

Minutes of the meeting of the **Planning Policy Sub-Committee** held on **Thursday 7 September 2000** when there were present:

Cllr D A Weir – Chairman

Cllr T G Cutmore
Cllr Mrs J M Giles
Cllr C C Langlands
Cllr Mrs S J Lemon
Cllr C R Morgan

Cllr R A Pearson
Cllr R E Vingoe
Cllr Mrs M J Webster
Cllr Mrs M A Weir

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A Hosking.

SUBSTITUTES

Councillor P F A Webster

OFFICERS PRESENT

S Scrutton	-	Head of Corporate Policy and Initiatives
G Brazendale	-	Committee Administrator

91 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 22 August 2000 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

92 ROCHFORD DISTRICT REPLACEMENT LOCAL PLAN – REPORT ON ISSUES PAPER

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Corporate Policy and Initiatives summarising the key representations received in response to the Local Plan Issues Paper published in 1999, which sought comments and views on the matters that should be addressed in the next Rochford District Local Plan.

Representations concerning the release from the green belt of land for development purposes, and those relating specifically to housing matters, were appended to the report. With regard to the former, the Head of Service informed Members that Reads Nursery and Baron Court (site reference 26) was not in the green belt and would be deleted from the relevant data base. A map showing the location of the major sites where a re-designation from the green belt had been proposed was displayed, and would subsequently be circulated at Members' request, to the Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee noted that the main issues identified by the representations were as follows:-

- Concern about the ability of the district to accommodate 2800 additional dwellings (Note: this figure is now likely to be 3050 additional dwellings to 2011).
- The problems with school places, access to doctors' surgeries, etc.
- Impact of additional development within the urban areas – residential amenity must be protected.
- Garden size standards are inadequate.
- There should be no consents for flats.
- New development should be mixed.
- Appendix 1 of the Local Plan Issues Paper conflicts with Essex Design Guide which should take precedence.
- A range of views on whether car parking standards should be reduced or maintained.
- 1 metre separation – view that this is inadequate on the one hand and on the other that it does not accord with the Essex Design Guide and frustrates good design.
- Importance of affordable housing provision is recognised.
- The need for good design to reduce crime.

During consideration of the representations, the following main points arose:-

- **Consultation Process**

Members considered that information concerning the origin of each of the representations would be of value, together with detailed maps of the areas proposed for re-designation. Site visits to these locations would be arranged in due course.

Concern was expressed about the relatively low number of submissions received, given the importance of representations at the current stage in the planning process where land use allocations for the next decade were being determined. It was therefore suggested that extensive press coverage, summarising the representations received so far, inviting further contributions from the District's residents, and emphasising the importance of these views in the formulation of the Local Plan, should be undertaken. A motion to this effect by Councillor P F A Webster and seconded by Councillor R A Pearson was agreed unanimously. For further publicity, notice boards and, at a later stage in the production of the Draft Plan, a leaflet circulated to residents, could be used.

For the future, it was considered essential to consult a wide range of relevant local organisations (such as wildlife groups), together with providers of statutory services, such as education, about the implications of proposed re-designations/development.

- **Infrastructure Provision**

The need for adequate infrastructure, particularly school places and health facilities such as doctors' surgeries, to accompany new residential development was considered essential. Sound planning information and ongoing consultation with the local Education and Health Authorities were pre-requisites in achieving the effective co-ordination of new housing and service provision. The identification of future demand for these facilities was as important as establishing present need, particularly for school places. Regarding medical facilities, Members referred to forthcoming discussions by the Primary Care Group (PCG) to establish the future local Health Trust, and the value of an approach by the District Council at this formative stage in the planning of service provision. The possibility of requesting developers to provide "pump-priming" funding for the provision of surgeries and health facilities was also considered.

The Head of Service indicated that, concerning future school places, the current school plan produced by Essex County Council was valid until 2005, and regular meetings with the Learning Services Department were held to discuss likely future housing developments and their pupil product. Regarding health-service provision, the Sub-Committee's views would be made available to the Head of Housing, Health and Community Care.

It was recognised that, Central Government would no longer accept a lack of infrastructure as a reason for refusing applications for residential development, and the District Council should therefore aim for a phased release of sites designated for housing in order to facilitate infrastructure provision and reduce disruption for existing residents.

- **Current/Future Action**

In response to Members' questions and observations, the Head of Service provided the following information concerning current and future work:

- An examination of the inner green belt boundary, to assess the value of particular sites to the overall composition of the green belt, was being carried out, the results of which would be reported to the Sub-Committee.
- The urban capacity study, the brief for which was agreed at the last meeting, would seek to identify "brownfield sites" which could become available for residential development in the future.
- Information regarding proposed developments in neighbouring authorities, such as Southend, Castle Point and Chelmsford would be sought.
- Consideration would be given to including a provision in the Local Plan to ensure a mix of housing in any new residential

developments, together with a detailed design brief if considered appropriate.

RECOMMENDED

- (1) That, together with Members' views as outlined in these minutes, the responses to the issues Paper be considered during the review of the Local Plan, and that there be a future report on the Green Belt Boundary Review.
- (2) That extensive press coverage, inviting further submissions from the District's residents concerning the Issues Paper, be undertaken. (HCPI)

The Meeting closed at 9.15pm

Chairman_____

Date_____