

Local Development Framework Sub-Committee – 14 October 2008

Minutes of the meeting of the **Local Development Sub-Committee** held on **14 October 2008** when there were present:-

Cllr C I Black
Cllr T E Goodwin
Cllr K J Gordon

Cllr K H Hudson
Cllr J M Pullen
Cllr Mrs C A Weston

VISITING MEMBERS

Cllrs T G Cutmore, A J Humphries, Mrs G A Lucas-Gill and D G Stansby.

OFFICERS PRESENT

G P Woolhouse	- Corporate Director (External Services)
S Scrutton	- Head of Planning and Transportation
S Hollingworth	- Team Leader (Planning Policy)
S Worthington	- Committee Administrator

5 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 September 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6 ROCHFORD DISTRICT CORE STRATEGY – PREFERRED OPTIONS

An addendum to the report was distributed to Members which set out some suggested amendments to the Core Strategy document, most of which were typographical or grammatical in nature.

Officers drew particular attention to item 6 on page 1 of the addendum, which proposed amending Preferred Option H4 on page 3 of the Core Strategy document in order to provide additional information relating to economic viability with respect to affordable housing. It would be necessary to undertake detailed calculations relating to the residual land value of development sites, taking out any infrastructure costs, landowner profits, etc, which could in turn lead to difficulty in developers delivering the target of 35% affordable housing. It was essential to ensure that the issue of economic viability was adequately addressed in policy H4.

In response to a Member enquiry relating to whether such open book accounting was normal practice within the building industry, officers advised that, although currently not always the case, this would become common practice in future as Local Authorities would need to be satisfied that maximum affordable housing was yielded from all available sites. In instances where landowners claimed not to be able to provide 35% affordable housing within development sites, they would need to be able to provide economic proof to the Local Authority.

Members of the Sub-Committee confirmed that the amendments outlined in the addendum (appended to the Minutes) were appropriate for inclusion in the Core Strategy document.

In response to a Member enquiry relating to grade 1 farmland, officers confirmed that generally the presumption was that any development would seek to avoid higher grades of agricultural land.

Responding to a further query relating to general locations, officers advised that, with respect to settlement tiers, there was a difference in interpreting administrative boundaries, compared to geographical areas; within Rawreth Parish there was no settlement above tier 4. It was further emphasised that the Core Strategy document looked spatially at the Rochford District as a whole, rather than at individual localities.

Officers advised, in response to a Member question relating to references to public transport enhancements within pages 38 and 39 of the Core Strategy document, that public transport was an important issue for all identified development sites. It was not, however, appropriate to explore this issue in detail at this early stage of the Core Strategy process. The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transportation emphasised that the current Core Strategy document was an early precursor of many documents that would look in detail at issues, including appropriate infrastructure, at a later stage in the development plan process.

It was unanimously agreed, in response to a Member expressing concern that there should be absolute clarity with respect to the locations of the proposed development sites for public consultation purposes, that the tables on pages 38 and 39 of the document should also include the relevant parish details.

Responding to a Member enquiry relating to the relaxation of parking standards within town centres, officers emphasised that, in accordance with Government guidance, the Council already adopted a practice of relaxing parking standards within town centres for developments within easy access of public transport.

It was, however, observed that the District Council's preferred option for parking standards, as outlined in page 71 of the Core Strategy document, was a sensible one in light of the high levels of car ownership within the district, coupled with poor public transport coverage in parts of the district.

One Member commented that there would be merit in the early preparation of an Area Action Plan for Rayleigh town centre that might include provision of a primary care or outreach centre for Rayleigh. During debate, it was observed that it would be appropriate for this issue to be raised with officers as part of the budget planning process in advance of the forthcoming Member budget away day.

In response to a Member query relating to the provision of play spaces in the

vicinity of new residential developments, officers emphasised that, in determining the layout of significant new housing developments, careful planning would be needed for play space provision, having regard to appropriate location and potential noise and disturbance to houses.

Members concurred that the Core Strategy document was well set out, with clear explanations, attractive photographs and good supporting documents, which made it very easy to follow and understand.

Recommended to Council

That, subject to the amendments in the addendum to the report, and to the inclusion of parish details in the tables on pages 38 and 39, the Rochford Core Strategy Preferred Options document be approved for consultation and community involvement.

The meeting closed at 8.07 pm.

Chairman

Date

If you would like these minutes in large print, braille or another language please contact 01702 546366.

Appendix

Proposed Amendments to Draft Rochford Core Strategy

	Page	Para	Issue	Change suggested
1	17	1	Repetition	Delete: “, resulting in Rochford ranked within the lowest quartile of local districts by its economic change score”
2	18	Last	Explanation of diagram required	Delete last paragraph and replace with: “Different parts of the District have a stronger relationship with different nearby towns. This relationship is illustrated in diagrammatic form below”.
3	19	Diagram	Diagram unclear	Amend Key so that purple line is better represented and amend description to read, “Boundary of different commuter areas”.
4	31	General locations post-2021	Grammatical error.	Amend ‘has’ to ‘have’.
5	32	Affordable Housing	Typing error.	Remove italics from ‘ <i>Planning Policy Statement 3 – Housing (PPS3)</i> ’
6	33	Preferred Option H4 Para. 2	Alteration to preferred option to account for economic viability assessment, in line with preamble	Amend “This requirement will only be relaxed in highly exceptional circumstances, such as where site constraints make the provision impossible. In such cases we will negotiate a proportion of affordable dwellings and / or a commuted sum towards off-site affordable housing provision” to “This requirement will only be relaxed in highly exceptional circumstances, for example where constraints make on-site provision impossible or where

				the developer is able to definitely demonstrate that 35% provision will be economically unviable, rendering the site undeliverable. In such cases we will negotiate the proportion of affordable dwellings based on the economic viability calculations. It is expected that affordable housing will be provided on each development site; in rare cases, taking account of particular site characteristics, the affordable housing contribution may be provided by way of a commuted sum towards off-site affordable housing.”
7	33	Alternative Options H4, 1 st alternative option, reason why not preferred	Typing error.	Amend ‘on’ to ‘of’.
8	34	Blue margin, para. 1	Typing error.	Amend ‘particular’ to ‘particularly’.
9	36	Para. 2	Typing and grammatical error.	Amend “At the design stage it is little more difficult to design to Lifetime Homes standards than for homes that meet the Building Regulations” to “It is little more difficult at the design stage to achieve the Lifetime Homes Standard over the requirements of the Building Regulations, and whilst it may be more expensive to implement, costs should reduce as the standard becomes widely accepted.

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10	36	Preferred Option H6	Typing error.	Amend 'standard' to 'Standard'.
11	36	Blue margin, para. 2	Typing error.	Amend 'Home' to 'Homes'.
12	44	Para. 4	Typing error.	Amend 'outside' to 'aside'.
13	45	Preferred Option ED1	Typing error.	Remove '-on-Sea'.
14	46	Alternative option ED1	Typing error.	Amend "importunity" to "opportunity".
15	91	Preferred option CLT3	Tone of Preferred Option not in line with rest of document with the use of "demanded".	Amend "Developer contributions will be demanded" to "Developer contributions will be required".
16	93	Blue margin	Should refer to 7 dentists in Rochford District, rather than Rayleigh.	Amend "Rayleigh" to "Rochford District".
17	104	Para. 5	Reference to the use of the compulsory purchase process unnecessary.	Delete sentence: "We have negotiated with landowners and used compulsory purchase where necessary to deliver the Country Park."