

**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
NOTES OF A MEETING OF PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL
HELD ON TUESDAY, 2 SEPTEMBER 2014
IN COMMITTEE ROOM 1, CIVIC OFFICES, HIGH STREET, EPPING
AT 7.35 - 8.46 PM**

Members Present: G Chambers (Chairman), Ms Y Knight (Vice-Chairman), D Dorrell, H Kauffman, B Surtees, A Watts and D Wixley

Other members present: R Bassett, J Philip and D Stallan

Apologies for Absence: Mrs M McEwen, B Sandler and Ms G Shiell

Officers Present D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhoods), N Richardson (Assistant Director (Development Management)), P Millward (Business Manager) and M Jenkins (Democratic Services Assistant)

11. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

There were no substitutions made at the meeting.

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made pursuant to the Member's Code of Conduct.

13. NOTES FROM THE LAST MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the notes of the last meeting of the Panel held on 8 July 2014 be agreed.

14. TERMS OF REFERENCE

At the last panel meeting, the members revised their Terms of Reference and the new draft was submitted to this meeting for onward recommendation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Panel supported the new draft and made only one amendment to Item 8 whereby "Development Control" was amended to "Development Management."

15. WORK PROGRAMME

At the last Panel meeting the members revised their Work Programme, the current draft was agreed for onward recommendation to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Members made two amendments:

- (a) Item 6 under Progress/Comments amend to "Consider and report on any recent meeting of the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Area and District Committees Invitation Panel;" and

- (b) Item 9 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) should be placed under Item 2 making it (c), as it was felt that the CIL could only be used when the Local Plan was finalised.

16. LOCAL PLAN - PROGRESS REPORT

The Panel received a progress report regarding the Local Plan from the Director of Neighbourhoods.

The July Cabinet meeting agreed a revised Local Development Scheme proposing the next stage of consultation which would run between May to July 2015. The Panel were updated on the collation of evidence.

1. Strategic Housing Market Assessment

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) was being updated with a draft report expected by the end of October. The report would help identify the District's Objectively Assessed Housing Need and constitute an approach to future housing provision. A report was scheduled for the Cabinet in December 2014.

2. North Weald Airfield and Village Masterplan

Progress had been made on the masterplanning work for North Weald Bassett in consideration of the way the airfield would relate to the wider village. A draft report on the second phase and the development of options had been received following the exhibition in June a final report would be submitted to the Cabinet in October.

3. Plan Viability

The contract for the work on plan viability was well underway.

4. Economic and Employment Evidence

Consultants had been engaged for further work on economic and employment evidence for supporting the Local Plan and the Economic Development Strategy.

5. Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment

The joint Essex-wide Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment had been completed with briefings by the consultants held in July 2014. The Planning Policy Portfolio Holder advised that there be a requirement for the district to source 112 extra Gypsy and Traveller pitches, although they would be around existing settlements.

6. Green Belt Review

In June, the Cabinet approved a draft methodology for a comprehensive Green Belt Review which outlined further work being undertaken based on the experience of other recent examinations, its main purpose being to undertake a comprehensive high level review of all such land across the district identifying its contribution to the Green Belt. The site survey work was currently underway and was due for completion by the end of September.

7. Developer Briefings

In conjunction with Harlow and East Herts Councils Developer Briefings had been held for large BLAA sites on the edge of Harlow for setting out their current thinking on proposals for the development of these sites. This would assist officers in assessing which sites were deliverable, the timing of delivery, infrastructure requirements and also acted as supporting evidence for the Local Plan but also East Hert's plan.

8. Other Council's Plans

Responses had been prepared to the publication of the Pre-Submission Local Plan for Uttlesford and to the Harlow Emerging Strategy and Further Options consultation. The Council was a signatory to a letter sent from local authorities in the South East to the Greater London Authority in response to the consultation on the draft Further Alterations to the London Plan, expressing concern that it potentially undershot the provision of future homes London needed by a considerable margin. It failed to adequately plan for the interim level of need identified in the FALP of 49,000 dwellings per annum because only 42,000 were specifically allocated to London boroughs.

9. Duty to Co-Operate

Officers had been meeting regularly with the appropriate authorities to consider cross boundary issues including the update to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and identifying housing need, the approach to Green Belt reviews being carried out by several authorities and identifying the functional economic area. As such it was providing at officer level, a very useful forum for dealing with duty to co-operate matters in a positive manner.

10. Neighbourhood Plans

Moreton Bobbingworth and The Lavers had consulted on their draft Neighbourhood Plan and had used the "critical friend" service provided by the NPIERS Panel of Neighbourhood Plan examiners to review the draft plan. Theydon Bois Parish Council had applied for designation as a Neighbourhood Area in order to progress with a Neighbourhood Plan and was subsequently agreed at the July Cabinet. Epping Town Council had also requested the designation of their parish as a Neighbourhood Area and the Council was currently consulting on this. A report on designation would be put before the Cabinet in October 2014.

RESOLVED:

That the Progress Report on the Local Plan be noted.

17. THE LONDON INFRASTRUCTURE DELIVERY PLAN

The Panel received a report regarding the London Infrastructure Delivery Plan consultation from the Assistant Director of Governance (Development Management).

