

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON MONDAY 8
DECEMBER 2014, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor M Carver (Chairman)
Councillors L Haysey and S Rutland-Barsby.

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors D Andrews, S Bull, G Jones,
P Moore, T Page, J Ranger, P Ruffles,
N Symonds and K Warnell.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Chris Butcher	- Senior Planning Officer
Ripple Gupta	- Planning Officer
Isabelle Haddow	- Planning Officer
Martin Ibrahim	- Democratic Services Team Leader
Lorraine Kirk	- Senior Communications Officer
Martin Paine	- Senior Planning Officer
Laura Pattison	- Assistant Planning Officer
George Pavey	- Assistant Planning/Technical Officer
Jenny Pierce	- Senior Planning Officer
Kay Mead	- Senior Planning Officer
Claire Sime	- Planning Policy Team Leader
Kevin Steptoe	- Head of Planning

and Building
Control Services

21 THE BISHOP'S STORTFORD GOODS YARD UPDATE REPORT

The Panel considered a report that provided an update on progress with a planning framework for the Bishop's Stortford Goods Yard, including a suggested way forward towards a planning application, which the site promoters had stated was anticipated in September 2015. The report also explained that there were likely to be difficult trade-offs between the various aspirations for the site, given the need to ensure deliverability of development, and that these should be addressed through the Neighbourhood Plan group. Finally, the report recommended that current Local Plan policy be struck through and replaced with a new policy context provided by the emerging District Plan and Neighbourhood Plan.

Various Members questioned the need to delete policy now and expressed concern that the process appeared to be led by the developers referring to their views on the proposed link road and the need for further consultation. The role of the neighbourhood planning team was raised and whilst appreciation was expressed for the Council's level of engagement with them, some concern was expressed at whether their aspirations matched those of the general public.

The Panel Chairman reiterated that planning policy was agreed by the Council and not developers. He commented that the current policy was restrictive and did not provide a suitable framework for a deliverable development. He referred to the change in circumstances that had now unlocked the site and the Council need to demonstrate an evidence base for a balanced development that was deliverable, of which the transport interchange was a critical part.

Officers explained the role of the neighbourhood planning process and the need for developers to give weight to the process. The current policy was hampering the process and favoured car traffic. Officers referred to the advice of Peter Brett Associates (PBA) on sustainable transport aspirations that encouraged bus, cycle and pedestrian use and the need to ensure that car journeys had the town centre as their destination.

In respect of the role of developers, Officers explained the need to engage with them at an early stage to ensure that the question of viability was addressed. Ultimately, what was deliverable, sustainable and viable on this site would be determined by the planning process. Nevertheless, in recognition of Members' concerns, the Panel agreed to delete recommendation (A) and to amend recommendation (C) by replacing the word "new" with the word "updated".

The Panel supported the amended recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) to inform emerging policy for the Goods Yard site, the District Council should work in partnership with the Neighbourhood Plan team to agree a set of priorities for the site, and working in conjunction with the site promoters to agree cost/value inputs to inform development choices based around an agreed priority list; and

(B) the updated policy context for the planning application be provided by a revised District Plan Policy on the Goods Yard, subject to further public consultation, and closely aligned with any emerging Neighbourhood Plan policy for the site.

22 **DRAFT DISTRICT PLAN – RETAIL AND TOWN CENTRES
POLICY CRITICAL FRIEND APPRAISAL (NOVEMBER
2014)**

The Panel gave consideration to a report summarising the findings of the Critical Friend Appraisal of the Draft District Plan policies on retail and town centres contained within Chapter 15, which sought agreement to use the Appraisal to inform the preparation of the East Herts District Plan.

The Panel supported the recommendation now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that the Retail and Town Centres Policy Critical Friend Appraisal (November 2014), be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform and support the East Herts District Plan.

23 **AUTHORITY MONITORING REPORT 2013/14**

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval for the publication of the Authority Monitoring Report. The Panel noted that Local Planning Authorities were no longer required to prepare an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) for submission to the Secretary of State before the end of each year. In addition, the enactment of the Localism Act in 2011 had led to the withdrawal of the national core output indicators, giving local authorities the freedom to choose to report on indicators that were considered relevant to their local area and plan-making process.

