

Local Plan Working Group



Forest Heath
District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Local Plan Working Group** held on
Wednesday 28 January 2015 at 4.00 pm at the **Council Chamber, District**
Offices, College Heath Road, Mildenhall, IP28 7EY

Present: **Councillors**

Chairman Rona Burt
Vice Chairman Robin Millar

Bill Bishop
Michael Jefferys

Carol Lynch
Tony Simmons

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Warwick Hirst and Rachel Hood.

Councillor Bill Sadler was also unable to attend the meeting.

2. **Substitutes**

There were no substitutes at the meeting.

3. **Schedule of Recommendations**

The Schedule of Recommendations from the meeting held on 16 October 2014 were received.

The Strategic Planning Manager explained that Councillor Hood considered that there were three specific and important omissions from these Schedule of Recommendations which had not been reflected, as follows:

1. It had been agreed that the horseracing industry was a unique and specific constraint in Forest Heath District Council.
2. In the documentation provided to this meeting, it was confirmed that the word 'growth' (in the context of the SIR documentation), meant 'housing' growth and not 'economic' growth. (Councillor Hood stated that she had specifically asked for this to be recorded within the Schedule of Recommendations).
3. With regard to the discussions on infrastructure, it was confirmed that infrastructure would be assessed/re-assessed as part of the whole process going forward. (Councillor Hood stated that she had

specifically asked for this to be recorded within the Schedule of Recommendations).

The Working Group considered these matters, as raised by Councillor Hood and, with 4 voting for the motion and with 1 abstention, it was

RESOLVED:

That the Schedule of Recommendations from the meeting held on 16 October 2014 be noted, as presented, with no further amendment.

4. **Joint Development Management Policies Document - Planning Inspector's Report and Adoption (Report No LOP/FH/15/001)**

The Strategic Planning Manager presented this report which explained that following the adoption of the Core Strategies for both Forest Heath District Council (FHDC) and St Edmundsbury Borough Council (SEBC) in 2010, work had commenced on a joint document of Development Management Policies. Two consultations were held in early/late 2012, leading to both Councils submitting the document for examination in 2013.

Examination hearings into certain matters were called and conducted by an independent Planning Inspector during July 2014. During this time, objectors were able to put to the Inspector why the document should be changed. Following these hearings, the Inspector asked that his recommended main modifications be the subject of public consultation and this was conducted for a period of six weeks, which ended in November 2014.

The Council received the Inspector's report into the examination in January 2015 (attached as Appendix A). The receipt of this report formally closed the examination and was the penultimate stage in the preparation of the Joint Development Management Policies Document.

The Inspector's role was to consider whether the Document complied with relevant legislation and was 'sound'. The Inspector's report concluded that the document was 'sound', provided that a number of modifications were made. Therefore, the document presented for adoption was attached as Appendix B to the report, which included the main modifications as required by the Planning Inspector, along with the additional modifications as suggested by Officers.

This document was also being considered by SEBC's Sustainable Development Working Party on 28 January 2015 and also by the Joint Development Management Policies Committee on 11 February 2015. Subject to the outcome of these meetings, formal adoption would be proposed at the Council meetings on 24 February 2015 (SEBC) and 27 February 2015 (FHDC).

Therefore, the Strategic Planning Manager requested that the Working Group considered the content of Appendix B. However, it was also explained that the Working Group would be unable to make any further modifications to this Document.

Whilst considering Appendix B, various comments were made on the document and it was requested that the following be specifically recorded:

1. Policy DM3 – Masterplans ((p) page 11 of Appendix B)

Councillor Jefferys queried as to why the references to the provision of "*... composting unit and water butt per dwelling.... and litter and dog waste bins on areas of amenity/open space*" had been removed from the Document by the Inspector.

The Strategic Planning Manager explained that these specific references had been removed as these were not Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) compliant and, therefore, were not necessary infrastructure required for the development to commence. Therefore, the Inspector considered that it was inappropriate for the Council to require these types of infrastructure to be provided.

Councillor Jefferys wished it to be recorded that he considered that the provision of litter and dog bins on areas of amenity/open space seemed to be good practice and expressed his disappointment that these requirements had been removed from this Policy, by the Inspector.

