

Minutes



Local Development Framework Panel

22nd September 2010

Present:

Councillors	Present	Councillors	Present
G Butland	Yes	H J Messenger	Yes
A V E Everard	Yes	Lady Newton	Yes
N R H O Harley	Yes	Mrs W D Scattergood	Yes
M C M Lager	Yes	Miss M Thorogood	Yes
N G McCrea	Yes	R G Walters	Yes

Councillor J E Abbott, Dr R L Evans, Councillor D Mann, R Ramage and Mrs J A Smith were also in attendance.

16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

INFORMATION: The following declarations of interest were made:

Councillor J E Abbott declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 5 - Core Strategy Submission Draft as he was the Chairman of Rivenhall Parish Council which had submitted representations on the Core Strategy.

Councillor M C M Lager declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 5 - Core Strategy Submission Draft as he was a Member of Witham Town Council which had submitted representations on the Core Strategy.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct the Councillors remained in the meeting. Councillor Abbott spoke during Question Time and Councillor Lager took part in the discussion when the item was considered.

17 MINUTES

DECISION: The Minutes of the meeting of the Local Development Framework Panel held on 4th August 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

18 QUESTION TIME

INFORMATION: There were eleven statements made a summary of which is contained in the Appendix to these Minutes.

INFORMATION: Consideration was given to a report on the representations which had been submitted on the Core Strategy Submission Draft following public consultation.

Members were advised that the Core Strategy Submission Draft had been published for public consultation on 10th May 2010. The period for the submission of representations had been extended to 8th July 2010 to enable comments to be made on the proposed abolition of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS). A total of 1128 representations had been submitted by 347 people. Appendix 2 to the report set out a summary of the representations submitted, including those relating to the abolition of the RSS; growth locations; and alternative sites. The Officers' recommendations in respect of each representation were also set out in Appendix 2. Those recommendations which proposed changes to the Core Strategy were also included out in Appendix 1 of the report. As required by The Planning Inspectorate, these had been categorised as 'focused changes' and 'minor changes'. It was proposed that the changes would be published for consultation between 8th October 2010 and 19th November 2010. It was not proposed that any of the growth locations identified in the Core Strategy should be changed, or removed.

A report to the last meeting of the Panel had set out the Government's guidance on the abolition of the East of England Plan – the Regional Spatial Strategy and the implications of this for the Core Strategy. The Panel had agreed to continue with the preparation of the Core Strategy and had rejected the option of increasing the housing requirement for the District. The Council was now required to determine whether to continue with the proposed housing provision contained in Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy and which was based on the RSS assessment, or to decrease the housing provision.

The East of England Plan had required 7,700 dwellings to be provided in the Braintree District over the period 2001 to 2021 and a minimum requirement of 385 dwellings per year. However, the number of dwellings provided over the period 2001 to 2008 had exceeded this figure and the remaining housing requirement for the period 2009 to 2026 now amounted to 4,637, representing an average of 272 dwellings per annum. This was a low annual figure compared to past levels of growth in the District. Furthermore, the number of additional dwellings completed over the past year had been as anticipated and it did not affect the overall housing requirement.

Whilst the RSS had been abolished, the population growth and housing need evidence base which had supported the calculation of the housing requirement was still relevant. In particular, the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008 indicated that an annual supply of 673 new affordable homes was needed in the District. It was proposed that 30% of the growth locations identified in the Core Strategy would contribute to this need. However, it was also considered that there was a need to achieve a better balance between housing and local jobs and to deter commuting out of the District. It was acknowledged also that house building supported the local economy and the regeneration of previously developed land, and that a reduction in housing provision could have an adverse affect.

It was proposed that the provision of a minimum of 4637 dwellings in Braintree District for the period 2009 and 2026, as set out in Policy CS1, should be retained in the Core Strategy as this was based on sound evidence of housing need.

