

---

Minutes of the meeting of the **Planning Policy Sub-Committee** held on **6 June 2001** when there were present:

Cllr T G Cutmore  
Cllr A Hosking

Cllr C C Langlands  
Cllr R E Vingoe (in the Chair)

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Cllrs J M Giles, R A Pearson, Mrs M J Webster

**SUBSTITUTES**

Cllr P F A Webster

**OFFICERS PRESENT**

Shaun Scrutton  
Keith Blackburn  
Mrs M A Martin

Head of Planning Services  
Economic Development Officer  
Committee Administrator

**ALSO PRESENT**

Roger Serginson  
Philip Maskell  
Mike Brown  
Michael Toomey  
Rob Weedon

AGL  
Essex Ford Group  
Essex Ford Group  
Laindon Holdings  
Architect

**110 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 1 March 2001 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

**111 ROCHFORD BUSINESS PARK**

Members received a presentation from the new owners of the Business Park on their intentions for the development of the site prior to the submission of a planning application. This was aided by wall plans and a 'virtual' tour of their existing multi-franchise site in Basildon.

During the presentation, Members noted the following points:-

- Laindon Holdings the owners of the green field site off Cherry Orchard Way, Rochford, in conjunction with the District Council, wish to develop this land and build a Business Park broadly similar to the one in Basildon.
- Laindon Holdings are end users not developers and have many years' experience in the motor trade.
- The Essex Ford Group are a private independent Ford main dealer and would happily work with the multi car dealership.

- It is envisaged the site might include six car dealerships, body shops, a petrol filling station, and commercial units with a mix of uses housed in quality modern buildings and with a minimum of signage.
- The car showrooms would occupy approximately 30% of the site and the B1 industrial use 70%.
- Effectively this is a 'one-stop' shop where customers can visit several car manufacturers on one site.
- In the case of a multi-franchise, one well known name can bring in customers to the others.
- A landscape buffer would be created enhanced with native tree planting.
- A target date for outline planning approval would be July 2001 with a view to achieving the procurement of services to the outline of the site by early 2002.
- An approach for further funding would be made to the East of England Development Agency.
- a study of the Environmental implications has been carried out.
- a Traffic Implication study and Programme of Work is underway.
- The site could create around 1,600 jobs; approximately 620 of these would be car related jobs.
- It is envisaged that around 50% of the car related jobs would attract salaries in excess of £20,000 per annum.

## **112 ROCHFORD ECONOMIC AUDIT**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Chief Executive concerning the report of an audit of the economy of Rochford District which had been carried out by consultants. This item had been previously discussed by the Corporate Resources Sub-Committee at its meeting on 6 February 2001 when it was referred to this Sub-Committee for further consideration.

During debate, Members noted the following:-

- the consultants report provided a 'snapshot' of the Rochford economy looking back over the last ten years and ahead for a similar timescale.
- 90% of local firms employ less than ten employees.
- the relative success of manufacturing locally which is concentrated into automotive and component manufacturing.
- low level of skills amongst the local population; an imbalance between education provision and the needs of businesses.
- difficulty for smaller employers to be involved in skills training.
- a new University in Southend would benefit South East Essex.
- a Business Park would have the potential to create approximately 1,600 jobs; this coupled with a net migration into the area could result in a reduction by 15% of those currently commuting out of the District.
- car dealerships can offer apprenticeships and work with the Colleges.
- the quality of any new jobs created in the District would be as important as the quantity.
- there would be a need to look at a mix of uses on sites available for development.

Members also noted that these comments would be incorporated in the drafting of the Rochford Economic Development Strategy document and the Draft Local Plan which would come back to Members later this year.

**Recommended**

That the Rochford Economic Audit document be considered in the context of the Economic Development Strategy and the Draft Local Plan. (HPS)

**113 PLANNING POLICY GUIDANCE NOTE 17 - SPORT, OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION - CONSULTATION**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning Services which outlined the proposed changes to Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 which deals with sport, open space and recreation.

The Government has stated that it is committed to delivering an urban renaissance and a better quality of life. A revised version of PPG17 has been prepared which aims to help secure the provision and protection of sport and recreation facilities and of open space.

A response to a series of questions posed in the consultation draft would be required by 15 June 2001 and these had been considered in the report. This would be agreed under the Council's urgency procedures. A full copy of the draft document had been placed in the Members' Room. Any requirement for additional facilities within the District could be addressed within the Draft Local Plan.

Members were pleased to note that Local Authorities are advised to adopt policies for the protection of existing open space, and the provision of new facilities based on a robust assessment of actual need.

During Member debate, the following points were noted:-

- a cinema would be one example of an intensive recreational facility
- it is essential that traffic assessments are conducted before any intensive recreational facility is considered with a town centre
- the points made within the PPG17 document would need to be included in the Leisure Strategy document
- most of this District already meets the suggested target of access to a park or open space within a 500 metres walk of new dwellings.

**Recommended**

That, subject to additional comments above, this report forms the basis of the Council's response to the consultation on the revisions to PPG17. (HPS)

**114 ROCHFORD DISTRICT REPLACEMENT LOCAL PLAN - TELECOMMUNICATION MASTS**

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning Services which sought Members views on possible amendments to the current policy PU1 which deals with the provision of telecommunication masts. Attached to the report was the current policy for considering any such proposals.

The Head of Planning Services advised Members that the Local Planning Authority would need to make its views clear on this issue. It is not unreasonable to provide a clear policy framework, although this would need to be tested through local planning enquiries.

During Member debate the following comments were noted:-

- the Local Planning Authority should seek to incorporate in to the Local Plan a policy which attempts to resist such masts being sited in close proximity to residential dwellings or schools.
- concern at the definition of 'close proximity' as the health and safety issue relating to these masts is still unproven; a distance of 50 metres would seem to be an appropriate starting point.
- siting and appearance are also key issues
- the need to include reference to the need for base stations to be removed when they become redundant.

### **Recommended**

That, subject to the inclusion of the comments above, a revised policy on telecommunications masts be prepared for inclusion in the replacement Local Plan that seeks to control the provision of masts and intensification of base stations within close proximity to residential areas or school premises. (HPS)

The meeting ended at 9.35 pm