

## Planning Policy Committee – 7 March 2024

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Minutes of the meeting of the **Planning Policy Committee** held on **7 March 2024** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr J E Cripps  
Vice Chairman: Cllr M J Steptoe

Cllr A H Eves  
Cllr I A Foster

Cllr J E Newport

*Please note that the full livestream of this meeting can be viewed at the following link: [Planning Policy Committee \(youtube.com\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=...)*

### **120 VISITING MEMBER**

There were no visiting Members.

### **121 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs M Hoy and I H Ward.

### **122 SUBSTITUTES**

There were no substitute Members.

### **123 OFFICERS PRESENT**

J Quilter - Corporate Manager, Strategic Planning  
D Kudla - Senior Strategic Planner  
W Szyszka - Democratic Services Officer

### **124 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 January were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **125 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Cllr M J Steptoe declared a non-pecuniary interest by virtue of being a Member of Essex County Council and Barling Magna Parish Council.

### **126 NEW LOCAL PLAN POSITION STATEMENT – MARCH 2024**

Members considered the report of the Interim Director, Place providing Members with a summary on progress in developing the New Local Plan to date alongside current and planned activity.

During the debate of this item, the following points were noted:-

- Officers were confident in achieving the June 2025 Local Plan deadline and were satisfied with the timetable;

- Collective work was being undertaken in relation to the Gypsy & Traveller Assessment with a report anticipated to be ready in April 2024. There were no immediate issues flagged against any sections outlined at Table 2 on page 6.4 of the report; however, officers would continue to monitor items listed to mitigate any risks;
- Any consultative letters regarding the Local Plan that would be distributed to residents across the District would be subject to budget availability in consultation with the S151 Officer;
- In relation to the Flood Risk Assessment, Members further noted that the Council would work in collaboration with the Environmental Agency to consider current kept evidence. Many aspects of the evidence would be subject to change and implications of climate change would have to be taken into account;
- Members noted that it was important to acknowledge traffic assessments with particular awareness of the location of the assessment sites as well as giving consideration to roads that fall outside of the District. Officers responded that survey sites would be considered, and information relayed back to Members via Committees.

### **Resolved**

That the Planning Policy Committee notes the New Local Plan Position Statement.

### **127 COMMERCIAL PROPERTY MARKET REVIEW 2024**

Members considered the report of the Interim Director, Place setting out details in relation to the Commercial Property Market (CPMR).

A question was asked regarding trends and whether younger people were less likely to return to the District for example, after completing their studies elsewhere, also querying how the Council reached these conclusions.

In response, officers advised that the information was derived from ONS statistics and not specifically commissioned by the Council. Furthermore, there was more focus placed upon apprenticeships offered across the District that can produce good qualifications in the long-term and benefit the outputs across.

### **Resolved**

That the Planning Policy Committee notes the report as part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan.

**128 TOWN CENTRE HEALTH CHECKS TOPIC PAPER**

Members considered the report of the Interim Director, Place setting out a comprehensive evaluation of the health and wellbeing of Rayleigh and Hockley Town Centres.

Cllr I A Foster noted that current plans for mothballing the Freight House indefinitely and moving Council Offices out of Rochford could be perceived as degradation of Rochford and added that this would be contrary to the Town Centre Health Checks, as attached on page 8.19 of the report, paragraphs 1, 4 and 5 of the Rochford Town Area Action Plan and parts of pages 8.11, 8.13 and 8.14 of the recommendations.

Cllr J E Cripps moved a Motion in line with Committee Procedure Rule 9 (N), seconded by Cllr A H Eves that the meeting be extended for as long as necessary in order to complete the business.

This was unanimously carried on a show of hands.

**Resolved**

That the Planning Policy Committee notes the report as part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan.

The meeting commenced at 7.30 pm and closed at 9.40 pm.

Chairman .....

Date .....

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