

Appendix C – Summary of the East Herts January Community Voice Meetings

SUMMARY OF THE WARE COMMUNITY VOICE HELD AT THE PRIORY, WARE ON THURSDAY 13 JANUARY 2005

Present: 40 attendees including Councillor Mrs J J Taylor (Chairman) M G Carver, D Clark, D Atkins, T Milner, M R Alexander, D A A Peek, (HCC) Dennis Ashley

Officers: Rachel Stopard, Lorraine Blackburn, Lois Prior, Jo Edwards, Simon Andrews

Welcome The Chairman explained that the format of the evening was to consider the implications of the East of England Plan and how this will impact on Hertfordshire and the District of East Herts. The Plan would affect all planning and development up to 2021 and would affect, schools, housing, transport and the environment. It was noted that the consultation period would expire on 16 March 2005. The Chairman commented that the Panel of Speakers comprising East Herts' Councillors M G Carver, D Clark and Rachel Stopard, Executive Director and (HCC) Dennis Ashley would speak separately on the issue.

Rachel Stopard gave a factual overview of the implications of the Plan and what the proposals would mean to East Herts and how the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) could be influenced. The composition of the Assembly was explained.

It was noted that whilst East Herts supported the "Vision" of sustainability, the Plan lacked adequate funding to support the initiatives proposed. Of particular note was the Plan for the region, once adopted would be mandatory on local authorities. The Government stated that 478,000 homes should be built in the South East (30% of which should be affordable housing); approximately 79,600 would be in Hertfordshire (approximately 21,000 in East Herts District). The Government had stressed that the economy was the driver for initiatives in the Plan.

In terms of employment, the Plan forecast 421,500 for the region; 40,000 would be in the Stansted/M11 area and 55,800 in the rest of Hertfordshire (on the premise that Stansted was developed to maximum existing capacity). It was noted that EERA do not support the 2nd runway at Stansted Airport.

The transport implications of the Plan were referred to and that funding from the Government to support the infrastructure had not been confirmed which had led to EERA "suspending" their support of the Plan in December, 2004. Funding to support the infrastructure was considered fundamental to the success of the Plan.

How proposals affected the County as a whole were explained in terms of proposed population increases, greenbelt status, traffic increases and congestion. It was noted that proposals in the Plan were "site specific" in terms of development proposals north of Harlow the intention being to "regenerate" Harlow into a major shopping centre.

Hertfordshire County Council had major concerns about the Plan in that it they felt that:

- The Plan was not “robust”
- Road and rail infrastructure was already overburdened
- Water supplies were under pressure
- Widespread Greenfield development was not justified
- Airport development was adding to pressure
- Employment growth was optimistic and they questioned whether huge out of town settlements would really regenerate local town centres.

This was supported by the District particularly on the issues of housing/jobs balance, pressure on services, congestion and environmental impact. The District was committed to the issue of sustainability, but questioned the assumptions on local regeneration and whether 21,000 homes in East Herts was realistic. Further East Herts was committed to the protection of the environment and opposed proposals which would undermine areas of environmental sensitivity. Overall, it was felt that the Plan would have a negative effect on the quality of life in this area.

The Leader explained the role he and HCC Ashley played within the context of EERA. He commented that the Plan needed to be robustly challenged. He commented that the Plan failed in so many ways and referred to an attempt to reconcile problems experienced in Felixstowe with Ware. It was noted that many areas on the east coast were deprived whereas East Herts was a privileged area in terms of quality of life as such the two areas could not be compared. Any funding therefore would go to areas of high deprivation.

He commented that the Plan came “top down” rather than “bottom up” and as a result was fundamentally flawed. The Plan would affect 6m people in an area represented by 108 EERA members who were not democratically accountable for their actions.

The Leader stressed that this was the only opportunity offered to challenge the Plan. He stated that the Plan would be enshrined in statute and as such would be mandatory on local authorities and at a regional level.

Of particular concern was that the Government had initially agreed to fund the infrastructure proposals in the Plan then later, retracted that offer. It was on this basis that the Plan had been prepared and subsequently supported by EERA. The fact that EERA had now suspended its support of the Plan had very serious implications in terms of its viability and that funding would have to be found from developers.

He acknowledged that the Council was slightly below the government's projection in terms of the provision of housing up to 2021. It was however committed to providing a high proportion of affordable housing.

The Leader explained that the Plan would seriously affect the quality of life and that the proposals were impossible to sustain without sufficient resourcing. He questioned why it was necessary to overburden the economy in this region. It

was argued by the Government that economy was the driver for growth but the ODPM had asked for 200,000 more homes in growth areas, as such the Council will be told to provide more housing which is not required.

