

Planning Policy Sub-Committee – 7 October 2019

Minutes of the meeting of the **Planning Policy Sub-Committee** held on **7 October 2019** 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 L Shaw and I H Ward.

OFFICERS PRESENT

| | |
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| S Scrutton | - Managing Director |
| D Goodman | - Senior Strategic Planner (Planning Policy) |
| J Guy | - Strategic Planner (Planning Policy) |
| S Worthington | - Democratic Services Officer |

23 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 April 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

24 STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT UPDATE 2019: DATA PROTECTION AND NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Managing Director summarising the findings of a recent consultation on proposed amendments to the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement and the amendments now proposed.

In response to a Member question as to what weight was given to consultation responses received and who determined that, officers advised that appendix B set out an initial officer response to comments received, on a case by case basis. The Statement of Community Involvement did not actually make it clear who should make that particular determination. Only minor amendments were being proposed to the Statement of Community Involvement.

Officers advised, in response to a further Member question as to whether any consultation responses that fell outside the scope of the consultation would be carried forward or dropped, that it would be possible to prompt such respondents to re-submit such comments at a more appropriate time.

Recommended to Council

That Council adopts a revised Statement of Community Involvement, set out

at appendix A, and notes the consultation feedback report, set out in appendix B. (MD)

25 NEW LOCAL PLAN EVIDENCE BASE: HOUSING DELIVERY TEST ACTION PLAN 2019

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Managing Director providing details of the Housing Delivery Test Action Plan 2019 and asking that this be published on the Council's website.

In response to a Member observation that the Authority had not achieved its original targets and question as to how this performance compared to that of other local authorities, officers confirmed that there were several other local authorities in Essex that were required to prepare similar action plans; in addition, there were some local authorities whose performance was poorer than that of this Council. Engagement with developers suggested that there were market issues, including for example, rising build costs, that were impacting on the financial viability/deliverability of housing developments. Many local authorities were having to prepare similar action plans. In the case of Green Belt Districts like that of Rochford the position was not a unique one.

Responding to a further question as to whether it was likely that the Council would always under-achieve in respect of Government housing targets, officers emphasised that this test had not existed a few months ago; this was a new test introduced by the Government and it was too early to tell whether this was workable.

Officers advised, in response to a Member question as to whether the Council had sufficient resources to monitor performance against these targets, that there was a significant piece of work underway reviewing staffing capacity.

Members nevertheless emphasised the need to explore and address any potential causes of failure to meet these targets. Officers drew attention to table 3 on page 6.16 of the report which sets out specific future projections of housing delivery relative to targets for the period up to 2024 which were in excess of targets set. Officers stressed that five-year deliverability targets could mean at times that the Council would struggle to have a five-year supply of housing. The Council would be looking to adopt a new development plan in 3-4 years' time.

Members agreed that there would be merit in the Sub-Committee meeting on a quarterly basis in order to monitor progress against these housing delivery targets. In response to a Member request that meetings focus on specific sites, with updates on what sites were coming forward each year to deliver against housing targets, with specific numbers reported to Members at quarterly meetings, officers advised that it would be possible to produce a quarterly monitoring report for future meetings.

In response to a Member query as to whether work was being undertaken in terms of including windfall sites within housing delivery targets, officers confirmed that as a result of work carried out assessing windfall sites within the district, a realistic figure of around 30-40 houses per annum from windfall sites could be justified for inclusion in the new development plan.

Officers further advised, in response to a supplementary Member question as to whether this windfall annual figure could be included earlier, that when the Council produced a 5-year housing supply update, it could include a windfall allowance of 40 dwellings per annum, which was calculated as a mean average.

Resolved

That the Housing Delivery Test Action Plan 2019, attached at appendix A, be noted as evidence and published on the Council's website. (MD)

26 NEW LOCAL PLAN EVIDENCE BASE: ESSEX COAST RECREATIONAL DISTURBANCE AVOIDANCE AND MITIGATION STRATEGY SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD) 2019

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Managing Director seeking Members' approval for consultation on the Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy supplementary planning document.

In response to a Member question as to whether this applied to all development within the district, officers advised that the coastline was broken down into separate protected areas, which were further divided into zones of influence. The tariff was of low value compared to the cost of building/selling a house but would in future apply to all new homes. This would be incorporated into a Section 106 agreement for larger sites; however, the Council would need to determine how to address this issue for smaller sites at the planning application stage.

Recommended to Council

That the Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (the RAMS SPD) 2019, attached at appendix A to the officer's report, be consulted on for a period of six weeks. (MD)

27 STRATEGIC PLANNING WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE: OCTOBER 2019

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Managing Director providing Members with a brief update on how key pieces of work, including the development of policy documents and supporting evidence are currently progressing.

Officers advised, in response to a Member question relating to the causes of the delay in delivery of the Joint Strategic Plan, that these were largely attributable to the political changes arising from the May local elections which had necessitated ASELA meeting with new Council Leaders. It was noted that there was an ASELA meeting scheduled on 10 October at which it was anticipated that agreement would be reached in respect of a timetable for preparation of the Plan and for the Issues and Options document.

Responding to a Member concern raised in respect of the delay in the Local Plan Preferred Options document from autumn to spring and staffing resources, officers emphasised that other factors, including political changes could impact on progress; an update on the local development framework would be given to Members before the end of the year.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and closed at 10.55 am

Chairman

Date

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