

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
DISTRICT PLANNING EXECUTIVE PANEL
HELD IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
WALLFIELDS, HERTFORD ON
WEDNESDAY 22 OCTOBER 2014, AT 7.00
PM

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

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillors D Andrews, E Buckmaster,
G Jones, J Jones, M McMullen, P Moore,
M Newman, T Page, M Pope, P Ruffles,
K Warnell and G Williamson

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Chris Butcher	- Senior Planning Officer
Isabelle Hadow	- Planning Officer
Martin Ibrahim	- Democratic Services Team Leader
Lorraine Kirk	- Senior Communications Officer
Kay Mead	- Senior Planning Officer
Martin Paine	- Senior Planning Officer
Laura Pattison	- Assistant Planning Officer
George Pavey	- Assistant Planning/Technical Officer
Jenny Pierce	- Senior Planning Officer
Claire Sime	- Planning Policy Team Leader

Kevin Steptoe - Head of Planning
and Building
Control Services

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Paul Jobson - Peter Brett Associates

11 **EAST HERTS GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS AND
TRAVELLING SHOWPEOPLE IDENTIFICATION OF
POTENTIAL SITES STUDY, SEPTEMBER 2014**

The Panel considered a report presenting the findings of the East Herts Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Identification of Potential Sites Study, September 2014. This made recommendations on the manner in which the identified accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople could potentially be met in the District for the period to 2031.

Before any consideration of the report, Officers advised that a few factual inaccuracies concerning two existing authorised sites detailed in the study had come to light. These were not of a material nature and would be corrected in the final version.

The Panel Chairman welcomed Paul Jobson, Peter Brett Associates, who was in attendance to give a presentation on the Identification of Potential Sites Study (IOPS). Mr Jobson detailed:

- the purpose of the IOPS and national policy requirements;
- existing provision and needs within East Herts;
- potential assessment areas and site criteria;
- sources of sites for assessment; and
- the outcomes of the Study.

In response to various questions, Mr Jobson and Officers outlined the consultation that had taken place with

stakeholders, which had included onsite meetings. They referred to the reasons why some publicly owned land had been identified as unsuitable sites as set out in Appendix D of the Study. It was emphasised that the District Plan would need to identify a five year supply of specific deliverable sites in the plan making period. In terms of determining planning applications, these would need to be considered on their merits in accordance with policies within the adopted Local Plan (or District Plan when adopted), along with Planning policy for travellers guidance and the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Panel Chairman added that no decisions on suggested sites were being proposed at this meeting and that the proposed working group would consider further the site options of the IOPS. The Council would follow the same approach in respect of Green Belt considerations towards potential traveller sites as the principles being used towards potential site allocations for general housing.

The Panel supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the East Herts Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Identification of Potential Sites Study, September 2014, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform and support the East Herts District Plan;

(B) the East Herts Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople Identification of Potential Sites Study, September 2014, be agreed to inform Development Management decisions; and

(C) in light of the potential site options suggested in the Identification of Potential Sites Study, a joint Member/Officer Working Group be established to take forward the requirement to provide sufficient pitches and plots to meet the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers

and Travelling Showpeople and to formulate an appropriate policy approach.

12 **MEAD LANE URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK**

Consideration was given to a report presenting the main issues raised during the consultation on the draft Mead Lane Urban Design Framework (UDF). The report also sought agreement that the proposed amendments be made, and that the UDF be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document to the East Herts Local Plan, Second Review, April 2007 (Saved Policies).

In response to Members' questions, Officers advised that discussions with the County Council over education provision were ongoing and reference was made to the outcome of a recent planning application relating to Simon Balle School. Although the UDF made reference to the general character of the area, its purpose was to provide a broad framework. If adopted, it would be given significant weight in the planning application process.

The Panel supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the issues raised during the public consultation on the draft Mead Lane Urban Design Framework, together with the Officer responses, be agreed;

(B) in light of the responses received, the suggested amendments to the document be agreed; and

(C) the Mead Lane Urban Design Framework be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document to the East Herts Local Plan, Second Review, April 2007 (Saved Policies).

13 **NEIGHBOURHOOD PLANNING GUIDANCE NOTE**

The Panel considered a proposal to publish an updated guidance note on Neighbourhood Planning. A number of amendments had been made to the original Interim Guidance Note to reflect the requirements of the Town and Country Planning England Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 and to update and clarify the process and support available.

The Panel supported the proposal as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that the Neighbourhood Planning Guidance Note contained at Essential Reference 'B' to the report submitted be agreed and published.

14 **GREATER ESSEX DEMOGRAPHIC FORECASTS 2012 – 2037 PHASE 6 MAIN REPORT, SEPTEMBER 2014**

The Panel considered a report setting out the findings of the Greater Essex Demographic Forecasts 2012 - 2037 Phase 6 Main Report, which was intended to form part of the evidence base for generating an appropriate District-wide housing target for the period 2011 to 2031, and to inform and support the East Herts District Plan.

The Panel noted Councillor G Jones' continued scepticism over the estimated housing need.

The Panel supported the recommendation as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that the Greater Essex Demographic Forecasts 2012 - 2037 Phase 6 technical study, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform and support the East Herts District Plan.