Councillor Mrs Lynch also stated that one of her Parish Councils within her Ward had also expressed disappointment that this requirement had been removed from the Policy.

2. Policy DM8 – Low and Zero Carbon Energy Generation- Solar Farms (page 25 of Appendix B)

Councillor Jefferys referred to the installation of solar farms and wished it to be recorded that he considered that this Policy needed to be further strengthened in relation to the screening of such developments in rural settings.

The Strategic Planning Manager confirmed that these comments would be reported to the Joint Development Management Policies Committee at their meeting on 11 February 2015.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. The content of the Inspector's report be noted.

and

RECOMMENDED TO THE JOINT DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES COMMITTEE:

2. That the following documents be recommended for adoption by full Council:

- The Joint Development Management Policies Document (Appendix B).
- The Habitats Regulations Screening Assessments for Joint Development Management Policies Document, (Appendix C).
- The Sustainability Appraisal for Joint Development Management Policies Document (Appendix D).
- The District Policies Map and Town Centre Maps (Appendix E).

(Councillor Millar joined the meeting at 4.20 pm, during the discussion of this item)

5. **Single Issue Review (SIR) and Site Specific Allocations (SSA) Local Plan (LP) - Update (Verbal) (Verbal)**

The Strategic Planning Manager provided an update on progress with the development, in tandem, of the Single Issue Review (SIR) and Site Specific Allocations (SSA) Local Plan.

Counsel's advice had now been received with regard to the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). This advice had confirmed that the Council would not be required to undertake any additional consultation on these documents.

Also, as part of the consultation documents on the SIR and SSA, 'Topic Papers' would also be prepared to cover the areas of:

- Environmental constraints
- Housing and affordable housing
- Past trends and developments within the District
- Updated employment land assessments.

Consultation documents would also be prepared on the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report. This consultation would be undertaken with the three statutory providers, over a four week period, on the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, with regard to constraints, deliverability and options.

The Strategic Planning Manager also explained that the consultation documents for the SIR and SSA would be considered by the Local Plan Working Group and by the Cabinet, prior to the commencement of the consultation in June 2015.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

6. **Revised Local Development Scheme Programme Chart - January 2015
(Report No LOP/FH/15/002)**

The Strategic Planning Manager presented this report which explained that a Joint Local Development Scheme was agreed by both Cabinets of Forest Heath District Council and St Edmundsbury Borough Council in July 2013.

Following the Forest Heath District Council Cabinet decision on 9 December 2014, to prepare the Core Strategy Single Issue Review and the Site Specific Allocations Local Plans in tandem, a further update to the Local Plan timetable was now required and it was also necessary to roll forward the programme to 2017.

The proposed updated Local Development Scheme for publication, was attached as Working Paper 1 to Report No LOP/FH/15/002.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

That the West Suffolk Local Development Scheme programme chart 2014-2017, as set out in Working Paper 1 to Report No LOP/FH/15/002, be published.

7. **West Suffolk Shop Front and Advertisement Design Guide:
Consultation Responses and Adoption
(Report No CAB/FH/15/003)**

The Principal Planner presented this report which explained that the public consultation on the Guide took place between 24 November 2014 and 9 January 2015. Nine responses had been received to the consultation and these had been summarised within paragraph 1.2.3 of the report, along with the suggested Council response.

This Guide was also being considered by St Edmundsbury Borough Council's Sustainable Development Working Party on 28 January 2015. The Guide would then be considered by both Cabinets in February 2015. Subject to the outcome of these meetings, formal adoption of the Supplementary Planning Guidance would be proposed at both Council meetings on 24 February 2015 (SEBC) and 27 February 2015 (FHDC).

A statement of adoption would then be prepared and sent to any interested parties and the adopted Guide would also be published on the Councils' website and in paper copy. Once adopted, the Guide would be used as a material consideration when determining applications for new shopfronts and advertisements.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. The content of this report be noted.

and

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

2. That:-

- The West Suffolk Shop Front and Advertisement Design Guide with suggested amendments be recommended to Full Council for adoption as a Supplementary Planning Document.
- Officers be given delegated power to edit/insert images as part of the final document publishing process.

8. Any Other Business

There were no items of Other Business raised.

The Meeting concluded at 5.10 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
