

Planning Policy & Transportation Committee – 12 September 2006

Minutes of the meeting of the **Planning Policy & Transportation Committee** held on **12 September 2006** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr P A Capon
Vice-Chairman: Cllr C A Hungate

Cllr C I Black
Cllr J P Cottis
Cllr T G Cutmore
Cllr J R F Mason

Cllr D Merrick
Cllr J M Pullen
Cllr Mrs M J Webster

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs A J Humphries and P R Robinson.

SUBSTITUTES

Cllr P F A Webster

OFFICERS PRESENT

S Scrutton - Head of Planning and Transportation
A Meddle - Team Leader (Local Plans)
S Worthington - Committee Administrator

281 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

282 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllr T G Cutmore declared a personal interest in all items on the agenda by virtue of employment within the electricity supply industry.

283 PROGRESS ON DECISIONS

The Committee reviewed the progress on decisions schedule.

Decriminalised Parking Enforcement – New Traffic Regulation Orders and Investigation into Residents' Parking (Minute 442/05)

It was noted that County Highways would be producing an information sheet for residents outlining the implications of residents' parking schemes, with associated costs. This would be applicable to residents across the county.

Gypsies and Travellers – Policy Update (Minute 227/06)

The report on options for dealing with unauthorised caravan sites within the District would include full costings of all proposals and would subsequently

report into the full Council meeting on 31 October.

Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for the Rochford District (Minute 124/06)

It was noted that at the Council meeting held on 27 April 2006 a Council decision was taken to formally adopt the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan. Unfortunately, the formal Minute failed to record that decision. It was therefore necessary that the decision made at Council be ratified for the purpose of the public record.

Recommended to Council

That the decision to adopt the Rochford District Replacement Local Plan be ratified. (HPT)

284 Rochford District Regulation 25 Core Strategy

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning and Transportation seeking Members' approval for the draft Rochford District core Strategy, produced to comply with the milestones set out in the Council's local Development Scheme.

Members noted that the East of England Plan (RSS14) had not been supported by the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) and deemed that there would be merit in including within the text at the top of page 10.4 of the Council's Core Strategy document a note advising residents that this was the case. Members further considered that this note should also emphasise that it was the Secretary of State who formally approved the East of England Plan.

During general debate of the draft Core Strategy document Members noted that some sections appeared somewhat ambitious and optimistic in terms of vision for the District. Paragraphs 2.2 – 2.12 and 2.25 were highlighted as seeming particularly ambitious, although Members would, of course, wish to see the aspirations realised.

A Member observation was made that land allocations for housing should be divided fairly around the District, rather than being made in concentrated areas.

In response to a Member enquiry relating to affordable housing, officers confirmed that the definition contained within the Core Strategy's glossary was that used in the latest draft of Planning Policy Statement 3. Members felt that there would be merit in the glossary including the definition "non-market housing, provided to those whose needs are not met by the market," but did however recognise that a fuller definition would be required within the main body of the Core Strategy document.

Responding to a Member concern relating to paragraph 4.6.3 being too general, officers advised that the Core Strategy was at an early stage, identifying possible and probable options for the purpose of the initial public consultation exercise. As a result of consultation with members of the public and public bodies, evidence would be gathered which would help to develop the Council's preferred options, following the consultation process.

In response to Member enquiries, the following points were noted:-

- Agricultural buildings that had been abandoned and were no longer used were usually to be found within Green Belt land and as such Green Belt policy would still apply with respect to allocation of land for housing.
- 'Previously Developed Land' included brownfield land and other land within urban areas, including gardens of existing houses.
- The advice received from the Government Office for the East of England (Go-East) on the arrangements for preparing the core strategy was disappointing in light of the Lichfield and Stafford public inquiries; it would be prudent to examine the outcomes of forthcoming public inquiries while developing this Authority's Core Strategy document.
- There would be a 4-page article in the next edition of *Rochford District Matters* introducing and explaining the Core Strategy to residents.
- Developers would be expected to make a substantial financial contribution towards the infrastructure that would be necessary to implement the policies and proposals in the Core Strategy and other development plan documents.
- Renewable energy issues relating to underground homes could be revisited by the Council in due course, as required.

Concluding debate, Members identified minor changes on pages 10.5, 10.9-10.10, 10.18, 10.42 and 10.53 designed to correct typographical errors and to further clarify text.

Resolved

- (1) That the draft Regulation 25 Core Strategy be progressed to public consultation, subject to the amendments below, in line with the requirements of the Council's latest draft Statement of Community Involvement and the results reported back to this Committee:-

Page 10.4

Grey box to include wording "The East of England Regional Assembly has not supported the East of England Plan, within which the Core Strategy must be aligned. This has no democratic basis, given that it is formally approved by the Secretary of State."

Page 10.5

Replace the definition of 'affordable housing' in the Glossary with "Non-market housing, provided to those whose needs are not met by the market."

Page 10.9

Under 'dwellinghouse' replace "l" with "in".