Concern was expressed about the regeneration of Harlow on a huge flood plain. The implications in terms of congestion in the area and the impact on quality of life were highlighted. The Plan would impact on everyone in the area including the area's green belt with the real threat of the area becoming part of Greater London!

HCC Derrick Ashley addressed the community. He confirmed that the proposals in the Plan represented over and unsupported development. He believed that this Plan was not in the interests of the people in the area and that the Plan was "strong on aspirations and short on detailed delivery". It was the County's belief that the housing numbers were excessive, further that the Government had not provided a firm proposal in terms of investment to support the proposals in the Plan and the infrastructure needed.

Questions Denise Sinclair – Asked whether the Council could still make objections?

Cllr Carver – confirmed that this was the only opportunity to comment about the plan and that was why the Council was carrying out extensive consultation throughout the district. He reiterated that responsibility for delivery of the plan would fall to the Council and the County Council. He confirmed that the Plan was Government driven.

Caroline James – 21,000 houses? How many could be reasonably sustainable?

Cllr Carver confirmed that the Council had an infrastructure deficiency, in that it had plans to build 9 -11,000 homes within the Plan's timeframe; roads were already congested and of the poor links with Kings Cross and Liverpool Street. On the social aspect of housing, it was anticipated that help would go to the areas of greatest need (as East Herts was recognised as having a high quality of life). The Council supported incremental growth where it could be achieved in the community and throughout the district.

Sue Jones – Requested a definition of "deprivation". She asked how the Plan in terms of "overload" would impact on schools etc. She also commented on the "masses" of readily available housing elsewhere in the country ie Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire etc.

Cllr Carver explained the key indicators which made up the scale of deprivation. He commented on the Government's plans for 21,000 homes and the regeneration of Milton Keynes as a city and the development of Bedfordshire, Luton and Houghton Regis areas.

HCC Ashley commented on the scale of development in Essex and the regeneration of Stevenage. He commented that population had quadrupled in the last 10 years and the infrastructure had not caught up. Lord Rooker had

preached “no infrastructure no development” and Hertfordshire and the District Council would be challenging this positional statement.

Ian Malone – Questioned how the Council could be trusted in the light of the fact that hospitals/schools were being shut and that the public were being told that they were not needed?

HCC Ashley explained that there had to be accountability of delivery of a service. Schools could not be expanded in an area if they were not needed and that was why temporary accommodation was provided.

Alan Thomas – Asked why the Council believed the Government were so keen for the population to grow so rapidly in East Herts and was there a correlation between population growth and density?

HCC Ashley commented that the South East had grown more than any other region and that the Government wanted to build on that success. He commented that the SE was viewed as the “driver” for the economy. It was his belief that the Government’s macro policy was flawed when viewing other government reports eg the OPDM stated that it had no policy on national development, only for the South east!

Nigel Clarke – On the issue of transparency in relation to proposed housing north of Harlow, EERA had been asked to supply certain documents and that Alan Moore had declined access. The Freedom of Information Act was questioned.

HCC Ashley commented that a large number of Government studies conflicted with the Plan now proposed. New studies had been commissioned which had come up with a fresh set of conclusions for the expansion of the South East and proposals for Harlow.

Question - was there a case to challenge the Plan on the basis of a flawed process?

HCC Ashley commented that if the process was flawed, this would only achieve short term delays, the public needed to argue about the content of the Plan.

Liz Gugin – Questioned how many Members of EERA were representatives of the federation of house builders.

Cllr Carver commented on a recent requested a EERA meeting to declare interests (prior to that no requests to declare had been sought) he commented that it was interesting to see the subsequent responses of some attendees. He explained that Members of EERA were not democratically elected and therefore not accountable for what happened in the Plan.

Question – on the regeneration of Harlow and of plans to make it a regional shopping centre. Doubts were expressed.

Cllr Carver commented on recent housing development in Cambridge to support the expansion of high tech industry which was much needed in the area.

Cllr Clark – commented that the regeneration of Harlow could have a disastrous effect on market towns

Ian Malone - questioned the number of empty properties in the District and requested specific information of this.

Cllr Carver and Rachel Stopard commented that the Council was undertaking a study on empty properties and when the study had been concluded, this information would be made available.

Question – commented on the amount of congestion already and the problems which would occur as a result of the M11 expansion.

