

## MINUTES

of the

### DEVELOPMENT POLICY COMMITTEE

held on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2007

Present:

Councillor D Ashford (Chairman)

Councillors J Galley, N. Gulliver, J.E. Hunnable, D.A. Lumley,  
G.H.J. Pooley, R. A. Ride, T E Roper, C.A. Rycroft, A.F. Sach,  
A.B. Sosin, R.J. Shepherd, R.T. Whitehead and T.N. Willis

Also in attendance Councillors I. Grundy, B. Patient and R. Stevens

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor M.J. Mackrory.

2. **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> February 2007 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

3. **Public Question Time**

Three statements were made regarding item 7 – North Chelmsford Area Action Plan – Issues and Options Consultation (Reg 25)

At the appropriate time a representative of Little Waltham Parish Council made a statement regarding item 7 'North Chelmsford Area Action Plan – Issues and Options Consultation (Reg 25)' and a representative of South Woodham Ferrers Town Council made a statement regarding item 8 'A Plan for South Woodham Ferrers – Draft SPD'.

4. **Announcements**

There were no announcements.

5. **Summary of the 'Planning for a Sustainable Future' White Paper**

The Committee considered a report summarising the proposals contained in the White Paper for a Sustainable Future and a number of associated consultation papers and examined the proposed changes within the planning process and the Council's suggested response, these included:

- (a) Planning fees – proposals for change
- (b) Changes to permitted development rights for householders

- (c) Planning Performance Agreements – A new way to manage large-scale major planning applications
- (d) Improving the appeal process – making it proportionate, customer focused, efficient and well resourced.

The Committee was informed that, in Officers' view whilst the 'paper' suggested some small but welcome initiatives overall it appeared to direct control from Local Authorities to Central Government. The Committee expressed concern at this aspect.

**RESOLVED** that the Director of Planning and Building Control Services be authorised to respond to the Department of Communities and Local Government to the White Paper in the terms as outlined in the report before the Committee.

6. **Site Allocations Document – Issues and Options Consultation (Reg 25)**

The Committee considered a report which sought its authorisation for the publication for public consultation of the Site Allocations Document. The Site Allocations document was a key document in the Local Development Framework (LDF) and in conjunction with the North Chelmsford Area Action Plan would be instrumental in the delivery of the Borough Council's Spatial Strategy up to 2021. It was reiterated that this document contained a series of options which, it was hoped, would be published for an eight week consultation period from 23<sup>rd</sup> July. Responses to that consultation would be used to prepare a Site Allocations Preferred Options consultation document (Reg 26) which was anticipated to be published for public consultation in Spring 2008.

A concern was raised as to how much protection was afforded to land outside the Green Belt but on the edge of the urban area. The Committee was informed that protection of countryside was paramount and that the community's views were being sought as to what level of protection would be afforded.

**RESOLVED** that the Site Allocations Document be agreed for formal consultation under Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, and that the Director of Planning and Building Control Services be authorised to undertake the necessary work to prepare the document for consultation.

7. **North Chelmsford Area Action Plan – Issues and Options Consultation (Reg 25)**

The Committee considered a report which sought its authorisation for the publication for public consultation of the North Chelmsford Area Action Plan Issues and Options document. The Plan would be used to deliver the major Greenfield element of the Borough's planned growth up to 2021, together with key infrastructure provision of the Borough Council's spatial strategy as set out in the Core Strategy.

The Committee was reminded that the key element of the Plan would be the development of two new neighbourhoods to the North of Chelmsford with the necessary infrastructure to support the new communities and enhance provision to existing communities. The Plan would also identify major transport infrastructure proposals including the NE Chelmsford bypass, new rail station, Park and Ride locations and a potential Cross Valley Link. It would also be used as a catalyst to assist wider regeneration objectives in North Chelmsford and to provide new employment sites.