In discussing the report, the Corporate Director made specific reference to a representation submitted by Countryside Properties (Special Projects) Ltd regarding Chapter 6 – Economy, Paragraphs 6.11 – 6.23, Policy CS4, Map 5 and the inclusion of B8 uses on employment land to the west of the A131 Great Notley (Appendix 2 pages 90 and 91). It was noted that on 14th April 2010 the Local Development Framework Panel had agreed to exclude B8 uses from the site. However, the Council had subsequently sought independent advice which corroborated the view of Countryside Properties that the exclusion of a B8 use would be a hindrance to the effective/efficient delivery of the site. It was proposed that the recommendation should be amended from 'No Change' to 'restrict the overall quantum of B8 use to no more than 40% of the total floor area and restrict the largest unit size to 7,500 sq m'. It was also suggested that the following amendments should be made to the proposed focused changes namely, Chapter 5 Housing, Paragraph 5.26 – to include a reference to the definition of affordable housing as being that set out in PPS3; Chapter 5 Housing, Paragraph 5.29 – the sentence '(A pitch normally accommodates two caravans)' to be retained; and Chapter 6, Economy Table 1 Employment Land – '2010' to be highlighted and '2009' to be added with a strike through.

Reference was made to the Coalition Government's Localism Bill and proposals to engage more with communities on local planning matters. It was noted that more details regarding the Bill were awaited and that the Bill was unlikely to become law until 2011. In considering the report, Members were mindful of the need to look to the future and the provision of affordable housing for the District.

DECISION: That it be **Recommended to Council:-**

- (1) That the proposed housing provision of a minimum of 4637 dwellings in the Braintree District between 2009 and 2026, as set out in Policy CS1 of the Core Strategy, be retained.
- (2) That the focused changes and minor changes to the Core Strategy as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved and published for the purpose of consultation in accordance with the procedure referred to in Appendix 1, subject to the recommendation relating to the representation submitted by Countryside Properties (Special Projects) Ltd regarding Chapter 6 – Economy, Paragraphs 6.11 – 6.23, Policy CS4, Map 5 and the inclusion of B8 uses on employment land to the west of the A131 Great Notley being amended from 'No Change' to 'restrict the overall quantum of B8 use to no more than 40% of the total floor area and restrict the largest unit size to 7,500 sq m'. The following amendments to the proposed focused changes were also agreed namely, Chapter 5 Housing, Paragraph 5.26 – to include a reference to the definition of affordable housing as being that set out in PPS3; Chapter 5 Housing, Paragraph 5.29 – the sentence '(A pitch normally accommodates two caravans)' to be retained; and Chapter 6, Economy Table 1 Employment Land – '2010' to be highlighted and '2009' to be added with a strike through.

- (3) That the Sustainability Appraisal of the Core Strategy be reviewed to take account of the focused changes.
- (4) That the progress of the Localism Bill be monitored and representations made, as appropriate, to ensure that local opinion is at the heart of local planning.

DECISION:

- (1) That the Statement of Community Involvement be amended to refer to the Local Development Framework Panel rather than the District Development Committee.
- (2) That the Sustainable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) report, which forms part of the evidence base, be amended to advocate Natural England's request for 8 hectares of SANG per 1000 people to offset new development and conclude that this is achievable.

20 WATER CYCLE STUDY

INFORMATION: The Chairman stated that there was currently no information to report under this item and that it would be deferred to the next meeting.

DECISION: That a report on the Water Cycle Study be submitted to the next meeting of the Local Development Framework Panel.

The meeting commenced at 6.00pm and closed at 7.32pm.

Councillor N G McCrea

(Chairman)

APPENDIX

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK PANEL

22ND SEPTEMBER 2010

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Summary of Questions Asked / Statements Made During Public Question Time

Statements Relating to Agenda Item 5 – Core Strategy Submission Draft

(i) Statement by Mr F Sheldrake, 11 Oakley Road, Braintree

Mr Sheldrake referred to proposals for land at Panfield Lane, Braintree. Mr Sheldrake considered that any new housing estate should have an access road direct to the Braintree bypass in order to keep traffic away from Braintree town centre. This had been achieved for earlier estates such as Beckers Green, Marks Farm and Great Notley.

(ii) Statement by Mr E Gittins, Edward Gittins Associates

Mr Gittins stated that he represented various clients and, in particular, two clients with large land holdings in Coggeshall and Kelvedon which he was putting forward as strategic sites. Mr Gittins expressed concern that these sites were not being assessed or drawn to the attention of Members as being alternative sites for consideration.

Mrs E Dash, Planning Policy Manager, outlined the procedure which had been followed in developing and consulting on the draft Core Strategy. Mrs Dash explained that it was not possible to assess strategic sites at this stage and that it would be for the Inspector to consider any such proposals.