Councillor Carver commented that the Plan contained positive policies in terms of environmental balance but there was nothing in the Plan to support another M11 junction.

Question - An attendee commented that Alan Moore had talked about a by-pass for north of Harlow, yet there was nothing in the Plan.

The Chairman referred to a letter she had received from David Roberts describing EERA as a Quango and not democratically accountable.

Councillor Carver impressed upon the public the need to respond and how to submit comments within the consultation period ending 16 March 2005. He stressed that this Plan would affect everyone in this area and this was the only opportunity the public would get to comment.

The meeting closed at 8.55 pm

SUMMARY OF SAWBRIDGEWORTH COMMUNITY VOICE HELD ON THURSDAY, 20 JANUARY 2005

Present: 152 people attended including 3 East Herts Councillors

Officers: Sue Birley, Alison Brown, Jeff Hughes, Martin Ibrahim, Mary Orton, Bryan Thomsett, David Tweedie, Catherine Whitbourn

1. Fire Service

Councillor Diana Richards, the Chairman invited Steve Milton from the local Fire Service to address the meeting. He informed the meeting that a recruitment campaign was underway for new fire officers to crew appliances. He emphasised the importance of ensuring that a ready supply of trained officers was in place to cover for impending retirements. He also outlined the importance of having smoke detectors being fitted. Details could be obtained by calling in at the local fire station.

2. East of England Plan

Mary Orton, Assistant Director (Policy and Performance), gave a factual overview on the East of England Plan, which had been published for consultation by the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA). Councillor Mike Carver, Leader of East Herts Council and Councillor Derrick Ashley, Hertfordshire County Council, both emphasised the significance of the Plan and the importance of as many people as possible responding to the consultation. They outlined their belief that the Plan was flawed and should be challenged, not only for its content, but also for the process that had been put in place by EERA.

A number of questions were asked and comments made in relation to the Plan. These included:

- The formation of the 'Stop Harlow North' campaign and the need to oppose the proposals for housing developments to the north of Harlow. This had the danger of creeping urbanisation towards Sawbridgeworth and the loss of Green Belt. ***(Although the regeneration of Harlow was supported, it was felt that this would not be achieved by substantial housing developments outside of the town centre. What was required was investment within the town centre.)***
- The impact of the proposals for Climate Change and the environment in general. ***(It was important to aim to achieve a balance between sustainable development and the need to protect the environment).***
- Was Harlow Council supportive of the Plan. ***(Harlow Council, as East Herts did, supported the regeneration of Harlow. However the Councils did not agree on the means for achieving this.)***
- EERA's conclusion that expanding Harlow northwards was the least problematic was due to the site being owned by a single owner. It was suggested that letters should be written to BP as the landowners of the site in question. Also, shareholders should be encouraged to sell their shares.

- The myth of affordable housing. ***(East Herts Council aimed to bridge the affordability gap by looking at sensitive developments to include provision of affordable housing. However, funding from the Government was now more problematic due to the regionalisation of the bidding process.)***
- The process was wholly undemocratic. ***(EERA was a voluntary body, which now had statutory powers.)***
- How was regeneration going to happen when jobs were drifting abroad. ***(The Plan envisaged Harlow becoming a sub regional retail centre, which made little sense as the only jobs this would create would be low paid, and therefore, unable to afford the new housing provision.)***
- There was a need for a M11/A414 link to the south of Harlow. ***(Agreed that this was needed and should be on the table.)***
- The impact of development to the north of Harlow on boundary changes between Essex and Hertfordshire. ***(This should be seen in the wider political context - the Counties had already lost their statutory planning role, inevitably, there would be moves towards unitary and regional authorities.)***
- The need to preserve Green Belt land and to identify swathes of land in a holistic way to avoid losing land to development in a piecemeal way. ***(EERA saw Hertfordshire as containing much green land, therefore it would be difficult to argue that it had run out.)***
- The need to consider flooding issues, especially as the proposed site for development to the north of Harlow was on flood plains. ***(Yes this was important - the Sustainability Appraisal accompanying the Plan referred to flooding issues. Developments were supposed to be resource neutral, in the use of recycled materials and water.)***
- Rivers Community Orchard was recognised by the Royal Horticultural Society as a valuable site – this should be protected. ***(Agreed – this would be taken on board.)***
- The importance of a well thought out Environmental Impact Study was needed as part of the Council's response. ***(Agreed.)***

Councillor Carver concluded the evening by detailing the ways in which the public could respond to the consultation. He referred to the information packs that had been handed out, and urged everyone present to e-mail or write to EERA. He stated that the consultation deadline was 5.00 pm, 16 March 2005. He also invited anyone with technical knowledge on any relevant issues to inform the Council.