Kevin Murray Associates had been commissioned by the Borough Council to assist in the preparation of the Plan. Kevin Murray attended the meeting and made a presentation on the scope and content of the document. The following questions were asked by the Committee.

What are the restraints on the provision of a new Secondary School as referred to in the presentation?

The Committee was informed that reports from the Education Authority had indicated that it would be easier to find land in the East Side on which to build a new School than to increase capacity in existing Schools on the West Side. It was also noted that Essex County Council Education Authority were well aware of problems involving bussing children from the East to the West side of Chelmsford.

To what extent is the Core Strategy dependant on the level of infrastructure proposed?

The Committee was informed that there were a series of prerequisites listed with the priorities set out and a list of very desirables. It was however noted that the new railway station was a key issue when considering the quantum and scale of development.

When the Broomfield Village Design Statement was prepared it had not taken account of the extra development proposed in Broomfield and that the document appeared to reject some sites.

The Committee was informed that a full and fair consultation would take place and that all sites would be available for public consultation.

Had Churches been consulted during the process up to now?

The Committee was informed that Churches had not been consulted in the process so far but that this would be part of a detailed stage later on in the process.

Is the Cross Valley link really necessary as it would probably lead to further development in that area?

The Committee was informed that if a Cross Valley link did take place it would be of the most sensitive design possible in order to minimise the effect in the area.

It was reiterated that this document contained a series of options which, it was hoped, would be published for an eight week consultation period from 23<sup>rd</sup> July. Responses to that consultation would be used to prepare a North Chelmsford Area Action Plan Preferred Options consultation document (Reg 26) which was anticipated to be published for public consultation in Spring 2008.

**RESOLVED** that the North Chelmsford Action Plan be agreed for formal consultation under Regulation 25 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, and that the Director of Planning Building Control Services be authorised to undertake the necessary work to prepare the document for consultation subject to the following amendment.

“Deletion of paragraph 9.6 of the report before the Committee and the substitution of the following:

#### The Broomfield Area

Development on this location would require the provision of additional infrastructure to meet the present and future needs of the community including an integrated retail neighbour hood centre located to the south of the village with appropriate public car parking together with primary health care facilities. Primary education provision together with enhanced public transport links to both Chelmsford Town Centre and the new neighbourhood at Springfield would also need to be considered.

#### The Springfield Area

Development in this location would require the provision of additional infrastructure to meet present and future needs of the community including an integrated retail neighbourhood centre with appropriate public car parking containing primary health care facilities and potentially a library. Primary and Secondary education provision together with enhanced public transport links to both Chelmsford town Centre and the new neighbourhood at Broomfield would also need to be addresses.

In both locations consideration will also need to be given to the provision of Public Open Space sites for employment use as well as the need to address foul and surface drainage issues”.

### 8. **A Plan for South Woodham Ferrers – Draft SPD**

The Committee considered a report on the draft South Woodham Ferrers (SWF) Plan. It was noted that the Plan had been prepared through a local steering group supported by SWF Town Council and Chelmsford Borough Council. The purpose of the Plan was to provide guidance for regeneration and improvement across the town, the country park and riverside, in the town centre and around the station and industrial areas. It would also support policies in the Core Strategy. The Committee welcomed the report.

**RESOLVED** that,

- 1 The draft document be approved and the Director of Planning and Building Control Services be authorised to issue the Plan for South Woodham Ferrers for formal public consultation in accordance with Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.
2. The Director of Planning and Building Control Services be authorised to make any minor amendments that are necessary to improve the content and presentation of the document before or after public consultation.

9. **Making Places SPD – Urban Site Guidance for Designers, Developers and Planners**

The Committee considered a report outlining the main issues that had been raised on the Making Places Supplementary Planning Document SPD. This followed its formal consultation which had been undertaken between 7<sup>th</sup> November and 19<sup>th</sup> December 2006. The Consultation draft had received 47 separate representations from 11 respondents. The document had been largely well received, all responses had been considered and where appropriate the guidance had been altered or refined.

