

Planning Policy Sub-Committee – 22 June 2016

Minutes of the meeting of the **Planning Policy Sub-Committee** held on **22 June 2016** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr D J Sperring

Cllr Mrs J R Lumley

Cllr J R F Mason

VISITING MEMBER

Cllr I H Ward

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs C I Black, Mrs T R Hughes and G J Ioannou.

SUBSTITUTES

Cllr C M Stanley	- for Cllr C I Black
Cllr D Merrick	- for Cllr G J Ioannou

OFFICERS PRESENT

C Lyons	- Assistant Director, Planning Services
D Goodman	- Assistant Planner
X Preston	- Assistant Planner
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator

1 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Local Development Framework Sub-Committee held on 11 February 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Sub-Committee noted the terms of reference.

3 REVISED DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director, Planning Services providing details of the outcome of the public consultation on the draft Statement of Community Involvement and presenting a revised draft Statement for Members' consideration.

Officers confirmed, in response to a Member question relating to evidence that 'hard to reach' residents had had access to the consultation document, that responses had been received from a broad range of respondents. These had been received in response to, for example, documents sent out via a mailing list of people who had previously expressed an interest, via the website and via adverts and leaflets, as well as via events, such as one run by RRAVS, and via

parish newsletters.

In response to another Member query relating to the number of consultation responses received online via the JDI consulting software, officers advised that overall there had been 43 responses, with 55 comments made in total. 35 of these came via JDI, with some via letter and some via the Hullbridge Action Group.

In response to a Member concern that the JDI software was not user-friendly, officers emphasised that the consultation on the options and issues document would not take place until the autumn. By that time it was anticipated that there would have been an IT upgrade and that documents would then be uploaded to the website immediately, not delayed, as was currently the case. Information would accordingly be ready to view online very quickly. Officers confirmed that it would be possible to alert Members of the Sub-Committee if there was a possibility that the software and IT would not be able to deal quickly with consultation responses to the options and issues document in the autumn.

Responding to a Member question relating to the Council's ability to monitor the response rate to consultation in the autumn and to adapt it on the basis of consultation responses received, officers advised that evening events would be run in the parishes in the autumn, which may well encourage further public engagement.

Members drew particular attention to the fact that events organised within the parishes only reached a small number of residents, and often the same people attended events at parish level. Members remarked that the low response rate to date would appear to bear this out. Officers did, however, emphasise that 55 comments to this kind of policy document was an encouraging response rate. Residents will be more interested in the next level of documents in this process; it is more common to get a much higher response rate to the issues and options documents.

Members, however, commented that they did not consider that there had been sufficient publicity for this consultation document. In response to a request from Members as to whether it might be possible to be more dynamic in terms of public engagement, officers advised that to date two parish events had taken place, one in Rochford and one in Canewdon, both facilitated by the District Council. The impact of these had been impressive in terms of opening up future options for public engagement.

Members stressed that these sorts of events would only be attended by a small group of residents, and typically the same residents who would attend other similar events, which was not a very representative cross section of residents. Members also stated that there were many residents who were just not interested in these kinds of consultations. In response, officers advised that events were planned for the autumn in primary and secondary schools, which would have the added advantage of also reaching the parents, as well as other engagement events with local stakeholders and businesses. It was further

emphasised that the process by which consultation would be undertaken, as detailed in paragraph 2.3 of the document, on pages 6.26 and 6.27, had to align with the Council's adopted consultation strategy.

Officers confirmed, in response to Members' concerns around the regular monitoring of consultation responses of the options and issues document in the autumn, that it would be possible to include an additional paragraph after paragraph 2.4 on page 6.28 of the officer's report, stating that there would be regular reviews and assessment of consultation responses and that during the consultation a review would be taken to ensure that the correct type of consultation methods were being used to maximise public engagement, ensuring that the document has been accessed by all groups of residents in all parts of the District. Members emphasised that a further meeting of the Sub-Committee should be convened before the issuing of any options and issues document and also indicated that there would be merit in holding regular meetings of the Sub-Committee in order to monitor progress.

In concluding the debate, officers agreed that a further meeting of the Sub-Committee would be convened in the next few weeks in order that further ideas for public engagement might be considered and that a draft of an additional paragraph to be included after paragraph 2.4 of the document should be emailed to Members of the Sub-Committee by Friday, with a request that Members approve the suggested wording by next Wednesday, for inclusion in the document being recommended to Full Council.

Recommended to Council

That the draft Statement of Community Involvement 2016, as amended post consultation and with an additional paragraph inserted after paragraph 2.4 in respect of ongoing review/assessment of consultation responses, be formally adopted. (ADPS)

It was further **Resolved**

That a meeting of the Sub-Committee be scheduled to consider further ideas for public engagement. (ADPS)

4 PLANNING POLICY PROJECTED WORK PROGRAMME

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director, Planning Services providing Members with a brief update on the planning policy work over the past six months, current progress of key pieces of work and an indication of the projected work programme for development of the new Local Plan.

During debate, Members requested that Hockley Parish Council be included in the workshops planned for summer 2016, as detailed in appendix A to the officer's report.

In response to a Member question relating to the numbers that could be accommodated at engagement events, officers advised that numbers would range from 25 to 50 residents, as the events were workshop-based, sitting around tables with discussions taking place.

Officers confirmed, in response to a Member query as to whether the Hockley Area Action Plan (HAAP) would form part of the public engagement exercise for Hockley parish, that the HAAP would be included, as it formed part of the emerging Local Plan. The HAAP could be included as an agenda item for the Hockley engagement event, and included within the walkabout for that area. It was further emphasised that the Hockley Town Centre Plan should also be included for the planned Hawkwell engagement event.

Responding to a Member question relating to possible attendance at these public engagement events by District Councils, officers confirmed that District Councillors would be very welcome to attend, and could also help facilitate the events.

In response to a Member question relating to the Rayleigh engagement event, officers confirmed that this would cover Rawreth and Rayleigh. There could be merit in splitting attendees up into three groups and doing a walkabout of Rawreth, of Rayleigh town centre and a third walkabout in another part of the parish boundary; ultimately, officers would be guided by suggestions from District Councillors and from Rayleigh Town Council.

Resolved

That, subject to resource constraints, current work streams should continue on the preparation of the new Local Plan evidence base and the Issues and Options Document over the next 6 months. (ADPS)

The meeting commenced at 11.00 am and closed at 12.20 pm.

Chairman

Date

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