The meeting closed at 9.20 pm

SUMMARY OF THE BUNTINGFORD COMMUNITY VOICE HELD ON 24 JANUARY 2005

Present: 54 people attended including 3 East Herts Councillors and two local MPs

Officers: Simon Andrews, Lorraine Blackburn, Mary Orton, Claire Pullen, Georgina Stanton.

1. East of England Plan

Mary Orton, Assistant Director (Policy and Performance), gave a factual overview on the East of England Plan, which had been published for consultation by the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA). Councillor Mike Carver, Leader of East Herts Council and Councillor Derrick Ashley, Hertfordshire County Council, both emphasised the significance of the Plan and the importance of as many people as possible responding to the consultation. They outlined their belief that the Plan was flawed and should be challenged, not only for its content, but also for the process that had been put in place by EERA.

A number of questions were asked and comments made in relation to the Plan. These included:-

The stance taken by Hertfordshire and Essex Councils on the Plan. (Both Hertfordshire and Essex have concerns with the plan in terms of levels of growth and would liaise further). The point was made that Hertfordshire is not like Norfolk and Suffolk and should have a say in how much housing is built in the County.

What did we do to Prescott? (It was noted that the North East voted against regional assemblies and an Opposition Government would scrap assemblies as a whole).

The area was 300 GPs short and there was no dentist available in Royston. These are the priorities! (This shortage was noted and being progressed via other organisations).

Clarification was sought on the processes adopted by EERA in relation to progressing the Plan. (It was felt that if comments on the Plan had not been taken into account by EERA, then recourse through the legal system would have to be considered). Go-East was confirmed as the Government body behind EERA and the body for pushing forward the Plan. The public were urged to challenge the Plan.

Clarification was sought on what the Government could do if the Plan was not supported. (It was suggested that the Government could cut rate support grant and other funding streams/get teams in to run our organisations etc).

Clarification was sought on the names of groups already established and actively protesting about the Plan. (A number of local groups had been established strongly opposing the Plan eg "Stop Harlow", CPRE in Herts etc. Those opposing the plan were urged to submit their own representations and/or get in touch with the local pressure groups).

Concern was expressed about the level of growth eg employment of Stansted Airport . (It was noted that some challenges were being progressed in Court. There were conflicts in the Plan about employment growth rates/runway proposals).

Harlow growth proposals. (It was noted that employment levels in Harlow had dropped by 20,000 jobs over the last 10 years). It was stressed that Harlow could not be regenerated by building more houses or by regenerating the town based on a low skills base in retail). The regeneration of Cambridge in terms of its bio-tech industry was explained).

The period of objections and the process for submitting representations was explained. It was stressed that this was the only opportunity being offered to the public to object. This Plan would form the basis of planning obligations over the next 20 years although it would be reviewed from time to time.

On a suggestion of Councillors resigning in protest to the Plan. (it was felt that it was better in terms of influence, being on the inside opposing the Plan than on the outside. Hertfordshire and East Herts Councils had submitted a number of challenges already to Go East.

The issue of Buntingford offering capacity in terms of house building was discussed and the role of the Government appointed Inspector should a planning application be refused; this was considered in the context of the housing growth projected in the Plan also determined by the Government.

Councillor Carver commented that if the level of growth rates were allowed to go ahead there was a real danger of the area becoming Greater London. It was noted that the huge area of land north of Harlow which could accommodate 28,000 homes was owned by BP.

Councillor Carver concluded the evening by detailing the ways in which the public could respond to the consultation. He referred to the information packs that had been handed out, and urged everyone present to e-mail or write to EERA. He stated that the consultation deadline was 5.00 pm, 16 March 2005. He also invited anyone with technical knowledge on any relevant issues to inform the Council.

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm

SUMMARY OF HERTFORD COMMUNITY VOICE HELD ON THURSDAY, 27 JANUARY 2005

Present: 60 people attended including Mark Prisk MP, 2 East Herts Councillors and 1 Hertfordshire County Councillor

Officers: Alison Brown, Michelle Diprose, Bernard Perry, Miranda Steward, Rachel Stopard, Catherine Whitbourn

1. East of England Plan

Councillor Jim Thornton, the Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained the need to consider the implications of the East of England Plan and the impact it would have on the district of East Hertfordshire. Rachel Stopard, Executive Director gave a factual overview on the East of England Plan, which had been published for consultation by the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA). The plan suggested 478,000 new homes would be built, this meant 20,800 for East Herts, and 421,500 new jobs would be created, 40,000 in the Stansted/M11 area and 55,800 in the rest of Hertfordshire. She further stated that East Herts was committed to Economic Regeneration, Sustainable Development and the Protection of the Environment. However, it would challenge huge out of town developments and any proposals that undermined areas of environmental sensitivity.