The London Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) had been published by the Mayor of London for consultation making the case for better infrastructure provision in London. The Mayor had published a number of key policy reports making the case as follows:

(a) The Independent London Finance Commission Report argued for the full devolution of property taxes to London government with an associated increase in

borrowing levels enabling London government to increase investment in its own infrastructure;

(b) The Mayor's 2020 Vision document identified world class infrastructure provision which met the city's needs;

(c) The Further Alterations to the London Plan (FALP) document set out the scale of the housing challenge to 2036 with planning policies to address it, including identified housing capacity to 2025. There were a range of other proposals about infrastructure and the environment ensuring good quality sustainable development; and

(d) The London First Infrastructure Commission examined the challenges faced by the capital because of growing population, workforce, ageing infrastructure and demanding fiscal context. The commission looked at all solutions to planning, delivery and financing for the future, specifically calling for stronger city wide strategic infrastructure planning with greater coordination across sectors.

The Panel noted that the London Infrastructure Delivery Plan did not set out how policies would be delivered, implemented and monitored. Instead, it made a business case for London to control its own finances through fiscal devolution.

The Panel supported the prioritization of transport schemes, such as four tracking the West Anglia Lines along the whole of the Upper Lee Valley and the Central Line because of:

- (i) Predicted job growth in Central London;
- (ii) The Central Line's importance in delivering commuters to this area; and
- (iii) Its particular importance to the lower end of the London-Stansted-Cambridge corridor.

The Panel were interested in obtaining more details on car parking facilities around train stations as there was currently a congestion problem there.

Members supported the Mayor's approach to London's growth by keeping it within current boundaries and not encroaching on the Green Belt, at least until the full London Plan Review undertaken in 2015. However, the IDP also included increasing densities across London to meet housing and transport requirements. It was important that the Mayor of London engaged fully and effectively with cross boundary partnerships in the medium to longer term. Any longer term trends for high population growth were likely to be seen in the context of improving public transport accessibility.

Members were advised that this report would be recommended to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for final response to the Mayor of London before the consultation deadline of 31 October 2014.

RECOMMENDED:

That the London Infrastructure Delivery Plan consultation be recommended to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for final response.

18. PROGRESS REPORT ELECTRONIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS FOR DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT - GOVERNANCE DIRECTORATE 2014-15

The Panel received a progress report regarding Electronic Information Systems Development Management from the Planning Service Business Manager.

Development Management was dependent on the operation of its planning database for both Development and Building Control which was linked to Information@work, the software for all plans, maps, photographs and documents.

Significant benefits came from reducing the use of paper, therefore work continued on improving electronic access to planning information by Parish and Town Councils. It was advised that the District Council was no longer able to print plans and other documentation received electronically for circulation to Parish and Town Councils. Officers were aware that Internet and computer equipment were limited in some areas, therefore progress had been made on improving the situation with funding for electronic projectors to Parish Councils. Fourteen Parish and Town Councils had made applications for grant funding to support electronic equipment.

Members were advised that there was an urgent need for the engagement of a full time permanent Systems Administration Officer for co-ordinating and managing Northgate M3 and Information@work for Planning/Building Control and iPlan on the District Council website. A business case for creating one post had been submitted as part of restructuring proposals in September 2014.

The iPlan User Group continued to meet and provided very good examples of feedback to assist in improving the quality of iPlan. It was intended to introduce Web Mapping linked to planning and building control information in late 2014.

A project to convert microfiche records to electronic format was due to begin in November/December 2014. The aim being to convert 71,000 historic Development Control microfiche jackets (4 million images) to electronic format during the course of the next twelve months.

Members noted the report and the progress made regarding electronic data, however they expressed frustration at the quality of the plans submitted to Development Control meetings. Officers advised that there was no legal requirement to control the types of plans displayed at meetings, adding that they were often hampered by the electronic technology available at meetings. In particular Area Plans South Sub-Committee had basic resources compared to the District Council's Chamber.

RESOLVED:

That the Progress Report regarding Electronic Information Systems for Development Management – Governance Directorate 2014-15 be noted.

19. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS 2014/15 - QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE

The Panel received a report regarding Key Performance Indicators 2014/15 – Quarter 1 Performance from the Assistant Director of Governance (Development Management).

As part of the Council's legislative duty a range of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) relevant to the Council's services and key objectives were adopted each year. Performance against the majority of KPIs was monitored on a quarterly basis.

A range of 36 KPIs for 2014/15 were adopted in March 2014, however recent changes made allowed for each scrutiny panel to be responsible for the review of quarterly performance rather than all indicators being considered by the Finance and Performance Management Scrutiny Panel.

The overall position with regard to the achievement of target performance for all of the KPIs at the end of the first quarter (1 April to 30 June 2014) was as follows:

- (a) 22 (60%) indicators achieved the cumulative third quarter target; and
- (b) 14 (39%) indicators did not achieve the cumulative third quarter target, although 4 (91%) of these performed within the tolerance for the indicator.

Of the 36 KPIs, 80% of the indicators were currently anticipated to achieve the cumulative year end target.

RESOLVED:

That the Key Performance Indicators 2014/15 – Quarter 1 Performance be noted.

20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman reminded Members that an extra meeting would need scheduling for February 2015. The new date agreed would be Thursday 26 February 2015.

21. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next programmed meeting of the Panel was scheduled for Tuesday 9 December 2014 at 7.30p.m. in Committee Room 1.