

Planning Policy Committee – 7 January 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the **Planning Policy Committee** held on **7 January 2021** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr D J Sperring

Cllr M Hoy
Cllr Mrs J R Lumley
Cllr Mrs C M Mason

Cllr Mrs C A Weston
Cllr S E Wootton

VISITING MEMBER

Cllrs Mrs J R Gooding, I H Ward and M G Wilkinson

OFFICERS PRESENT

M Hotten	- Assistant Director, Place and Environment
S Worthington	- Principal Democratic and Corporate Services Officer
D Goodman	- Team Leader, Strategic Planning and Economic Regeneration
D Kudla	- Senior Strategic Planner
J Guy	- Strategic Planner
L Morris	- Democratic Services Officer

6 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2 October were approved as a correct record and would be signed by the Chairman in due course.

7 NEW LOCAL PLAN EVIDENCE BASE: HOUSING AND ECONOMIC LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (HELAA)

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director, Place & Environment, setting out details of the HELAA commissioned by the Council to inform the new Local Plan.

The Chairman advised Members that this report had been considered in detail at two meetings of the Working Group and contained amendments clarifying questions previously raised by Members.

In response to a concern raised by a Member regarding the decision for the HELAA to be commissioned by officers rather than Members of the Planning Policy Committee, the Chairman advised that this had been taken on board and confirmed that for future HELAA's being commissioned, Members would have an earlier opportunity to provide input.

In response to a Member concern regarding the rigidity of the HELAA and confusion surrounding this, the Chairman advised that additional wording had been added to the report to clarify this. The Team Leader, Strategic Planning advised that it was mandatory for land to be categorised within the definitions within the HELAA.

Cllr Mrs C M Mason put forward a Motion to amend the wording of the recommendation within the report which was seconded by Cllr M Hoy. A vote was taken, and the Motion was lost.

(2 Members voted for the Motion, 4 Members voted against and 0 abstained.)

Resolved

That the Committee notes the HELAA, at Appendix A, and publishes this on the Council website. (ADPE)

(4 Members voted for the Motion, 0 Members voted against and 2 abstained.)

8 NEW LOCAL PLAN EVIDENCE BASE: URBAN CAPACITY STUDY

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director, Place & Environment, setting out details of the Urban Capacity Study prepared to consider the realistic capacity of Rochford's urban areas to accommodate new development.

A Member raised a concern that the appendix referred to areas of the District that did not exist, and Councillors had asked for several years for the areas to be referred to by Ward. The Chairman suggested to Members that the recommendation was accepted on the principle that amendments to rectify this were made prior to the report being published on the website, which was agreed by Members.

Resolved

To note the Urban Capacity Study, at Appendix A, and publish it on the Council's website. (ADPE)

9 NEW LOCAL PLAN EVIDENCE BASE: GREEN BELT STUDY

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director, Place & Environment, setting out details of the Green Belt Study commissioned by the Council to inform the new Local Plan.

A Member raised concern regarding removing a small area of Green Belt in Hawkwell and was advised by the Team Leader, Strategic Planning that the study was not changing the Green Belt status of any land. He further emphasised that the only way Green Belt land could ever be changed was through the examination of a Local Plan; it was completely within the Council's remit to not put this forward.

A Member queried if there was an objective assessment of what determines 'strong' and 'weak' in terms of land, and was advised by the Team Leader, Strategic Planning that a consultant will make a judgment for different areas in the district, classing them as 'strong' or 'weak' by comparing them against the five purposes of the Green Belt. The Team Leader, Strategic Planning further advised that the second stage of the process, the harm assessment, introduces

other subjective factors such as containment. The Team Leader advised that it is a subjective, professional judgment, but that the two-tiered approach made it easy to further investigate this judgment. The Chairman confirmed that anything recommended would be considered on a case-by-case basis which was needed to inform decisions made by Full Council.

Resolved

That the Committee notes the Green Belt Study, at Appendix A, and publishes this on the Council website. (ADPE)

10 NEW LOCAL PLAN EVIDENCE BASE: LANDSCAPE CHARACTER, SENSITIVITY & CAPACITY STUDY

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director, Place & Environment, setting out the details of the LCSCS commissioned to provide a source of up-to-date and robust information on landscape character and sensitivity in the District.

A Member raised concern that when the maps were enlarged on the Council's website, they became unclear and requested that the quality was improved in order to aid residents who may wish to zoom in on their local area. The Chairman assured Members that everything possible would be done to mitigate this issue.

Resolved

That the Landscape Character, Sensitivity & Capacity Study, attached at Appendix A, be noted as evidence and published on the Council's website. (ADPE)

The meeting commenced at 2.00 pm and closed at 2.53 pm.

Chairman

Date

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