Mark Prisk MP for Hertford and Stortford raised concerns over the way local residents had been consulted over the East of England Plan and felt the plan was all about new development and not re-development.

Councillor Mike Carver, Leader of East Herts Council and Councillor Derrick Ashley, Hertfordshire County Council, both emphasised the significance of the Plan and the importance of as many people as possible responding to the consultation.

They outlined their belief that the Plan was flawed and should be challenged, not only for its content, but also for the process that had been put in place by EERA.

A number of questions were asked in relation to the Plan. These included:

- Why is the Government not helping business in the north of England where houses and industrial areas are lying derelict? East of England Regional Assembly is a scam and redevelopment issues should be left to the district for them to decide what is best. **(Mark Prisk MP responded by stating that he shared the same views, but it was the Government saying that people wanted to come and live in the South East region and it was acting on that. There should be stronger efforts on regeneration in the northern part of England.)**
- There was only one mention in the leaflet that people could respond by letter. If people work they may not have the time to respond, could more public awareness be placed in the local press encouraging people to make their views to the EERA? **(The consultation process started before Christmas and East Herts Council launched its consultation from the beginning of January 2005 in order to highlight the process to the public. People could also write as individuals and the press were working very hard with East Herts by allowing correspondence and adverts to be published in the papers.)**

- The proposals for jobs were a projected number. What percentage of total number of jobs is proposed for Hertford? ***(The jobs total is incredibly ambitious and there is a mis-match with houses in relation to jobs, 40,000 would be in the Stansted/M11 area and 55,800 in the Hertfordshire area.)***
- How does the Government go about creating jobs? ***(It is the private sector that creates jobs – it is on a predict and provide basis.)***
- The Christian Society has been looking for a new site for a new hall, and everyone is holding onto their land. Does the Plan recognise a need for cultural facilities to expand? ***(Every site is being looked at along with every field as a possible development site and they would need to look at these types of facilities being available.)***
- If the plan is fundamentally flawed, is there not an alternative plan being put forward by the Council? ***(The numbers in the plan are ambitious and the Council has put forward lower numbers but were out voted. A dossier of evidence is being gathered to forward to an Inspector of the Plan. There are a number of processes to go through before final adoption in 2006. The County Council and District Council will be representing certain issues.)***
- How would town centres be regenerated? What are the Council's proposals? ***(A large out of town development is flawed. To regenerate a town investment is needed first, attracting into the town an infrastructure of employers to regenerate the area and increase economic activity. A sensible balance of housing and business which should be incremental would be needed.)***
- Who put plan together? ***(The East of England Regional Assembly is made up of local authority representatives and nominated stakeholders.)***
- In the north of England people were allowed to vote on these types of plans. Are we able to vote on this plan? ***(No, that is why it is important to make views known.)***
- What action in relation to EERA not giving complete funding is taking place? ***(For any remaining funding this will have to be found locally.)***
- At what point does living in this area become unattractive? ***(It is not over yet, opposition will continue.)***
- Is there any point in reading the Executive summary and responding on the plan? ***(It is absolutely essential to respond to the plan.)***

Councillor Carver concluded the evening by detailing the ways in which the public could respond to the consultation. He referred to the information packs that had been handed out, and urged everyone present to e-mail EERA on www.eera.gov.uk or write to EERA. He stated that the consultation deadline was 5.00 pm, 16 March 2005.

The meeting closed at 9.10 pm

**SUMMARY OF BISHOP'S STORTFORD COMMUNITY VOICE
HELD ON MONDAY, 31 JANUARY 2005**

Present: 150 people attended including 11 East Herts Councillors

Officers: Linda Bevan, Simon Drinkwater, Will O'Neill, Mary Orton, Lois Prior,
Bryan Thomsett

1. **Welcome by Councillor Allen Burlton**

2. **East of England Plan**

Mary Orton, Assistant Director (Policy and Performance), gave a factual overview of the East of England Plan, which had been published for consultation by the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA). Councillor Mike Carver, Leader of East Herts Council, Councillor Derrick Ashley, Hertfordshire County Council and Mark Prisk MP emphasised the significance of the Plan and the importance of as many people as possible responding to the consultation. They outlined their belief that the Plan was flawed and should be challenged, not only for its content, but also for the process that had been put in place by EERA.

