

Local Development Framework Sub-Committee – 19 September 2007

Minutes of the meeting of the **Local Development Framework Sub-Committee** held on **19 September 2007** when there were present:-

Chairman: Cllr K H Hudson

Cllr C I Black
Cllr J M Pullen

Cllr C G Seagers
Cllr D G Stansby

VISITING MEMBER

Cllr P F A Webster.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr K J Gordon.

OFFICERS PRESENT

S Scrutton - Head of Planning and Transportation
S Worthington - Committee Administrator

8 ROCHFORD CORE STRATEGY – PREFERRED OPTIONS CONSULTATION

The Sub-Committee considered the report of the Head of Planning and Transportation seeking Members' approval for the preparation of a revised Core Strategy Preferred Options document.

Officers advised that revising the document to take account of representations received and Go-East advice to provide more details of development locations and more empirical advice to support the preferred options would significantly improve the likelihood of the Core Strategy being deemed sound by the Planning Inspectorate.

In response to a Member enquiry relating to revised housing figures recently proposed by the Council's Conservative Group, officers confirmed that a sustainability assessment of all housing solutions proposed to the Council via the various representations received, including the Conservative Group's proposals, would be conducted on a site by site basis. A range of issues would be considered, including accessibility, implications for local businesses, schools and hierarchy of settlement. This would enable the Council to build up a sound evidence base and to make direct comparisons of sites. It was anticipated that a revised consultation document would be considered by the Council next spring.

Members concurred that it was important to stress to residents that there was a real demand for new homes from people who had grown up in the District and wanted to remain here; the proposed new housing was not in order to accommodate an influx of newcomers to the District. Although the District

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was large, there was a lot of land that was unsuitable for housing.

Members also felt that there would be merit in looking closely at development sites during 2007 – 2021 in respect of developer contributions towards infrastructure and in setting a standard relating to quality of design in order to ensure that the developments were of a high standard which would enhance the District.

Members expressed concern that there would be insufficient Government funding for the infrastructure required to support so much additional housing. It was emphasised that much of the District did not enjoy good communications, which made it less attractive for businesses. A large portion of the District's workforce already commuted outside the District. Members stressed that, on balance, it was best that the District Council should determine where new housing should be built within the District rather than this being determined centrally without the benefit of valuable local knowledge.

In response to a Member enquiry relating to when decisions would be taken as to precise allocations of housing in specific parts of the District, officers confirmed that emerging advice from the Government and the Planning Inspectorate indicated that some analysis of housing allocations would have to be contained within the preferred options Core Strategy document.

Members expressed concern that there was an increasing need for bungalows, given the ageing population within the District, which it would probably not be possible to meet, given the large housing densities required for the limited land within the District. It was clear that land costs would increase, making the prices of bungalows prohibitive. Officers advised that the provision of suitable housing for the lifetime of occupants would be addressed by means of the Lifetime Home Standards, which the Council had signed up to via the Local Area Agreement.

Recommended to the Executive Board

That a revised Core Strategy Preferred Options document be prepared, having regard to the results of recent community involvement and an improved evidence base. (HPT)

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm.

Chairman

Date

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