Page 10.10

Under 'Four Year Rule', item (b), replace "ranted" with "granted".

Page 10.18

Under 'town centre', replace definition with "Those areas of Hockley, Rayleigh and Rochford, as defined on relevant proposals maps, which provide a range of facilities and services and which fulfil a function as a focus for a community and for public transport. They do not include neighbourhood shops and shopping parades, which have different characteristics."

Page 10.42

Insert 'no' after 'almost' in second sentence of paragraph 4.6.5.

Page 10.53

The underground homes option in the 'probable' box to be replaced with "Underground homes could be encouraged, although this would be contrary to policy in the Green Belt because of the other development associated with it that would be located above ground (such as car parking spaces, garages, sheds, play equipment and the like".

On a Motion moved by Cllr T G Cutmore and seconded by Cllr P F A Webster, it was further:-

Resolved

- (2) That it be noted that the East of England Regional Assembly has not supported the draft East of England Plan, within which the Core Strategy must be aligned, and that this has no democratic basis given that it is formally approved by the Secretary of State. (HPT)

285 REPORT OF THE PLANNING POLICY SUB-COMMITTEE

1 Supplementary Planning Documents

The Committee considered the report of the Planning Policy Sub-Committee recommending a series of amendments to supplementary planning documents 1 to 8.

Responding to a Member enquiry about minimum parking standards, officers confirmed that a judgment would be made on each individual planning application as to whether a minimum parking standard would be applied, taking into consideration factors such as location and public transport provision.

In response to a Member enquiry relating to pages 11.79 and 11.86 relating to cycle parking, officers confirmed that it would be possible to amalgamate these sections into one within the vehicle parking standards supplementary planning document. Officers further advised that the illustration on page 11.87 of the document related to a specific design of bike rack that was generally favoured by cyclists.

Members concurred that “must” should be replaced by “should preferably” in the second sentence on page 11.98, as staining could often look appropriate, if the correct type was used.

Responding to a Member query, officers advised that the supplementary planning documents were based on the Authority’s own policies in the Replacement Local Plan. Officers further confirmed that the policies and proposals within the Local Plan would be assessed for their suitability to transfer in due course to the relevant Development Plan Documents; there would accordingly be an opportunity to re-visit some of the policies later on and to determine whether changes might as a consequence be required to supplementary planning documents.

Resolved

That Supplementary Planning Documents 1 to 8, subject to the amendments below, be progressed to public consultation as required by Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 and the results of this reported back to this Committee.

Pages 11.79, 11.80 and 11.86

Paragraphs relating to cycle parking should be collated together within one section, rather than separated out.

Page 11.98

Second sentence to read: “All windows and other external joinery should preferably be painted and not stained.” (HPT)

(Note: Cllr C I Black wished it to be recorded that he had voted against the above decision with respect to Supplementary Planning Document 3 and had abstained from voting with respect to Supplementary Planning Document 5.)

286 GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS – ACCOMMODATION ASSESSMENT

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning and Transportation on the arrangements for providing information to the East of

England Regional Assembly on the accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers in the District to feed into a policy review of the East of England Plan.

It was noted that the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had advised that the Salford University study “Looking Back, Moving Forward” fulfilled the legislative requirements of Local Authorities to conduct a gypsy and traveller housing needs assessment. However, information had been provided by Salford University in the last few days on how their conclusions could be broken down on an individual basis for Authorities, which led them to believe that there could be difficulties with achieving this in a meaningful manner. Officers advised that it would therefore be prudent for officers to report back to Members in due course after liaising further with Salford University and colleagues in the county.

Members expressed disappointment with this situation and concurred that there would be merit in highlighting that EERA did not support the East of England Plan, which included the requirement for Councils to conduct the housing needs assessment.

Officers confirmed, in response to a Member enquiry relating to Council Tax, that the report on unauthorised sites in the District that would be brought to the next meeting of this Committee, would include details of whether gypsies and travellers on sites within the District had paid Council Tax.

Resolved

- (1) That the report be noted and a further report made to the Committee in due course clarifying the way forward on gypsy and traveller accommodation assessments.
- (2) That it be noted that the East of England Regional Assembly has not supported the draft East of England Plan, which has included the statutory duty for Local Authorities to conduct a gypsy and traveller accommodation assessment. (HPT)

287 GYPSY AND TRAVELLER CARAVAN SITES – EAST OF ENGLAND PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning and Transportation explaining the proposed arrangements for a review of gypsy and traveller caravan sites to be carried out by the East of England Regional Assembly.

Members concurred that there would be merit in highlighting that EERA has not supported the East of England Plan.

Resolved

- (1) That the East of England Regional Assembly be advised that the

Council has no comments to make on the draft project plan and statement of public participation for the single issue review of gypsy and traveller sites.

- (2) That it be noted that the East of England Regional Assembly has not supported the draft East of England Plan, which has included the statutory duty for Local Authorities to conduct a gypsy and traveller accommodation assessment. (HPT)

The meeting closed at 8.50 pm.

Chairman

Date