

Minutes

Local Plan Sub-Committee 14th December 2020



This meeting was held in accordance with the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 via Zoom and YouTube.

Present:

Councillors	Present	Councillors	Present
J Abbott	Yes	A Everard	Yes
D Bebb	Yes	P Horner	Yes
K Bowers	Yes	D Hume	Yes
G Butland	Yes	Mrs J Sandum	Apologies
J Coleridge	Yes	Mrs G Spray (Chairman)	Yes
T Cunningham	Yes	J Wrench	Apologies

14 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

INFORMATION: The following interests were declared:

Councillor J Abbott declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 5 – ‘Local Development Scheme 2021–2023’ as an elected Member of Essex County Council which had prepared documents that formed part of the Development Plan and were referred to in the Scheme.

Councillor G Butland declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item 5 – ‘Local Development Scheme 2021–2023’ as an elected Member of Essex County Council which had prepared documents that formed part of the Development Plan and were referred to in the Scheme.

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

15 **MINUTES**

DECISION: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Local Plan Sub-Committee held on 17th September 2020 be approved as a correct record.

16 **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.

17 **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2021–2023**

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 setting out a rolling programme and identifying the key stages and timescales for the preparation of planning documents which would form Braintree District Council's Development Plan. The revised, draft Local Development Scheme for 2021-2023 was attached as an Appendix to the report. The document would replace the previous Local Development Scheme for the period 2019–2021, which had been approved in January 2019.

It was reported that the timetable set out in the Local Development Scheme had been updated to reflect the progress made on the examination of Section 1 of the emerging Local Plan and the subsequent impact of this on the timetable for the examination of Section 2 of the Plan. References to Strategic Growth Development Plan Documents for garden community sites to the West of Braintree and on the Colchester/Braintree border had been removed from the Scheme to reflect the Local Plan Inspector's proposed modifications to Section 1. The Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) section of the Scheme had been amended to refer to the adoption of the Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) SPD. Information relating to evidence base documents, Neighbourhood Planning activities and revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework had been updated. Other minor updates had also been made throughout the document to reflect evidence and legislative changes, and the impact of the on-going COVID-19 pandemic had been added to the table of potential risks.

In an update to the report, Members of the Local Plan Sub-Committee were advised that the reference in the Scheme to the current stage of the Neighbourhood Plan for

the Parish of Feering was incorrect and that it should indicate that the Parish Council was 'working towards Regulation 15 consultation' for the Plan.

DECISION: That the Local Development Scheme 2021–2023 be approved, subject to the reference in Section 5 of the Scheme to the current stage of the Neighbourhood Plan for the Parish of Feering being amended to 'working towards Regulation 15 consultation'.

18 **BRAINTREE DISTRICT PUBLICATION DRAFT LOCAL PLAN 2017 –
EXAMINATION PROCESS UPDATE**

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to a progress report on the examination of Section 1 and Section 2 of the Braintree District Publication Draft Local Plan 2017.

Braintree District Council, Colchester Borough Council and Tendring District Council (the North Essex Authorities (NEAs)) had agreed jointly to pursue Section 1 of the draft Plan, subject to the removal of the proposed garden community sites to the West of Braintree and on the Colchester/Braintree border. Following this decision, the Inspector appointed to determine Section 1 of the draft Plan had issued his proposed main modifications. These modifications, together with updates to the Habitats Regulation Assessment and the Sustainability Appraisal had been subject to a period of public consultation, which had closed on 9th October 2020. A total of 382 responses had been submitted from across North Essex regarding the main modifications, together with a smaller number of responses to the revised Habitats Regulation Assessment and the revised Sustainability Appraisal. All of the responses had been published on-line.

As part of the public consultation, the Inspector had invited comments on the 2018-based household growth projections issued by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) on 29th June 2020 and on the views of the NEAs as to whether or not the ONS projections represented a meaningful change to housing requirements. A total of 59 responses had been submitted. These too had been published on-line. The Inspector was required to consider the responses to the public consultation and all other information before him and to issue a draft final report.

In an update to the Agenda report, it was stated that the Inspector had published his draft final report on 10th December 2020. This report set out the Inspector's conclusions on the soundness and legal compliance of Section 1 of the draft Local Plan.

With regard to the housing requirement figures set out in the draft Plan, the Inspector had concluded that the 2018-based household growth projections for the Braintree District did not provide a reliable basis for assessing Braintree's housing requirements. However, the Inspector considered that a reduction in the number of additional households per annum would not lead to an excessive or unreasonable

disparity between the submitted housing requirement and the future need for housing in Braintree and he did not regard it as a sufficiently meaningful change to justify the considerable delay to plan-making that would occur if the housing requirement were to be reviewed. In the circumstances, the housing target for the Braintree District had been retained at an average of 716 homes per annum.

Overall, the Inspector had concluded, that provided Section 1 of the Plan was modified in line with his final recommendations it satisfied the requirements of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, it met the Government's tests and it could be found to be sound.

It would be for each of the NEAs to formally adopt Section 1 of the Local Plan independently. If appropriate, adoption could be deferred to a later date and Braintree District Council would make a decision on the date of adoption early in the New Year 2021.

In accordance with 'Procedural Practice Guidance in the Examination of Local Plans', the Planning Inspectorate would now set the timetable for the examination of Section 2 of the draft Local Plan and provide details of information and arrangements required by the Inspectors who had been appointed to conduct the examination. It was reported that work had already commenced on updating the housing supply trajectory for the Braintree District in readiness. Examination Hearings would take place virtually and members of the public would be able to view them.

In discussing this Item, Members of the Local Plan Sub-Committee thanked Ms Emma Goodings, Head of Planning and Economic Growth and her Team for their considerable work and input to the draft Local Plan process.

DECISION: That the report be noted.

Statement of Community Involvement - Extension of Temporary Exemptions for Public Consultation

At the close of the meeting reference was made to the 'Statement of Community Involvement'. This document set out how the Council engaged 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.

Members of the Local Plan Sub-Committee were reminded that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government had implemented temporary exemptions from consultation requirements. These exemptions had been due to expire in December 2020, but the Government had decided to extend them until December 2021.

A report on the Statement of Community Involvement and the implications of the extension of temporary exemptions would be submitted to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and closed at 6.45pm.

Councillor Mrs G Spray
(Chairman)