This AMR, now called the ‘Authority Monitoring Report’, reported on the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014. The Council was in the process of developing an updated monitoring framework alongside the emerging District Plan and it was likely that the format of the AMR would continue to evolve as part of this process.

In respect of the projected shortfall in housing completions and the different methods of addressing this,

the Panel Chairman referred to the unrealistic requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) in favouring the Sedgefield method and the need to continue lobbying for a more common sense approach.

In view of the shortfall in demonstrating a five year housing land supply, some Members commented on the pressures brought to bear on Development Management Committee in having to consider inappropriate planning applications.

The Panel supported the recommendation as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that the Authority Monitoring Report 2013/2014 contained as Essential Reference Paper ‘B’ and Essential Reference Paper ‘C’ to the report now submitted, be agreed for publication.

24 **DELIVERY STUDY UPDATE REPORT**

The Panel considered an update on progress with the Delivery Study, which included the latest set of recommendations from Peter Brett Associates (PBA) relating to the approach to financial viability, and the wide-ranging implications of this in terms of many aspects of the emerging District Plan. The report also set out delays with critical pieces of evidence and the implications of this for the overall timeline for the District Plan.

The Panel Chairman advised that he had asked Officers to set up a joint meeting with Members to consider the issue of viability.

In response to a Member’s question, Officers advised that the outstanding transport modelling data had yet to be received, but that they were in continuing discussions to obtain them as soon as possible.

The Panel supported the recommendation as now

detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that the District Plan Delivery Study Update Note from PBA, together with the presentation on Financial Viability, and the Progress Update, contained at Essential Reference Papers ‘B’, ‘C’, and ‘D’ respectively, including the implications of those for many aspects of the District Plan work, including the timeline, be noted.

25 **DUTY TO CO-OPERATE UPDATE REPORT**

The Panel received the notes of the latest round of Member-level meetings with adjoining Local Planning Authorities. Consideration was also given to the progress made in setting up the ‘Co-Operation for Sustainable Development Group’, involving Authorities in eastern Hertfordshire, western Essex, and north London.

The Panel supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the notes of the Member-level meeting held with Harlow Council be agreed; and

(B) the Terms of Reference for the Member Board of the ‘Co-Operation for Sustainable Development Group’ of authorities be noted.

26 **DRAFT DISTRICT PLAN CHAPTERS 17-19: RESPONSE TO ISSUES RAISED DURING PREFERRED OPTIONS CONSULTATION AND DRAFT REVISED CHAPTERS**

The Panel considered a report highlighting the issues raised through the recent consultation in connection with Chapters 17 – 19 of the Draft District Plan Preferred Options, together with Officer responses to those issues. The report also presented draft revised chapters showing proposed amendments, for subsequent incorporation into a revised Draft District Plan.

The proposed amendments were presented as working Draft Revised Chapters only at this stage, as they might change before final agreement of a revised Draft District Plan. Therefore, these Revised Chapters would only be presented for approval until such time that the complete suite of amendments were collated and presented as one comprehensive Revised Draft District Plan.

In response to a Member's comment relating to Buntingford and the railways, Officers confirmed that this was a comment made in the consultation.

The Panel supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the issues raised in respect of Chapters 17-19 of the Draft District Plan Preferred Options, as detailed at Essential Reference Papers B, C, and D to this report, be received and considered;

(B) the Officer response to the issues referred to in (A) above, as detailed in Essential Reference Papers B, C and D to the report submitted, be noted; and

(C) the draft revised chapters, as detailed in Essential Reference Papers B, C and D to the report submitted, be noted, with decision on their final content being deferred to allow consideration of further technical work and other issues.

27 APOLOGIES

An apology for lateness was submitted on behalf of Councillor L Haysey who was representing the Authority at another meeting.

28 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Panel Chairman welcomed Members and the public to the meeting and reminded everyone that the meeting was being webcast.

He advised that a further meeting with parish and town council representatives had been arranged for 15 January 2015. Future Panel meetings were being finalised and would be announced in due course.

Finally, the Chairman referred to the difficulties encountered by Uttlesford District Council with their Local Plan Examination, which demonstrated the need for East Herts Council to develop a robust Plan that would stand up to examination.

29 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Panel meeting held on 22 October 2014, be approved as correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The meeting closed at 8.25 pm

Chairman

Date