A number of questions were asked and comments made in relation to the Plan. These included:

- As the plan would meet needs beyond those for local people what scale of development was considered acceptable? (***This would depend on what was provided elsewhere in the region; some parts eg Peterborough wanted growth***)
- How did development at the Rugby Club in Bishop's Stortford fit into the plan? (***This site had not been specified but would be covered by general development to the north of Bishop's Stortford***)
- Was there a danger in emphasising the need for infrastructure before housing development in that it suggested that if this was provided residents would be happy with development which was not the case? (***The Government was not offering enough money to provide the infrastructure so this would not apply***)
- Residents should study the plan in order to successfully challenge it by finding specific technical faults in it eg traffic estimates (***this was endorsed***)
- How would adequate water and sewerage be provided? (***Funding would be a problem***)
- How could the Executive summary of the sustainability appraisal report be obtained? (***It could be requested on the same form used to request a copy of the East of England Plan supplied in the information pack circulated at the meeting***)

- Should responses be copied to Central Government? (***Mark Prisk would like copies at the House of Commons to send on to Central Government with his own covering letter***)

Councillor Carver concluded the evening by detailing the ways in which the public could respond to the consultation. He referred to the information packs that had been handed out, and urged everyone present to email or write to EERA including using the response form at www.eera.gov.uk. He stated that the consultation deadline was 5 pm on 16 March 2005. He also invited anyone with technical knowledge on any relevant issues to inform the Council.

Councillor Burlton thanked all present for attending.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm.

**SUMMARY OF STANDON AND PUCKERIDGE PUBLIC MEETING
ON EAST OF ENGLAND PLAN HELD ON THURSDAY,
24 FEBRUARY 2005**

Present: 40 people attended including 2 East Herts Councillors

Officers: Linda Bevan, Alison Brown, Mary Orton, Georgina Stanton,
Catherine Whitbourn.

1. **Welcome by County Councillor Jane Pitman**
2. **East of England Plan**

Mary Orton, Assistant Director (Policy and Performance), gave a factual overview of the East of England Plan, which had been published for consultation by the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA). Councillor Deborah Clark, Executive Member (Economic and Regional Development) of East Herts Council, Councillor Derrick Ashley, Hertfordshire County Council and Oliver Heald MP, emphasised the significance of the Plan and the importance of as many people as possible responding to the consultation. They outlined their belief that the Plan was flawed and should be challenged, not only for its content, but also for the process that had been put in place by EERA.

A number of questions were asked and comments made in relation to the Plan. These included:

- How much of the development proposed would be on brownfield sites? ***(Not known but there would not be enough brownfield area to accommodate all the development which was the reason for reviewing the green belt)***
- Why didn't EERA suggest developing a New Town instead of the current proposals? ***(This had been dismissed, at one time, as taking too long but it had since been suggested this should be recommended as an alternative)***
- Was it true that the examination in public could only look at the proposals in the plan ie not at building a New Town? ***(Yes but the examination would take account of all responses to the proposals)***
- How would the area cope with the extra water supplies needed? ***(This would be an expensive problem to overcome as the area was one of the driest in the country)***
- Would it be possible to ask for a judicial review like the one of the Government's proposals for Stansted Airport? ***(Yes, at the end***

of the process and a large volume of responses from the public would make this more likely)

- Would the development be high density eg flats and other small properties? ***(Yes)***
- Would the developers or taxpayers pay for the infrastructure? ***(Not known)***
- What roads were planned to support the development? ***(It was not clear that any specific schemes were planned for this. There were a number of schemes which had been planned for many years but were still some time away from being started)***
- How had regional government arisen? ***(This had been part of the Government's plans for devolution)***
- How would the proposals affect the existing and emerging Local Plans? ***(The emerging Local Plan was used as guidance for planning applications already and would be considered valid in the future)***
- Were local authorities aware of the geophysical reasons for the route of roads eg Bishop's Stortford and Buntingford bypasses, which had been built to avoid areas of unstable land eg swallow holes and redding beds, which were therefore not suitable for the development of housing on them? ***(Technical information such as this would be invaluable in challenging the plan; Deborah Clark and Oliver Heald asked for copies of any response sent to EERA giving this type of information)***
- Was the plan available on the internet? ***(Yes and in libraries - responses could be sent by letter or online)***

The meeting closed at 9 pm.