 5.04pm)	J Wrench	Yes

Councillors Hicks and Schwier were also in attendance.

24 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

INFORMATION: The following interests were declared:

Councillor G Butland declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Items 5 and 6 as a non-remunerated Director of North Essex Garden Communities Ltd.

Councillor Mrs G Spray declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Items 5 and 6 as a non-remunerated Director (without voting rights) of North Essex Garden Communities Ltd.

Councillor T Walsh declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Items 5 and 6 as a member of PAIN (Parishes Against Incineration) and as a supporter of some positions promoted by CAUSE (Campaign Against Urban Sprawl in Essex).

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

25 **MINUTES**

DECISION: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Local Plan Sub-Committee held on 17th October 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

26 **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.

27 **STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT - POST CONSULTATION UPDATE**

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to a report on a review of the Statement of Community Involvement. The Statement set out how the Council would consult residents and stakeholders on planning matters, including public consultation on the Local Plan, Neighbourhood Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents; how the Council would assist Neighbourhood Planning areas or forums; and the process for submitting comments about planning applications.

The Statement had last been updated in 2013. The revised Statement complied with Regulations issued under the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 and with the Town and Country Planning Regulations 2017, which stipulated that a Statement of Community Involvement should be reviewed at least once every five years.

A revised draft of the Statement of Community Involvement had been approved by the Local Plan Sub-Committee on 10th January 2019 for the purpose of public consultation. At that meeting, Members of the Sub-Committee had expressed concern about possible changes to the consultation process for planning applications which could lead to site notices no longer being displayed and neighbour notification letters not being sent for all planning applications. In response, Section 7 of the Statement relating to public consultation on Development Management applications and enforcement had been redrafted. The revised Section had been considered and endorsed by the Planning Committee on 4th February 2020.

The updated version of the Statement of Community Involvement was attached at Appendix A to the Agenda report and a summary of the changes made to the Statement was set out in the report. Public consultation on the draft Statement had taken place between 11th January 2019 and 11th March 2019. A summary of the comments submitted and an Officer response to each was attached at Appendix B to the Agenda report.

In considering this Item, Members of the Local Plan Sub-Committee recognised the importance of keeping Parish/Town Councils within the District informed about Local Plan issues and significant planning applications in their areas. Whilst it was acknowledged that Braintree District Council Officers attended Parish and Town Council meetings to provide advice and information, it was suggested that specific training sessions should be provided for local Councils, particularly as a number of new Councillors had been appointed following the local Elections in 2019. Similar training sessions had been held in the past.

In discussing Neighbourhood Planning, Members of the Local Plan Sub-Committee were pleased to note that a number of local Councils within the District were pursuing the adoption of a Neighbourhood Plan. Members of the Sub-Committee thanked Officers of the Rural Community Council for Essex and Braintree District

Council's Planning Policy Team for the assistance they provided to Councils regarding these Plans.

It was noted that the planning section of Braintree District Council's website was currently under review to ensure that it was user friendly and accessible. It was suggested that information relating to 'frequently asked questions' should be incorporated within the site if this was not already available.

DECISION: That the Statement of Community Involvement (2020) be adopted.

28

BRAINTREE DISTRICT PUBLICATION DRAFT LOCAL PLAN 2017 - UPDATE

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to a verbal, update report on the Braintree District Publication Draft Local Plan 2017.

It was reported that the Examination of Section 1 of the Publication Draft Local Plan had re-opened and that it had been held over a period of seven days during January 2020. This Examination session had been called to consider additional information requested by the Inspector relating to the 'Habitat Regulations Assessment'; 'employment provision'; 'housing need'; 'build-out rates'; 'delivery mechanisms and state aid'; 'transport and infrastructure'; 'viability'; and the 'sustainability appraisal'. At the close of the Examination, the Inspector had stated that he would be publishing an interim letter outlining his opinion as to how the draft Local Plan should proceed.

It was reported that there were three options available to the Inspector. These were to find Section 1 of the Draft Plan 'sound'; to find it 'sound subject to modification'; or to find that the Plan could not be made sound'. Any modifications to the Plan would be published by the Inspector for public consultation and the Inspector would determine whether or not to accept these. The Council would decide whether or not to accept the Inspector's decision. If the Council considered that the Inspector's recommendation was incorrect, it could ask the Secretary of State for Housing and Local Government to intervene. Third parties could challenge the Inspector's decision via the High Court.

It was hoped that the Inspector's opinion with regard to Section 1 of the Publication Draft Local Plan would be positive and that the Examination of Section 2 of the Plan would be able to proceed.

DECISION: That the verbal, update report on the Braintree District Publication Draft Local Plan 2017 be noted.

The meeting commenced at 5.00pm and closed at 5.57pm.

Councillor Mrs G Spray
(Chairman)