

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
EXECUTIVE PANEL HELD IN THE
COUNCIL CHAMBER, WALLFIELDS,
HERTFORD ON THURSDAY 29 MARCH
2012, AT 7.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor M Carver (Chairman)
Councillors L Haysey

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors D Andrews, W Ashley,
E Buckmaster, Mrs R Cheswright,
G Lawrence, P Moore, M Newman,
P Phillips, M Pope, N Poulton, C Rowley,
P Ruffles, S Rutland-Barsby and J Wing

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

John Careford	- Senior Planning Officer
Martin Ibrahim	- Democratic Services Team Leader
Kay Mead	- Senior Planning Officer
Martin Paine	- Senior Planning Officer
Laura Pattison	- Assistant Planning Policy Officer
Claire Sime	- Team Leader Planning Policy
Kevin Steptoe	- Head of Planning and Building Control
Bryan Thomsett	- Planning Policy Manager

22 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Panel meeting held on 24 November 2012, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

23 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everyone, especially the public, to the meeting.

The Chairman explained that this meeting was the first of three meetings which would eventually lead to the Council on 7 August 2012, approving its Preferred Options for formal public consultation. As such, no major decisions were being proposed at this stage and that the business of this meeting was to examine strategic options and not minutiae.

Finally, the Chairman referred to the transparency that East Herts Council was undertaking throughout this process and suggested that this was more open than some other local authorities.

At the request of the Chairman, the Planning Policy Manager gave an overview of the agenda items, advising that the first report concerned procedural matters, whilst the remaining items were of a technical nature. None of the reports suggested policy positions or identified sites suitable for development.

24 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

In respect of the matters referred to at Minutes 25 – 28 below:

- Councillor M Carver declared a personal and prejudicial interest by virtue of his position as Chairman of the Board of Governors at Hertford Regional College. He stated that he would leave the chamber, in the event of there being any substantial discussion related to the College.

- Councillors E Buckmaster and M Newman declared personal interests in that they were both members of the Stop Harlow North Group. Councillor Newman was also the website administrator.
- Councillor J Wing declared a personal interest in that his wife was the Vice-Chairman of the Board of Governors at Hertford Regional College.
- Councillor M Pope declared a personal interest in that he was a member of Save Our Green Spaces in Ware.

25 **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (LDS)
VERSION 3 - MAY 2012**

The Executive Member for Planning Policy and Economic Development submitted a report presenting Version 3 of the Council's Local Development Scheme (LDS). He also detailed the schedule and work programme that set out when and how the Council would prepare its Development Plan Documents (DPD) and also sought agreement to amend the plan-making terminology, in order to reflect changes to the planning system.

Arising from questions and comments by Members, Officers accepted that the risk assessments undertaken in respect of possible legal challenges to the preparation of Development Plan Documents (DPDs) should be amended to show its likelihood as '1' rather than '0'.

Officers further advised that following the publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), previous advice regarding Neighbourhood Plans stood and that the approach taken by the Council to date, had been confirmed by the NPPF.

The Panel recommended the proposals now detailed to the Executive.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the Local Development Scheme (LDS) version 3 – May 2012, as detailed at

Essential Reference Paper 'B' of the report now submitted, be agreed and take effect from 1 May 2012;

(B) the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning Policy and Economic Development, be given authority to make any consequential amendments to the Local Development Scheme (LDS) Version 3 following final publication of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations, as appropriate;

(C) the Local Development Framework (LDF) and associated terminology be replaced with District Plan; and

(D) the Local Development Framework Executive Panel be renamed as the District Planning Executive Panel to reflect the change in terminology.

**26 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK CORE STRATEGY:
APPROACH, TECHNICAL WORK AND NEXT STEPS**

The Executive Member for Planning Policy and Economic Development submitted a report explaining how the approach to the Local Development Framework Core Strategy required adaptation, in order to operate effectively in the context of changes to the planning system. He also set out East Herts Council's enhanced role and responsibility in terms of strategic planning.

The Executive Member also suggested an approach based on targeted consultation on a Preferred Strategy, with a timetable for consultation in Autumn 2012. He detailed a draft of the first three chapters of the Strategy Supporting Document, including associated documents at Essential Reference Papers 'B', 'C', 'D', and 'E' of the report now submitted.

The Panel was asked to note that the traffic light assessment within Essential Reference Paper 'D' represented work in progress and that any factual inaccuracies or typographical errors should be notified to the Planning Policy Team by 16 April 2012. The Panel Chairman implored all Members to use their local knowledge and to advise Officers of any factual inaccuracies by e-mail.

