

Minutes

Local Plan Sub-Committee

10th January 2019

Present:

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

Councillor Barlow and Councillor Schwier were also in attendance.

21 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

INFORMATION: The following interests were declared:

Councillor Mrs L Bowers-Flint declared a non-pecuniary interest in Items on the Agenda relating to Garden Communities, as a non-remunerated, non-voting Member and Deputy to Councillor G Butland, of North Essex Garden Communities Ltd.

Councillor G Butland declared a non-pecuniary interest in Items on the Agenda relating to Garden Communities, as a non-remunerated Member of North Essex Garden Communities Ltd.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, Councillors remained in the meeting 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 15th November 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

23 **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.

STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT - DRAFT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to a report on an update to the Statement of Community Involvement.

The Statement of Community Involvement explained how the Council would engage with residents and stakeholders on planning matters, including public consultation on the Local Plan, Neighbourhood Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents, and how comments could be made about planning applications. The Statement of Community Involvement had been adopted initially in July 2006 and it had last been updated in October 2013. A review of the document was now required at least once every five years.

The Statement of Community Involvement had been updated following changes to legislation and Regulations; corporate priorities; forms of communication; and methods for consulting on planning applications. Details of the changes were summarised in the report and the updated document was attached as an Appendix to the report. The document would be subject to a six week period of public consultation and the responses submitted and recommended amendments to the document would be reported to the Local Plan Sub-Committee.

In discussing the draft Statement of Community Involvement, Members of the Sub-Committee made reference to the methods which the Council would use to engage with the community about Local Plans and related documents and, in particular, the proposal that depositing documents at public libraries for inspection by the public would become a less important consultation method. Members expressed concern about this change as they recognised that not everyone had access to other forms of communication such as new technology, social media and newspapers.

Members of the Sub-Committee expressed concern also about possible changes to the consultation process regarding planning applications. These changes could lead to reduced use of newspaper notices and notification letters and increased use of the Council's website, social media and automatic notifications via email. In particular, Members were concerned that site notices may no longer be displayed and that neighbour notification letters may not be sent for all planning applications. Members considered that the use of site notices and notification letters was an important means of communication and that their use should not be restricted.

DECISION: That the updated Statement of Community Involvement be approved for public consultation for a period of six weeks, subject to Members' comments regarding the use of public libraries for depositing documents; and the use of site notices and notification letters for consulting on planning applications, as outlined above, being noted.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2019–2021

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to a report on an updated version of the Local Development Scheme.

The Council was required to publish a Local Development Scheme, which set out the timetable for the production of the Local Plan, other Strategic Growth/Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents over the forthcoming three years. The revised, draft Local Development Scheme for 2019-2021 was attached as an Appendix to the report. The document would replace the previous Local Development Scheme for the period 2018–2020, which had been approved in May 2018.

Since the publication of the previous Local Development Scheme, the Planning Inspector appointed to conduct the examination of Section 1 of the Braintree District Publication Draft Local Plan 2017 had determined that more evidence relating to transport infrastructure; viability; and the Sustainability Appraisal was required in order to make the plans for Garden Communities in North Essex sound. In the circumstances, the Local Development Scheme had been updated to reflect the time required for this additional work and its impact on the Local Plan, including Section 2, and the preparation of Strategic Growth Development Plan Documents and Supplementary Planning Documents.

The Local Development Scheme had also been updated to reflect the progress made by Neighbourhood Planning Groups on Neighbourhood Plans; and the revised National Planning Policy Framework published in July 2018 which had introduced the 'Housing Delivery Test' and the 'Standard Methodology' for calculating local housing need. Other minor factual updates had also been made throughout the Local Development Scheme document to reflect updated evidence and legislative changes.

DECISION: That the Local Development Scheme 2019–2021 be approved.

26 **BRAINTREE DISTRICT PUBLICATION DRAFT LOCAL PLAN - UPDATE**

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to a progress report on the Braintree District Publication Draft Local Plan.

The Publication Draft Local Plan had been submitted to the Government for examination in October 2017. Section 1 of the Plan set out strategic policies which were shared with Colchester Borough Council and Tendring District Council, and it included proposals for three Garden Communities at West of Braintree, Colchester/Braintree borders and Tendring/Colchester borders. Section 2 of the Plan contained policies and proposals which related specifically to the Braintree District.

The Inspector appointed by the Planning Inspectorate had held joint oral examinations of Section 1 of the Plan in January and May 2018. The Inspector had concluded that the Plan as submitted was currently not sound and he had written to the joint Authorities setting out areas which required revision and asking the Authorities to consider the next stages of the Plan process. The Authorities had subsequently exchanged a series of letters with the Inspector regarding the way forward. The Authorities had advised the Inspector that additional work on the evidence base and Sustainability Appraisal for Section 1 of the Local Plan would be

completed and subject to consultation in Summer 2019 and that it was anticipated that examination sessions would take place in Autumn 2019. The Inspector had welcomed the Authorities' constructive proposals and he had commented on a number of issues including the programme for the examination of the Draft Local Plan. The Inspector had agreed that the Authorities should provide a monthly update to ensure that he was kept informed of progress on the Plan and to enable the programme to be adjusted if necessary. The Inspector had formally paused the examination process whilst further work was undertaken.

As required by the Inspector, the methodology of the Sustainability Appraisal for Section 1 of the Local Plan had been reviewed and it was subject to a seven week period of public consultation which would conclude on 1st February 2019. The Environment Agency, Natural England and Historic England had been invited to submit comments.

A revised Local Development Scheme setting out the updated timetable for Section 1 of the Publication Draft Local Plan and subsequent Plans had been prepared and it had been submitted to Members of the Local Plan Sub-Committee for approval earlier in the meeting. The Local Development Scheme would be kept under review.

DECISION: That the content of the report be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and closed at 6.27pm.

Councillor Mrs L Bowers-Flint
(Chairman)