(iii) Statement by Mr S Pearman, 10 Witham Lodge, Witham

Mr Pearman referred to the Coalition Government's decision to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies, and how Councils were uncertain how they should respond to this. Mr Pearman considered that the report submitted to the Panel was largely based on the previous Government's Regional Spatial Strategy calculations, but that the Panel should now instead be re-assessing housing provision based on local rather than Government opinion. Mr Pearman suggested that the Council should put work on the Core Strategy on hold and not recommend its adoption; that, once the Localism Bill had been enacted, the Council should determine how it should consult with local people in order to take account of local needs; and that, once the new Act had been enacted and consultation responses had been received, the Council should then recommend changes to the Core Strategy.

(iv) Statement by Councillor P Barlow, Witham Town Council

Councillor Barlow expressed concern about the proposed growth locations at Forest Road, Rivenhall and Lodge Farm, Witham. Councillor Barlow stated that Lodge Farm was situated in Witham South Ward which had already seen

significant development in recent years. Councillor Barlow considered that further development would compromise the green wedge between Hatfield Peverel and Witham. Councillor Barlow referred to the local opposition to the proposals and he stated that the District Council was proposing development where it was not needed, or wanted. Councillor Barlow considered that the Core Strategy should be withdrawn to enable full consultation to take place with local people in accordance with the new process being put forward by the Coalition Government.

(v) Statement by Mr A Phillips, 9 Witham Lodge, Witham

Mr Phillips stated that the residents of South Witham had welcomed the development of land at Maltings Lane which had now risen to over 1000 dwellings. However, Mr Phillips indicated that no shops, doctors surgery, or community hall had been provided to date which put pressure on existing facilities. Mr Phillips considered that the proposed development on land at Lodge Farm, Witham, which was currently high quality agricultural land, would condemn the South of Witham to development for many years to come despite opposition from Witham Town Council.

(vi) Statement by Mrs M Robins, 1 Witham Lodge, Witham

Mrs Robins stated that living in Witham had been overshadowed by the development of land at Maltings Lane which had still not provided the requisite community facilities. Mrs Robins considered that there had been lost opportunities to commence building work on the Maltings Lane business park which could have provided jobs. Mrs Robins expressed concern about the noise and fumes which came from living next door to a construction site and she did not consider that it was appropriate to designate another development site across the road from Maltings Lane. Mrs Robins considered that new housing should be provided where it was needed and she requested that the Lodge Farm proposal should be deleted.

(vii) Statement by Mr S Aldridge, 31 Augustus Way, Witham

Whilst Mr Aldridge acknowledged the need for affordable housing, he questioned what facilities were proposed. Mr Aldridge stated that his quality of life had been affected by the Maltings Lane development in Witham.

(viii) Statement by Mr D Leverett, 21 Yew Close, Witham

Mr Leverett spoke against the proposed development of 300 houses at Forest Road, Rivenhall and he referred to the local opposition. Mr Leverett questioned what community facilities eg, dentist, doctors surgery and youth club would be provided. Mr Leverett questioned how the land had been designated as development land as he had understood that it was green belt land.

(ix) Statement by Councillor R Wright, 303 Rickstones Road, Rivenhall

Councillor Wright considered the Rivenhall Design Statement had not been given sufficient weight as part of the Core Strategy process. Councillor Wright referred to the boundary of Rivenhall Parish and whether, or not the Forest Road site was in the countryside.

(x) Statement by Councillor J E Abbott, 1 Waterfall Cottages, Park Road, Rivenhall

Councillor Abbott referred to the considerable opposition to the development of land for housing at Lodge Farm, Witham and Forest Road, Rivenhall which Witham Town Council and Rivenhall Parish Council were against. Councillor Abbott stated that this opposition had also been highlighted by recent surveys of residents. Councillor Abbott indicated that there was an alternative development site at Conrad Road, Witham which he considered would be a better option. Councillor Abbott stated that the Forest Road site was within Rivenhall Parish, not Witham as indicated on maps and in reports and that the Rivenhall Design Statement had been dismissed as part of the Core Strategy process. Councillor Abbott expressed concern about the impact that two new housing developments would have on traffic in Witham town centre which was already very congested at peak times.

(xi) Statement by Mr S Bolter, Wickham House, Gestingthorpe

Mr Bolter was not present at the meeting and his prepared statement was read in his absence by Mr A Peace, Member Services Manager,

The statement referred to the proposed development of land at Sible Hedingham and the lack of provision in the Core Strategy for a Neighbourhood Centre and improved public transport.