

Planning Policy Committee – 30 August 2022

Minutes of the meeting of the **Planning Policy Committee** held on **30 August 2022** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr I A Foster

Cllr M Hoy
Cllr Mrs J R Lumley
Cllr R Lambourne

Cllr J E Newport
Cllr M J Steptoe

VISITING MEMBER

Cllrs A G Cross, J Cripps, D J Sperring, C M Stanley, I H Ward and S E Wootton.

OFFICERS PRESENT

A Law - Assistant Director, Legal & Democratic
Y Dunn - Planning Manager
D Goodman - Team Leader, Strategic Planning & Economic Regeneration
D Kudla - Senior Strategic Planner
K Tinson - Corporate Services Officer

173 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

174 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs M Hoy, Mrs J R Lumley, J E Newport, M J Steptoe declared a non-pecuniary interest by virtue of being Members of Essex County Council.

175 LOCAL PLAN EVIDENCE BASE OPEN SPACE STUDY 2022

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director, Place, presenting Members with key findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the Council's most recent Open Space Study.

In response to a Member question relating as to whether open spaces that were owned by Parishes, such as Barling Magna, were included, it was advised by the officers that they were; however, open agricultural land was not included as it often had no public access. It was also advised that Wallasea Island was not included.

A Member queried whether new developments addressed any deficit. In response, officers advised that this was an evidence base for a new Local Plan and recommendations could be made with regard to new developments that would contribute to need and accessibility. Officers further advised that Rochford District Council was planning to create an Infrastructure Delivery Plan which would also be an evidence base document. Regarding considerations for the disabled to gain access, officers responded that caveats could be added to

reflect aspirations. Officers further advised that the 2009 methodology study looked at rugby and cricket sites which did not delimitate between public and private sites. Sites were identified via the Allocations Plan which identified protected open spaces, including private and public sites. Officers advised that private sites made up the provision and the purpose of the study was to make a policy in the future.

A Member expressed concern regarding the quality of the report commenting that the maps provided within the report were inadequate and that paragraph 3.21 on page 5.10 of the report omitted Rayleigh Town Sports and Social Club from the list. Officers agreed that this would be dealt with outside of the meeting.

Cllr J E Newport moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr M Hoy that the report be referred back to Planning Policy to address issues arising from the report before being referred back to the Planning Policy Committee for consideration.

(This was unanimously agreed.)

A Member raised a question regarding new estates having open spaces that residents pay £3k per annum to maintain and whether these spaces could be closed off to the public as they were managed by a private company. A further question was raised whether the development at Sutton Road with Southend United training ground should be included.

Officers responded that the Southend United site was not included as it was considered a semi-professional sports facility and there was a distinction in the methodology for lower level facilities. Officers also advise that the purpose of the report was to look at open spaces that required protection through the plan with some management companies aiming to protect access from public footfall.

Resolved

To note the findings and conclusions of the Open Space Study at Appendix A and publish it as part of the evidence base for the New Local Plan.

176 NEW LOCAL PLAN: SPATIAL OPTIONS (REGULATION 18) CONSULTATION FEEDBACK REPORT

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director, Place, presenting Members with a summary of feedback received and providing a comprehensive analysis of consultee opinion on proposed spatial strategy options, broad policy topic areas and individual development sites.

A Member raised concern with the report, noting that Brownfield sites were used first; however, a definitive register of Brownfield sites was required. A question was raised whether the current industrial estates, i.e., Rawreth Industrial Estate could be included on Brownfield register.

Officers responded that the current Brownfield register was published, and any updates would be published upon completion. Officers clarified that any brownfield site that was deemed available for development would be included on the Brownfield Register and Rawreth Industrial Estate was assigned as residential within the adopted Allocations Plan. Officers further clarified that this feedback report was the feedback allocated from the consultation and the Committee was asked to note the report having considered its contents.