15 DELIVERY STUDY UPDATE REPORT

The Panel received an update on progress with the Delivery Study, a critical piece of the evidence base for the emerging District Plan as it would determine whether or not the development strategy set out in the Preferred Options District Plan can be delivered. The Study could result in material changes to the Draft Plan, and important decisions might be needed in terms of the scale of developer contributions to meet wider policy objectives (such as affordable housing) and support for the infrastructure needed to deliver the growth.

It was noted that Peter Brett Associates (PBA) had been appointed to undertake the Study and the Panel Chairman referred to their role as a critical friend. Officers highlighted their initial advice around the calculation of the housing requirement, the duty to cooperate and the importance of transport modelling in managing congestion.

Councillor G Jones questioned why the rise in the buffer requirement from 5% to 20% proposed by PBA had not been recognised earlier. Officers acknowledged that the rise was significant and could require additional sites to be brought forward, or existing sites to be brought forward earlier in order to achieve the 5-year housing land supply. The publication of new government guidance, and new evidence of the Planning Inspectorate's tough stance, had become available since the 5% proposal in the draft Plan. PBA had been appointed to challenge the Council as a critical friend so as to help achieve a sound plan by the time of Examination.

Councillor G Jones commented on PBA's recognition of the gap in the evidence around the cumulative impact of growth. Officers explained that further transport modelling was being undertaken to look at this, and PBA would be providing further advice as part of the commission. Councillor T Page further questioned the

impact of development in north-west Essex on parts of East Herts. Officers replied that the Council would be represented at the Examination hearings into the Uttlesford Local Plan, and this issue would be given attention by the Planning Inspector.

Councillor T Page asked how 'severe' transport impacts could be defined, and how this would apply to the District Plan proposals. Officers explained that both PBA and ATLAS were looking into this further. However, initial indications were that the Planning Inspectorate did not view worsening congestion as a reason to fail to meet to housing needs. This position was being kept under careful review in relation to the site options and the cumulative impacts, and the scope for putting in place specific transport strategies and mitigation measures would be considered further.

Councillor E Buckmaster asked what the situation would be if limited or no mitigation measures could be identified. Officers replied that this was a difficult question in light of the initial advice from PBA and all possible solutions would be carefully investigated. Further advice would be sought from PBA.

Councillor G Jones pointed to the ATLAS advice about development embargoes unless adequate infrastructure was forthcoming. Officers commented that the ATLAS advice pointed to the importance of getting a plan in place, because such requirements would be embedded in policies within the adopted plan.

The Panel supported the recommendation as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that the District Plan Delivery Study Briefing Note from Peter Brett Associates, including the implications for the District Plan timeline, and the updated ATLAS Deliverability Advice Note, contained at Essential Reference Papers B and C of the report submitted, be noted.

16 **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 Member-level meetings held with Stevenage and Welwyn Hatfield Councils, be agreed; and

(B) the Terms of Reference for the 'Co-Operation for Sustainable Development Group' of Authorities, be noted.

17 **EAST HERTS RESIDENT SURVEY ON THE DRAFT DISTRICT PLAN, JULY 2014**

The Panel considered the findings of the East Herts Resident Survey on the Draft District Plan Preferred Options undertaken between 22nd May and 8th June 2014. The report detailed the methodology used in the telephone survey of 502 residents. Various typographical errors were highlighted by Officers.

The Panel supported the recommendation as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that the East Herts Resident Survey July 2014, on the Draft District Plan Preferred Options, be agreed as part of the evidence base to inform the East Herts District Plan.

18 **DRAFT DISTRICT PLAN CHAPTERS 20-25: RESPONSE TO ISSUES RAISED DURING PREFERRED OPTIONS CONSULTATION AND DRAFT REVISED CHAPTERS**

The Panel considered a report drawing attention to the issues raised through the recent consultation in connection with Chapters 20 – 25 of the Draft District Plan Preferred Options, together with Officer responses to those issues. The Panel also considered 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 to the Executive until such time that the complete suite of amendments were collated and presented as one comprehensive Revised Draft District Plan.

Officers referred to a missing page from the printed version of the agenda in respect of the Issues report for Chapter 21 – Heritage Assets. A revised version was tabled which had been amended to take account of comments received from the Bishop’s Stortford Museums Trust relating to the storage of materials uncovered during excavation. Councillor G Jones suggested that the amendment should also make reference to making the evidence publicly available. Officers undertook to consider this further.

The Panel supported the recommendations as now detailed.

RECOMMENDED – that (A) the issues raised in respect of Chapters 20 - 25 of the Draft District Plan Preferred Options, as detailed at Essential Reference Papers B - G to this report, be received;

(B) the Officer response to the issues referred to

in (A) above, as detailed in Essential Reference Papers B - G to the report submitted, be noted; and

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

19 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

He reminded Members that the next Panel meeting would be held on 8 December 2014. Before then, a further meeting with parish and town council representatives had been arranged for 6 November 2014.

Finally, the Panel Chairman apologised for various typographical errors that had been identified in the agenda papers and stated that these would be referred to when relevant.

20 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the Minutes of the Panel meeting held on 17 July 2014, be approved as correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The meeting closed at 9.03 pm

Chairman
Date