The Panel considered each chapter in turn and a number of questions and comments were raised. Officers advised that although the approval of the final District Plan was still some way off, the Authority was well placed compared to some other Authorities, in terms of being able to resist "unwelcome" development applications. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) suggested that if significant progress had been made in the District Plan process, then considerable weight would be given to it by the planning inspectorate.

In respect of the strategic overview of Transport and route hierarchies, Officers advised that the Road Hierarchy was set within Hertfordshire's Local Transport Plan. The issue of inappropriate 'satnav' usage was a matter for the Highway Authority where a team with responsibility for the road network liaised with the 'satnav' companies. While this issue was not one of strategic importance to be included in Part 1 of the District Plan, it might be a matter for consideration under Part 2.

Officers also referred to the requirement of the NPPF for robustness in respect of infrastructure work associated with developments and the requirement for sustainability.

Officers explained that brownfield land would be prioritised through the strategy selection process, but that if insufficient brownfield land was available, then it would be likely that Greenfield land would be needed in order to meet the NPPF requirement to achieve 'objectively assessed development needs'.

The Chairman stated that in recent years most development had been directed to brownfield sites in order to avoid Greenfield development, but that most of the brownfield sites were now full up.

Officers advised that further detailed work on settlements, the green belt, cumulative impacts and infrastructure delivery would be undertaken in Steps 4 – 6 of the Strategy Selection.

In noting that the traffic light assessments detailed in the Topic Assessments at Essential Reference Paper ‘D’ of the report submitted, represented work in progress, the Panel recommended that for the purposes of providing an audit trail, an additional recommendation authorising Officers to undertake this work, be proposed.

The Panel recommended the proposals now detailed to the Executive.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the planning process, strategic planning tools, and approach to preparing the LDF Core Strategy, as set out in Essential Reference Papers ‘B’ and ‘C’ of the report now submitted, be agreed;

(B) the draft technical work contained within Essential Reference Paper ‘D’ of the report now submitted, be agreed for the purposes of preparing the Preferred Strategy for consultation;

(C) Planning Officers be authorised to undertake such duties as necessary to demonstrate soundness at Examination in Public, including, for example, the collection of further information from landowners and developers, and conducting joint technical work with neighbouring Local Planning Authorities; and

(D) the Head of Planning and Building Control,

in consultation with the Executive Member for Planning Policy and Economic Development, be authorised to update the draft technical work contained within Essential Reference Paper 'D' of the report now submitted, as necessary.

27 **POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLD FORECASTS AND THE EAST HERTS HOUSING REQUIREMENT**

The Executive Member for Planning Policy and Economic Development submitted a report setting out the preliminary findings of the Population and Household Forecasts technical work and the issues and considerations necessary to inform a decision on the district housing target to 2031.

The Panel noted that the District Council was now solely responsible for setting its housing targets. The forecast range of 500 – 850 units per annum had been arrived at using a number of scenarios as detailed in the report now submitted. It would now be necessary to test this range to establish its feasibility.

In response to Members' questions, Officers confirmed that discussions with social housing providers were ongoing.

The Panel recommended the proposals now detailed to the Executive.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the Population and Household Forecasts - Topic Paper, detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'C' of the report submitted, be agreed as the basis for considering a district housing target to 2031, and for inclusion as part of the evidence base for the Local Development Framework (District Plan); and

(B) on the basis of the key conclusions from the Topic Paper referred to in (A) above, a range of 500 - 850 dwellings per annum be subject to further

investigation, to test the feasibility and implications of such a district housing requirement, against national planning policy requirements and the physical and environmental capacity of the district.

28 **STRATEGIC LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT (SLAA)
PROGRESS**

The Executive Member for Planning Policy and Economic Development submitted a report setting out progress on the Next Steps in the ongoing Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SLAA) technical work that would inform the East Herts Local Development Framework (District Plan) and housing trajectory.

Officers advised of an additional site that had come forward at Birchwood school, Bishop's Stortford.

The Panel Chairman invited Members to raise questions on specific sites with Officers outside of the meeting.

The Panel recommended the proposals now detailed to the Executive.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the SLAA sites being assessed under the initial Officer assessment, as detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'B' of the report submitted, be noted; and

(B) the SLAA Next Steps, be amended to omit 'Stage 2: LDF Executive Panel Ratification', as detailed at Essential Reference Paper 'C' of the report submitted, and stakeholders be engaged directly following completion of the initial Officer assessment.

The meeting closed at 8.23 pm