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Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee

18 April 2023

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PLANNING POLICY AND LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE,
HELD ON TUESDAY, 18TH APRIL, 2023 AT 6.00 PM
IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM, AT THE TOWN HALL, STATION ROAD, CLACTON-ON-SEA, CO15 1SE**

Present:	Councillors Turner (Chairman), Fairley (Vice-Chairman), Allen, Chapman BEM and Fowler
Also Present:	Councillor Bray (Portfolio Holder for Planning)
In Attendance:	Gary Guiver (Director (Planning)), Ian Ford (Committee Services Manager), Will Fuller (Planning Officer) and Emma Haward (Leadership Support Assistant)
Also in Attendance:	Keith Simmons (Head of Democratic Services & Elections)

33. CHAIRMAN'S OPENING REMARKS

“Good evening to my fellow Members, Officers and members of the public. This is the 16th and final meeting of the PP&LPC for this Council term. We have before us four more CA Character Appraisals and Management Plans. It is unfortunate that the remaining three (out of the overall total of 20) will have to wait until the next Council term. I always like to leave a clean slate for my successors.

In the last four years we have read 4,201 pages of agendas, taken our Draft District Plan in two parts through the Full Council twice, achieving unanimity across six different political groupings on all occasions and come out of all of this smelling of roses. We have a Local Plan to be proud of. It is holding up under close scrutiny from the Planning Inspectorate and very few Appeals are allowed. This is something this Committee can be immensely proud of. I thank all present and past Committee Members.

Of course, none of this would have been achieved if we had not had Mr. Guiver, our Director (Planning) and his very able team guiding, debating and suggesting to us the best policies for this Council. Helping Mr Guiver and his Team and this Committee to be legally compliant and follow due process has been our Deputy Chief Executive, Mrs Hastings, and Mr. Ford, who has faithfully minuted our wise words and recommendations! I thank you all. Four years well spent.

Not everything is sweetness and light though. The Local Plan is, as it states, the plan by which to judge the 2,300+ applications the Authority receives each year and make decisions thereupon. I only read the applications and decisions for the Town Council area of Frinton & Walton. Having spoken with the Portfolio Holder for Planning (Councillor Jeff Bray), his concerns District wide are similar to mine. I have raised these concerns with Mr. Guiver. The Local Plan is, or appears to be, not fully understood and interpreted as Members would and have been led to believe it should be. I have come across decisions made that I do not understand or comprehend. This applies to both the Planning Committee and the weekly decision list. As this is our last meeting of this Council term and all we do is advise the Planning Portfolio Holder, I thought it best to raise my concerns and any further concerns this Committee may have, ready for the next Council.”

Members of the Committee raised the importance of preserving the views and setting of ancient and scheduled monuments and other buildings of historic importance in the District's Conservation Areas.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Planning Portfolio Holder (Councillor Bray) responded to the points made and agreed to take them on board and to progress them with the Director (Planning).

34. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Bush, Chittock and Winfield.

Councillor Bush had been unable to attend the meeting as it coincided with the annual meeting of Great Oakley Parish Council and as Vice-Chairman of the Parish Council he was obligated to attend.

Councillor Chittock had been unable to attend due to a family funeral.

Councillor Winfield had been unable to attend due to the illness of a close family member.

35. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on Monday 23 January 2023 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Chairman reminded Members that the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community Joint Committee had agreed that the Development Plan Document for the Garden Community should go out to consultation. This had now been ratified by both TDC's and Colchester City Council's respective Full Councils and would now go out for a second public consultation. All responses to that consultation would be considered alongside the DPD at an Examination-in-Public, which was expected to be held in mid-Autumn 2023.

The Chairman and the Director (Planning) updated the Committee on the further practical and pragmatic discussions held with senior Officers of the Environment Agency (EA) in order to clarify the EA's current stance on the emerging Jaywick Sands Place Plan.

36. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In relation to Agenda Item 6, report A.1 – Conservation Area Character Appraisal and Management Plans for Great Clacton, Lawford, Bradfield and Ramsey, Councillor Fairley declared for the public record that she was the Ward Member for Bradfield and Ramsey.

37. QUESTIONS ON NOTICE PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 38

No questions on notice pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 38 had been submitted on this occasion.

38. PUBLIC SPEAKING

Pursuant to the provisions of the Council's public speaking scheme for the Planning Policy & Local Plan Committee, no member of the public had registered to ask at this meeting a question regarding the matters contained in the report of the Director (Planning).

No member of the public attended the meeting to make a statement on the matters contained in the report of the Director (Planning).

39. REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR (PLANNING) - A.1 - CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR GREAT CLACTON, LAWFORD, BRADFIELD AND RAMSEY

The Committee considered a comprehensive report of the Director (Planning) (A.1) which reported to it the Bradfield, Great Clacton, Lawford and Ramsey Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans prepared for the Council by Essex Place Services, and requested that the Committee agreed a recommendation to Cabinet that they be published for consultation purposes.

