

Local Development Framework Sub-Committee – 30 July 2015

Minutes of the meeting of the **Local Development Framework Sub-Committee** held on **30 July 2015** when there were present:-

Cllr J Hayter
Cllr Mrs G A Lucas-Gill
Cllr Mrs J R Lumley

Cllr J R F Mason
Cllr C G Seagers
Cllr D J Sperring

NON-MEMBERS ATTENDING

Cllr K H Hudson
Cllr I H Ward

OFFICERS PRESENT

S Scrutton - Director
N Hayward - Senior Planner
M Power - Committee Administrator

ALSO PRESENT

A Peattie - Enfusion Ltd.

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

Cllr D J Sperring was appointed as Chairman of the Sub-Committee.

2 TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference, as follows, were noted:-

‘To review and report on the contents of emerging Planning Policy Evidence Base Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and the new Local Plan.’

3 NEW LOCAL PLAN EVIDENCE BASE – ENVIRONMENTAL CAPACITY STUDY

The Sub-Committee received a presentation from Mr A Peattie of Enfusion Ltd, independent environmental planning and sustainability consultants, on the scope and overall findings of an environmental capacity study of Rochford District. The Sub-Committee also considered the report of the Director, which sought Members’ approval to publish the study as an evidence base document to support the Council’s new Local Plan.

In response to a Member observation that increased traffic in Rayleigh as a result of development would mean an increase in air pollution, an improvement to transport infrastructure that would reduce traffic in Rayleigh would be expensive, it was noted that Essex County Highways is currently

looking at options for a revised transport model in Rayleigh. It was emphasised that the Study is looking at the Local Plan post 2025 and, as such, it could be anticipated that significant improvements in air quality would have been achieved by 2025 as a result of traffic management schemes being put in place over the next 10 years. It was noted that, although the introduction of EU standards on vehicle emissions is often cited as having a positive impact on traffic pollution, improvement in air quality as a result of lower vehicle emissions may not be quite as significant as was originally thought.

Officers confirmed, in response to a Member question as to which routes in the District were specifically being referred to in paragraph 3.6 of the report, that the A130 corridor to the A127 was referred to as being at or near capacity in terms of impact on air quality by vehicle emissions to guide where the detailed study needs to go.

Clarification was requested by a Member as to whether the 1,440 additional dwellings suggested through the 2013 SHMA relate to the shortfall in the core strategy when compared to the Government strategy. Officers advised that when the Council receives updated information from the SHMA it will have a more accurate feel for the situation. All the Districts in the South East are facing the same challenges and going through the same process and there will be environmental constraints of any number of new development units.

During discussion, Members were reminded that the methodology used to calculate OAN requirements for local authorities requires the authority to calculate unconstrained housing need. The OAN process will factor in all the evidence in the NPPF and will provide the basis for determining the level of development to be included in the plan.

Officers confirmed, in response to a Member question about the implications of the need to cooperate with other areas in terms of an overall housing requirement for the sub-region that the Council will have all the necessary evidence when the time comes to assess or defend the OAN assessment of development needs in the Rochford District. This will put the Council in a position to challenge/defend the development needs should the OAN come up with an increased need. The Government will be issuing new guidance on the Duty to Co-operate and is looking at how the plan-making process can be streamlined. This is an evidence based plan-making process and, as such, evidence cannot be excluded to enable plans to be made more quickly.

In response to a Member question, officers confirmed that the key focus for future investment is to address changes to the A1245 interchange with the A127 in order to resolve the traffic management/congestion problems at this junction. The Council continues to have conversations with Essex County Highways to work out how to resolve the issue by exploring ways of achieving funding for improvements. The Rochford District Local Highways Panel has agreed a short-term improvement to the junction by way of yellow box markings and Essex Highways has advised that it is working on a scheme for

the junction that will fit in with the promised increased capacity on the A127 that is being proposed. A timescale of 3-5 years for installation of a major scheme at the junction is anticipated.

Officers advised, in response to a Member question, that the capacity study would be updated by including in it the comments raised by neighbouring authorities and environmental bodies, as contained in Appendix 2 to the report. In response to a Member request, all Members would be invited to comment on the Study before the report is finalised. It was suggested that a deadline of 30 September be given for submission of these comments to the Planning Policy team. Comments received from Members would be included in the final version of the Study, which would be submitted to Full Council in October.

Recommended to Council

That the Environmental Capacity Study be accepted as part of the evidence base for the new Local Plan, subject to seeking observations from all Members of the Council and including these comments, together with the comments raised by neighbouring authorities and environment bodies, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.

4 PLANNING POLICY PROJECTED WORK PROGRAMME

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Director providing Members with a brief update on the current progress of key pieces of work and an indication of the projected work programme for development of the new Local Plan.

Officers advised, in response to a Member question, that the Sub-Committee would meet as and when necessary, when there are items for consideration by Members.

In response to a Member question, the Director advised that any announcement from the Government that would affect the imposed deadline for the preparation of the Local Plan would be reflected in a revised timetable. The Council's Planning Policy team plans the work around the Local Plan. The Sub-Committee would be involved in reviewing any Government changes that would affect the Local Plan. A Member commented that a Gantt chart to show the timescale and progress of the Plan would be useful. A timetable for the work programme is available on the Council's website: this will be updated and circulated to all Members to enable Councillors to respond to questions.

Resolved

That, subject to resource constraints, current work streams continue on the preparation of CIL, finalisation of the Rayleigh Area Action Plan, fulfilment of the Council's monitoring responsibilities and progression of the new Local Plan evidence base over the next 6 to 12 months.

The meeting commenced at 11 am and closed at 12.10 pm.

Chairman

Date

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