It was noted that the document provided guidance to enable higher quality development to be achieved at higher densities. Some Members of the Committee expressed concern that most brownfield sites in the Town Centre were being developed with very high density schemes and that the Town Centre was in danger of being saturated with flatted developments.

The Committee was informed that the document sought a balance between high and lower density developments but that demand was led by smaller households ie one or two bedroom properties in the Town Centre.

**RESOLVED** that,

- 1 The amended Supplementary Planning Document - Making Places be treated as a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications pending adoption of the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD, and request Cabinet to ratify the decision.
2. The Director of Planning and Building Control Services be authorised to make any minor amendments that are necessary to improve the content and presentation of the document before final adoption.

10. **Sustainable Development Supplementary Planning Document SPD – Guidance on Sustainable Design and Construction Techniques**

The Committee considered a report outlining the representation responses and subsequent proposed changes to the SPD Guidance on Sustainable Design and Construction Techniques.

It was noted that the document provided guidance for the provision of schemes which minimised carbon impact and the depletion of natural resources.

The Committee was informed that once this SPD had been adopted it would help raise the environmental sustainability quality of new development across the Borough and assist in reducing the negative impacts of development upon the global and local environment.

**RESOLVED** that,

- 1 The amended Supplementary Planning Document on Sustainable Development and Construction be treated as a material planning consideration in the determination of planning applications, pending adoption of the Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD, and request Cabinet to ratify the decision.
2. The Director of Planning and Building Control Services be authorised to make any minor amendments that are necessary to improve the content and presentation of the document before final adoption.

11. **Affordable Housing SPD**

The Committee considered a report outlining the main issues that had been raised on the Consultation Draft Affordable Housing SPD. This followed its formal consultation which had been undertaken between 7<sup>th</sup> November and 19<sup>th</sup> December 2006.

The Committee was informed that the recent introduction of Government Guidance on Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMA) had been implemented and therefore causing the revision of timescales for the adoption of the interim Affordable Housing SPD to enable the assessment process sufficient time to be completed.

It was noted Fordham Research had been jointly commissioned by Chelmsford Borough Council, Braintree District Council and Colchester Borough Council to help prepare the evidence base and analysis of housing need and demand across all three areas required to complete a robust SHMA.

**RESOLVED** that the Council's responses to the representations and the interim adoption of the Affordable Housing SPD be deferred until the completion of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

12. **Chelmsford Town Centre Car Parking Strategy**

This item was withdrawn from the agenda and will be considered at a meeting of the Committee on 30<sup>th</sup> August, 2007.

13. **Consultation on Network Rail – Greater Anglia Route Utilisation Strategy**

The Committee considered a report on a consultation document by Network Rail on their Greater Anglia Route Utilisation Strategy (RUS) and the Council's suggested response. This had been a requirement of the Office of Rail Regulation modified Network Rail's network licence following the Rail Review 2004 and the Railways Act 2005.

It was noted that the Greater Anglia RUS covered the whole of East Anglia and included the Thameside route, the Great Eastern and the West Anglia Main Lines as well as the rural branches. The RUS included three important radial routes from London as well as containing a number of rural and cross country lines, it therefore related to a number of other strategies and policies.

The Committee was informed that the RUS examined a wider range of issues and had established a valuable evidence base.

**RESOLVED** that:

- 1 That the Council notes the Greater Anglia Route Utilisation Strategy, which discussed a number of key issues relating to rail network in the Chelmsford Area, subject to the issues raised in the discussion section of the report before the Committee. It is regretted that vision on capacity issues in the optioneering section of the Strategy is not as great as that in the London to Ipswich Multi Modal Study published in 2002, nor are there any provisions for additional infrastructure on the Great Eastern Main Line.

14. **Urgent Business**

There were no items of urgent business brought before the Committee.

15. **Reports to Council**

There were no reports referred to Council.

The meeting closed at 9:15pm

Chairman