Alterations to Boundaries**Great Clacton**

To the south of the churchyard and east of the twentieth century vicarage, mid-twentieth century housing had been augmented with a new development of further bungalows at the northern end of Nightingale Way, on previously undeveloped land. Those were characterful in design and had been carefully detailed but were not of sufficient architectural quality to merit inclusion in the Conservation Area. It was also proposed to omit an area of unkempt scrubland directly fronting Valley Road and a tarmacked area behind this surrounding the Army Cadets' building located off Valley Road. The map on page 4 of the Appraisal showed the proposed amended Conservation Area boundary.

Lawford

The proposed addition to the Conservation Area included the Ogilvie Hall and early twentieth century social housing with some later infill development.

The boundary of the Conservation Area would be expanded eastwards along Wignall Street to include Nos. 11-16 Wignall Street on the southern side of the road. Together those buildings formed a pleasing and uniform group on the approach to the historic core of Lawford. The buildings were of special historic interest and some architectural interest as they represented a period of time when social housing had been expanded in response to the post First World War national housing crisis.

The boundary change would also include the 1909 Ogilvie Hall, which was in the 'Arts and Crafts' style and played a prominent role in the approach to the historic core of Lawford.

Bradfield

It was proposed to revise the boundary to remove Old Hall House, Harwich Road, from the Conservation Area [Figure 4]. Built since the previous appraisal, Old Hall House [Figure 3] was not considered to reflect the prevailing character of the Conservation Area due to its construction date, massing, and appearance.

Minor alterations were also proposed to the northern edge of the Conservation Area's boundary to remove an outbuilding associated with Greenacres (a modern dwelling which was not within the Conservation Area boundary) on Station Road from within the Conservation Area. Other minor amendments were proposed to rationalise the Conservation Area boundary against existing plot boundaries. Those were depicted on the map on the following page.

Ramsey

The modern properties in Windmill Close had been excluded. The west boundary of the designation had been moved to the lane adjacent to White House Farm. Windmill Close, and the properties within it, were not considered to contribute to special interest nor did they form part of the historic settlement.

A large portion of the Conservation Area had been removed to the south of the village. This area held no architectural or historic interest in its own right and was better considered as part of the settlement's setting.

Three modern properties at the east of the Conservation Area had been removed from the designation.

The junction of The Street, Main Road and Wrabness Road had been added. This confluence of roads, and the triangular junction, had been in place since at least the mid-nineteenth century and formed the gateway to this part of the Conservation Area. Marsh View and Revans had also been incorporated into the extension of the designation here. Whilst altered, the buildings formed part of the historic building stock and termination of the former village envelope. Revans was also formerly the village store and one of the commercial buildings located on this road junction.

Other minor changes to the boundary had resulted from a tightening of the designation to take account of property boundaries, which made for more practical management of the designation.

Designated Heritage Assets

The Appraisals made note of the listed buildings, scheduled monuments and registered parks and gardens in each Conservation Area.

Proposed Non-designated heritage assets

Members noted that each of the Conservation Area Appraisals proposed a number of buildings to be considered on the Council's Local List.

Those buildings had been identified as they were either considered to be good examples of their type or architectural style, were prominent local landmarks, demonstrated use of local materials or design features, or were connected to local historical events, activities or people, and were all relatively complete in their survival.

At Great Clacton

- 11 North Road
- 17 North Road (The Great Clacton Surgery)
- 9 StJohn's Road (Foxes Garden and Furniture Shop)
- 397 and 399 Old Road (Vacant shop and Liberal Democrats office)
- 395 Old Road
- Former Public Convenience (Old Road, adjacent to The Ship public house)
- 406 and 404 Old Road
- Old Mill Cottage, 402 Old Road
- Eaglehurst, 6 Valley Road
- Great Clacton Methodist Church and adjacent semi-detached cottages on Valley Road
- 17 Valley Road • Sudbury House, Nightingale Way (outside of the Conservation Area boundary)

At Lawford

- Hall Farm
- Ogilvie Hall
- The Old School, Church Hill
- Woodman, Church Hill
- Almshouses
- 11-16 Wignall Street
- The Old Laundry

At Bradfield

- Bradfield Place
- Strangers' Home
- The Church of St Lawrence - Lychgate

At Ramsey

- The Castle Public House;
- 12-14 The Street (excluding Owl Cottage which was Grade II Listed);
- 18 The Street (The Gables);
- 24-27 The Street;
- The former Methodist Chapel;
- Old Mill Cottage;
- 28-29 The Street (The Old Ramsey Cash Stores);
- The Windmill House; and
- Swan House.