In response to a Member question, officers advised that Michelins Farm was aimed to compensate for employment loss. There was not expected to be a significant requirement for additional large scale employment land within the district at this current time. Officers advised the Committee that an economic development needs assessment was being determined, considering aspects such as employment space and different types of demand in order to conclude a plan of action as to how the market was going to respond. This information would then inform the allocations in the New Local Plan.

Members expressed concern with the report on the grounds that it failed to include sufficient evidence and analysis.

Cllr M Hoy moved a Motion, seconded by Cllr J E Newport that the report be referred back to Planning Policy for additional analysis.

(5 Members voted in favour, 1 against and 0 abstained.)

Resolved

Further work and analysis to be undertaken prior to the report being referred back to the Planning Policy Committee to:-

- (1) To note the Feedback Report at Appendix A.
- (2) To consider its findings and recommendations when preparing for subsequent phases of the New Local Plan.

177 STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT 2022 UPDATE

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director, Place, providing Members with a review of the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

A Member made a comment in relation to paragraph 2.24 on page 7.9 of the report regarding the use of the word 'informal' with regard to the engagement consultation with Essex County Council. Officers responded that the wording can be amended to 'formal' as an additional recommendation to the report.

A Member queried whether Covid-19 would have affected the figures presented in the report in light of the fact that the consultation had been taken during the midst of the pandemic.

Officers responded that the response rate saw a 3-fold increase in the last consultation; outdoor public events were well attended and Covid-19 did not have a significant material impact on responses.

Another question was raised regarding demographics and whether they were considered during the consultation taking into account elderly residents and a clear divide in digital technology during the isolation periods.

Officers advised that there was no mechanism to collect the age data of the responder submission; however, it was clear that the older generation saw an increase in events and phone calls compared to the younger generations.

Resolved

To note the contents of the Statement of Community Involvement Feedback Report at Appendix A.

Recommends

To Council that the revised Statement of Community Involvement at Appendix B be adopted, subject to the amended wording within the report.

(This was unanimously agreed.)

178 LOCAL PLAN TRANSPORT ASSESSMENT: HIGH LEVEL OPTIONS PAPER

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director, Place, setting out high-level options for the delivery of a transport assessment to support the Council's New Local Plan, for Members' consideration.

Members were in favour of Option B as outlined in the report as it represented that public opinion was taken into account, providing a good level of evidence with a fresh approach to traffic assessment within the area.

A Member expressed concern over resource implications, with suspected £50k of budget constraints.

Resolved

To indicate support for Option B as set out in the paper to inform a future report into the Executive.

179 NEW LOCAL PLAN: PROGRESS UPDATE AUGUST 2022

The Committee considered the report of the Corporate Director, Place, providing Members with an update on progress with the New Local Plan and setting out next steps in progression towards the Preferred Options stage.

A Member made reference to paragraph 3.12 on page 9.4 of the report and questioned whether Rawreth Industrial Estate be legalised and whether the Brownfield Register would be shared with Members.

Officers advised that a Gypsy and Traveller assessment was an assessment of demand and was generated from pitches that exist without planning permission and these made up the bulk of unmet need. Regarding immediate authorisation of sites, this would need to be addressed via the Development Committee, as opposed to the Gypsy & and Traveller assessment or the Local Plan Policy. In response to a Member question, Officers also advised Members that there was still a duty to co-operate with other local authorities but that there were no updates available at this moment in time. Other local authorities within the county had decided to pause their Local Plans and thus the statement of common ground with those authorities would require amending. An Essex County Council statement of common ground had been received in a draft format that would need to be agreed through a Portfolio Holder Report (PFH). Officers advised Members that this could be referred back to the Planning Policy Committee for observation following the PFH report.

A Member made a query regarding the gypsy and traveller accommodation assessment considering the fact that temporary sites had been granted permission; however, queried whether there was a point that these sites would be legalised.

Officers responded that the necessary components of need and demand would be considered and addressed in the Local Plan; a policy could be considered that looked at existing sites to become regularised or to allocate additional land.

Resolved

To note the Local Plan Progress Update August 2022 as set out in the report.

The meeting commenced at 7.30pm and closed at 9.08pm.

Chairman

Date

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