

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE
HELD ON 17 FEBRUARY 2015 AT 6.02 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
COUNCIL OFFICES, WEELEY**

Present: Councillors G V Guglielmi (Chairman), R Callender (Vice-Chairman), Amos, Broderick, De-Vaux Balbirnie, V E Guglielmi, Hawkins, I J Henderson, Howard, McWilliams, Richardson and M J D Skeels.

Also Present: Councillors Bucke, Johnson, Mitchell and White.

In Attendance: Head of Planning (Cath Bicknell), Planning Policy Manager (Gary Guiver), Planning Policy Team Leader (Richard Matthams), Communications and Public Relations Manager (Nigel Brown) and Democratic Services Officer (Michael Pingram).

41. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

There was an apology of absence received from Councillor Shearing.

42. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 27 November 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to it being noted that Councillor Shearing had left the meeting during the consideration of Minute 37 due to ill health.

43. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Howard declared a non-pecuniary interest in item A.1 of the report of the Head of Planning Services by virtue of the fact that he was employed by the University of Essex that was mentioned throughout the report.

44. PUBLIC SPEAKING

The Chairman informed the public speaker, who had recorded his wish to speak at the meeting, that he, would be invited to speak for three minutes at the start of the specific item on the agenda he had requested to speak on.

45. COLCHESTER BOROUGH COUNCIL LOCAL PLAN – ISSUES AND OPTIONS

The Committee had before it a report from the Head of Planning that sought its agreement to Tendring District Council's responses to Colchester Borough Council's 'Local Plan Issues and Options' document, which was currently the subject of public consultation.

The Council's Planning Policy Manager (Gary Guiver) explained that the document was the first stage towards a new Local Plan for Colchester up to 2032 which would eventually supersede its current plan that ran until 2023 and that through the legal 'duty to cooperate', Tendring District Council (TDC) was a key partner in its preparation.

He then explained to the Committee that he had received two email correspondences from Councillor Harry Shearing and Mrs Carol Bannister, Vice-Chairman of Weeley Parish Council respectively. Councillor Shearing, in his email, had stated that he supported the Officer recommendations in the report but that he would like greater emphasis around the issues of health provision across the two Districts. Mrs Carol Bannister, in her email, had stated that she had concerns under the risk section of the report regarding the possibility of further development in Weeley should Colchester Borough Council decide against pursuing the option of development east of Colchester.

In addition, the Committee had had circulated to it prior to the commencement of the meeting a representation from Colchester East Community Association (CECA) which set out its responses to Colchester Borough Council's consultation exercise relating specifically to the 'Save Salary Brook Valley' initiative.

Mr Ivor Powell, a resident of the District, addressed the Committee and expressed his concerns about Tendring District Councils Local Plan target of 12,000 new homes.

Plan Period, Evidence Base and Overarching Issues and Options

Mr Guiver explained that this section set out the Officers' recommended responses to questions 1-5 in the Colchester Borough Council (CBC) consultation document in relation to the length of the plan period, the evidence required to support the new plan and the overarching issues and options.

He said that Officers supported CBC's view that the Local Plan should cover the period to 2032 and beyond as it would adhere to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and also felt that as TDC was currently preparing its Local Plan up to 2031, it provided a good opportunity for the two Councils to work together. He suggested that if a joint Local Plan was prepared for the area crossing the administrative area, a longer plan period might be appropriate to ensure the full extent of development could be planned with a long-term strategy.

He also stated that CBC should take into account some of the evidence prepared by neighbouring authorities, in particular, TDC's 2013 Economic Development Strategy and that any transport modelling should take into account TDC's emerging strategy for growth.

Mr Guiver felt that one of the key strategic cross-boundary issues, which would require consideration and cooperation with the NHS, was the provision of health services, due to Tendring having a high and increasing proportion of older residents. With potentially 20,000 new homes by 2032, Officers' recommended that joint working between CBC, TDC and the NHS to explore purpose-built health centres in the Tendring area should take place.

Following a request from the Committee, Mr Guiver agreed to amend the Officers' response to question 4 to reflect that CBC, TDC and the NHS look to utilise existing assets such as Harwich or Clacton hospital before exploring the potential for purpose-built health centres.

Subject to the above amendment, the Committee **AGREED** to the Officers' recommended responses to questions 1-5 be submitted as part of TDC's formal response to CBC's consultation document.

Local Plan Vision

Mr Guiver explained that this section set out Officers' recommended responses to questions 6 and 7 in the CBC consultation document in relation to the vision for the future of Colchester.

He said that TDC was keen that Tendring, Colchester and Braintree Councils maximise economic opportunities along the A120 corridor and that if either option 1A/B or 3A/B was chosen the vision should include specific reference to the growth proposed at the University of Essex.

Following a suggestion from the Committee, Mr Guiver agreed to amend the Officers' response to question 7 to include reference to the Harwich-Stansted element of the A120 and to make it clear that Harwich formed an important part of that.

Subject to the above amendment, the Committee **AGREED** to the Officers' recommended responses to questions 6 and 7 be submitted as part of TDC's formal response to CBC's consultation document.

Housing

Mr Guiver explained that this section set out Officers' recommended responses to questions 8 to 10 in the CBC consultation document in relation to housing issues.

He said that TDC would suggest that CBC gave consideration to the use of minimum standards for internal floor areas, gardens and parking and suggested that with the emergence of more efficient forms of electric and hybrid vehicles it would mean there would be more requirements for parking spaces over the Plan period.