Heritage at Risk

There were no buildings or features in the Great Clacton Conservation Area, which were on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. However, the Grade II listed 383 Old Road appeared to have been unoccupied for several years and was in a neglected state, thus this building could be considered at risk. Grade II listed Great Clacton Hall

also appeared to be unoccupied following the closure of the Abbey Care Home formerly on those premises, though it appeared to be in a reasonable state of external repair.

At the time of writing in 2023, no buildings within the Lawford or Bradfield Conservation Areas featured on the national list of Heritage at Risk published by Historic England.

There were no buildings or features in the Ramsey Conservation Area, which were on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register. However, Grade II* listed Ramsey Windmill appeared to have been unoccupied for several years and this building could be considered at risk. Given the condition of the Conservation Area, and the issues identified, this appraisal recommended the inclusion of Ramsey Conservation Area on Historic England's Heritage at Risk Register.

Archaeology

Throughout these Conservation Areas, there was the potential for a multitude of below-ground heritage assets yet to be discovered. In general, the appraisals promoted a cautious approach to development, which might disturb or destroy those assets.

Assessment of significance

A detailed assessment of significance of each of the Conservation Areas had considered the following features:

- Layout
- Building materials and boundary treatments
- Listed buildings and non-designated heritage assets.
- Other buildings
- Landscaping and open spaces
- Views

Opportunities for Enhancement

- *At Great Clacton, due to its location, there were issues with traffic through the Conservation area;*
- *All of the Conservation Areas would benefit from interpretation of the historic features in the area;*
- *At Great Clacton there were a number of vacant buildings in the Conservation area;*
- *All areas suffered from loss of architectural detailing;*
- *Great Clacton and Lawford also had street furniture that required attention plus inappropriate signage;*
- *Road surfacing was of poor quality particularly in Great Clacton;*
- *At Great Clacton and Bradfield there were areas of poorly kept public open space;*
and
- *All of the Conservation Areas suffered from inappropriate modern development*

Management Proposals

- *Production of a list of local non-designated heritage assets;*
- *The Council using Article 4 Directions and its enforcement powers within all Conservation Areas;*

- *Production of heritage guidance leaflets for residents and business owners;*
- *The Council should work closely with the Highways Authority to address street clutter and signage in Great Clacton and Lawford Conservation Areas; and*
- *Bradfield would benefit from heritage interpretation within the Conservation Area.*

Funding Opportunities

- Heritage lottery fund
- S106 Agreements
- Partnership Schemes in Conservation Areas

During the consideration of this item, the Chairman requested that the following matters, be reviewed by Officers, for inclusion on an agenda for a future meeting of this Committee:-

- (1) whether Tendring District Council should cease its policy of not imposing Tree Preservation Orders on Essex County Council owned land in the light of a recent possible case of harm caused by highways works to a tree planted in 1910 at Kirby Cross;
- (2) the conservation and repair of surviving historic fenestration in Conservation Areas in the light of the energy conservation needs of households; and
- (3) the prevention of the dilution of positive buildings amongst those which are neutral thereby leading to an underwhelming and indistinctive overall character. There was a need to avoid the quality of design being 'averaged down' by the neutral and negative elements of the built environment.

At the invitation of the Chairman, the Planning Portfolio Holder (Councillor Bray) addressed the Committee on the subject matter of this item.

It was moved by Councillor Allen, seconded by Councillor Chapman BEM, and unanimously:-

RESOLVED that the Planning Policy and Local Plan Committee:

- a) endorses the new Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans for Great Clacton (Appendix 1 to item A.1 of the Report of the Director (Planning)), Lawford (Appendix 2 thereto), Bradfield (Appendix 3 thereto) and Ramsey (Appendix 4 thereto) Conservation Areas;
- b) recommends to Cabinet that the above documents forming Appendices 1, 2, 3 and 4 be published for consultation with the public and other interested parties; and
- c) notes that Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans for the District's three remaining Conservation Areas will be brought before the Committee in due course.

40. CHAIRMAN'S CLOSING REMARKS

"I would like to thank both the Chairman of the Planning Committee (Councillor White) and the Portfolio Holder for Planning (Councillor Bray) for their interest and their regular

attendance at our musings. It has made for better decision making and more open debate.

Thank you to Mr Guiver and your team. It has been a long and hard row we have harrowed, but it has born excellent fruit.

As to the future, this Committee has the last three Conservation Area appraisals to comment on i.e. Ardleigh, Great Holland and Tendring. It will be starting to work upon the five-year review of the Local Plan. It will also have many Parish Council Neighbourhood Plans to review and, most importantly, the 'Local Listings'.

Thank you all once again and may I wish all Members who are putting themselves forward at the Elections fair wind and a successful passage."

With the permission of the Chairman, Councillor Fairley asked for, and received from the Director (Planning) an update on the current position with regard to the Council's response to the public consultations on the following matters:-

- (a) Five Estuaries;
- (b) North Falls; and
- (c) East Anglia Green.

The meeting was declared closed at 7.24 pm

Chairman