

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON MONDAY
18 NOVEMBER 2013, AT 7.00 PM

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors W Ashley, R Beeching,
E Buckmaster, Mrs R Cheswright, G Jones,
J Jones, G Lawrence, M McMullen, P Moore,
M Newman, T Page, M Pope, P Ruffles,
N Symonds, G Williamson and J Wing.

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Martin Ibrahim	- Democratic Services Team Leader
Kay Mead	- Senior Planning Officer
Martin Paine	- Senior Planning Officer
Laura Pattison	- Assistant Planning Officer
Jenny Pierce	- Senior Planning Officer
Claire Sime	- Planning Policy Team Leader
Katie Simpson	- Planning Policy Officer
Brendan Starkey	- Assistant Planning Officer
Kevin Steptoe	- Head of Planning and Building Control Services
Bryan Thomsett	- Planning Policy Manager

19 **LONDON COMMUTER BELT (EAST) SUB-REGION:
OLDER PEOPLE'S HOUSING REQUIREMENTS:
OCTOBER 2013**

The Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport submitted a report setting out the key recommendations of the Older People's Housing Requirements technical study, for the London Commuter Belt (East) Sub-Region, which had been prepared by Opinion Research Services (ORS). He sought approval to the study forming part of the evidence base to inform and support the preparation of the District Plan, and for housing and other corporate strategy purposes.

Various Members commented and asked questions in relation to a number of issues, including:

- the needs of dementia sufferers;
- the design criteria for town centre accommodation;
- the need for more social housing; and
- the status of the study document.

Officers responded by stating that the study document, if accepted, would inform the District Plan, by setting the framework policy around which, further work would need to be undertaken, in order to develop policies via best practice advice notes.

The Panel supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED - that the London Commuter Belt (East) Sub-Region: Older People's Housing Requirements Study: October 2013, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform and support the preparation of the District Plan, and for housing and other corporate strategy purposes.

20 DISTRICT PLAN – UPDATE REPORT

The Panel considered a report detailing a schedule of meetings for the production of the draft District Plan prior to public consultation, together with summary notes from a recent training event for Members.

The Panel Chairman encouraged all Members to attend the training event on 28 November 2013.

The Panel noted the report.

RECOMMENDED – that the summary report on the Member Event on 24 October 2013 detailed at Essential Reference ‘B’, and the schedule of meetings contained at Essential Reference Paper ‘C’ of the report submitted, be noted.

21 DISTRICT PLAN TOPIC-BASED POLICIES REPORT (OCTOBER 2013)

The Panel gave consideration to 12 chapters of the Draft District Plan, which contained a series of policies with supporting text organised by topic, such as housing, natural environment and heritage. The Panel noted that these topic-based policy chapters effectively made up the second half of the District Plan, and would be those most commonly used by Development Management in the determination of planning applications. The report sought endorsement of these policies for their inclusion within the Draft East Herts District Plan for consultation purposes.

The Panel considered each chapter in turn and a number of comments and questions were raised by Members.

Housing

Officers confirmed that the purpose of the District Plan was to provide a framework through which robust policies could be outlined, whilst retaining a degree of flexibility in responding to different challenges. Further

detail would need to be developed in supplementary policy documents, guidance notes, etc, to enable the Authority to encourage developers to meet local needs.

Members referred to demand for Lifetime Homes, bungalows and 2/3 bedroom houses and the need to ensure an appropriate housing mix. Officers advised that developing the policies as now detailed, would provide a more robust position for the Authority to respond to specific challenges.

The Panel noted an error in paragraph 11.9.3, in that the reference to Field Farm, Levens Green should state planning permission for an additional 2 pitches.

Retail and Town Centres

Members questioned whether this chapter was sufficient for providing the flexibility needed for the period of the Plan. Officers responded by stating the need to protect existing town centres and for further work with town centre partners. Officers also clarified the rationale of the proposed thresholds for impact assessments as set out in RTC1.

Design

In response to Members' comments on some of the language used in this chapter, Officers explained that the proposed policies set out the Authority's aspirations.

In response to a question from Councillor L Haysey on what was exactly covered by the section on Advertisements and Signs, the Head of Planning and Building Control Services undertook to provide a written response.

Transport

It was noted that whilst national and local policies sought to reduce car usage, it was necessary to recognise the level of car dependency in more rural areas in order to access key services. In respect of encouraging minimum parking spaces, Officers confirmed that developing

supplementary planning guidance would be needed.

Community Facilities, Leisure and Recreation

In response to Members' comments on the lack of football pitches, Officers referred to the role of community use agreements and the need to look at specific settlements.

Councillor L Haysey referred to regular strategic meetings she attended with health partners and confirmed their awareness of changing demographics.

The Panel supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the topic-based policies be agreed for inclusion in the Draft East Herts District Plan for consultation purposes; and

(B) the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport, be authorised to make non-material, and typographical corrections to the topic based policies, prior to inclusion in the District Plan for consultation purposes.

22 **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

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

The Panel Chairman provided a further reminder of the training session on 28 November 2013, which would deal with the draft development strategy and settlement policies. He also advised that a meeting with parish and town councils had been arranged for 12 December 2013. These and other important dates were detailed in the Update Report at Agenda Item 6 (Minute 20 refers).

Finally, he reiterated the role of the Panel in the District Plan

process and emphasised that only Council could agree the final District Plan.

23 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Panel meeting held on 3 October 2013, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

24 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

The Panel Chairman asked Members to note that he was the Chairman of Hertford Regional College and a board member of South Anglia Housing Association.

Councillor J Wing asked Members to note that his wife was the Vice Chairman of Hertford Regional College.

25 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

RESOLVED – that the dates of meetings to be held on 3 December 2013 and 16 January 2014, be noted.

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm

Chairman
Date