He further explained that the two Districts had different types of population with Colchester having more students due to the University, whilst Tendring was defined by its popularity as a retirement area and that it would be beneficial for the two Councils to work together to deliver housing to meet the needs and demands of both.

In answer to how CBC's Local Plan could address those issues Mr Guiver said that if development in East Colchester/West Tendring was pursued, it would be sensible to have a joint policy that ensured a consistent approach to delivering affordable housing.

Following discussions, the Committee **AGREED** to the Officer's recommended responses to questions 8-10 be submitted as part of TDC's formal response to CBC's consultation document.

Centres and Employment

Mr Guiver explained that this section set out Officers' recommended responses to questions 11 to 13 in the CBC consultation document in relation to town centres and employment sites.

He said that great weight should be given to the potential growth at the University of Essex, that a key to economic growth was transport and that investment in transport infrastructure would be important to achieving this.

Following discussions, the Committee **AGREED** to the Officers' recommended responses to questions 11-13 be submitted as part of TDC's formal response to CBC's consultation document.

Rural Colchester

Mr Guiver explained that this section set out Officers' recommended responses to questions 14 to 16 in the CBC consultation document in relation to rural issues.

He said that CBC should, like TDC, adopt a policy regarding broadband as working from home was likely to increase in the future so it could be key to the economy and would help reduce traffic congestion.

Following discussions, the Committee **AGREED** to the Officers' recommended responses to questions 14-16 be submitted as part of TDC's formal response to CBC's consultation document.

Promoting Healthy Communities

Mr Guiver explained that this section set out Officers' recommended responses to questions 17 to 19 in the CBC consultation document in relation to health.

He said that, further to the amendment in response to question 4 mentioned above in the 'Plan Period, Evidence Base and Overarching Issues and Options' section, he would also amend the response to question 18 to reflect the same wording.

Subject to the above amendment, the Committee **AGREED** to the Officers' recommended responses to questions 17-19 be submitted as part of TDC's formal response to CBC's consultation document.

Sustainable Transport and Accessibility

Mr Guiver explained that this section set out Officers' recommended responses to questions 20 to 22 in the CBC consultation document in relation to transport and accessibility.

He reiterated the importance of broadband services being key to the future economy and also with regards to transport infrastructure, that it should include rapid transport services connecting key nodes around the town and suggested the possibility of an A120/A133 link road that could improve connections to and from the Knowledge Gateway which would ease traffic congestion at the University of Essex.

Following discussions, the Committee **AGREED** to the Officers' recommended responses to questions 20-22 be submitted as part of TDC's formal response to CBC's consultation document.

Heritage and Design

Mr Guiver explained that this section set out Officers' recommended responses to questions 23 to 25 in the CBC consultation document in relation to heritage and design.

He said that Colchester had a wealth of heritage experience as the oldest recorded town in England but added, where possible, that it would be helpful if both Councils could have consistent policies for the historic environment. He also reiterated his earlier comments under the section 'Housing' that TDC would suggest that CBC gave consideration to the use of minimum standards for internal floor areas, gardens and parking.

Following discussions, the Committee **AGREED** to the Officers' recommended responses to questions 23-25 be submitted as part of TDC's formal response to CBC's consultation document.

Natural Environment

Mr Guiver explained that this section set out Officers' recommended responses to questions 26 to 28 in the CBC consultation document in relation to the natural environment.

He said that the paper distributed to Members prior to the meeting by CECA suggested that he should amend the recommended response to question 27 (first paragraph) from "Consideration might be given to some form of green gap between Greenstead/Longridge and the new development" to "We strongly support the concept of a strategic green gap between Greenstead/Longridge and the new development" and that he was happy to do that with the agreement of the Committee.

During discussions it was suggested that the recommended response for question 27 (second paragraph) regarding the Coastal Protection Belt be amended from 'Consideration is currently being given, by TDC's Local Plan Committee, to whether or not the Coastal Protection Belt, with a corresponding policy, should continue to be included in Local Plans' to "TDC's Local Plan Committee have considered the issue and, in principle, support the retention of the Coastal Protection Belt but that both TDC and CBC should adopt a consistent approach."

Subject to the above amendments, the Committee **AGREED** to the Officers' recommended responses to questions 26-28 be submitted as part of TDC's formal response to CBC's consultation document.

Growth Options/Development Strategy

Mr Guiver explained that this section set out Officers' recommended responses to questions 29 to 32 in the CBC consultation document in relation to growth options and development strategy.

He explained the various options that CBC had proposed and told the Committee that the recommended response of TDC was that option 1A and 1B were the preferred options, followed by options 3A and 3B but that it did not support options 2A or 2B. He also said TDC would support the Garden City principles and would want to work with CBC to ensure that any development in the proposed location concurred with those principles and that he also recommended that higher densities of residential development should be situated in locations within the town centre where there was the necessary facilities and infrastructure.

During discussions it was suggested that the Council's Planning Policy Manager make the following amendments to the proposed responses;

- (a) That the recommended response to question 31 include reference to the issue of schooling; and
- (b) That the recommended response to question 30 be amended to include concerns of the impact on the flow of traffic along the A120 as a result of option 3A/B.

Subject to the above amendments, the Committee **AGREED** to the Officers' recommended responses to questions 29-32 be submitted as part of TDC's formal response to CBC's consultation document.

During a further general discussion a Member asked if the concept of a joint Local Plan between Tendring and Colchester for key strategic issues could be considered. The Council's Planning Policy Manager replied that, where possible, joint work between TDC and CBC was already happening but that a report could be prepared on the concept of joint strategic planning on key issues.

The meeting was declared closed at 7.54 p.m.

Chairman