

Local Plan Working Group



Forest Heath
District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Local Plan Working Group** held on
Wednesday 22 April 2015 at **6.00 pm** at the **Council Chamber, District
Offices**, College Heath Road, Mildenhall, IP28 7EY

Present: **Councillors**

Chairman Robin Millar

Bill Bishop
Warwick Hirst
Rachel Hood

Carol Lynch
Bill Sadler
Tony Simmons

9. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Rona Burt and Michael Jefferys.

10. **Substitutes**

There were no substitutes at the meeting.

11. **Minutes**

The minutes from the meeting held on 28 January 2015 were unanimously confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

12. **Regulation 18 Stage 'Further Issues & Options' Single Issue Review (SIR) and Site Specific Allocations (SIR) Local Plan Document - Consultation (Report No LOP/FH/15/004)**

Members received this report which explained that the Working Group had previously agreed to proceed with a 'combined' Single Issue Review (SIR) and Site Specific Allocation (SSA) Local Plan document. However, at this stage, the documents needed to be advanced separately, to allow the emerging SIR to influence the content of the draft SSA.

Working Paper 1 was a technical report which considered the housing distribution options that represented the first stage of preparing the Forest Heath Core Strategy Policy CS7 Single Issue Review (Further) Issues and Options (2nd Regulation 18 stage) Consultation Document. This document looked at the level of housing to be provided within the district to 2031 and possible options for its distribution between towns and villages.

The Working Group considered the eight options, as contained within Working Paper 1 and Members expressed their general support for these options. Whilst considering Distribution Option 6 (*Sustainable distribution in accordance with spatial strategy*), Members requested as to whether specific reference should also be made to the constraints of the horseracing industry. Officers initially stated that, in their view, the horseracing industry would not be considered as a disadvantage to this specific Option, but agreed to consider this request further.

Officers also explained that the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) was a tool for appraising policies to ensure they reflected sustainable development objectives. Sustainability Appraisals were required for all local development documents. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) was a procedure (set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004) which required the formal environmental assessment of certain plans and programmes which were likely to have significant effects on the environment.

Therefore, consultants had been appointed to undertake the SA and SEA work in relation to the emerging SIR and SSA consultation documents. This work had not been completed and the Working Group noted that Working Paper 1 may be subject to amendment on receipt of the appraisals. The SA and SEA process could not be prejudged especially in relation to the assessment of options and reasonable alternatives in the SIR. A full report setting out the findings of the SA and SEA and the proposed SIR and SSA Regulation 18 consultation documents would be presented to Cabinet on 2 June 2015.

Following approval of the consultation documents by Cabinet, it was envisaged that consultation on the SIR and SSA documents would take place for a minimum of six weeks commencing in June 2015 for consideration and amendments made where appropriate. The Site Specific Allocations Local Plan Document would undergo a further Regulation 18 consultation in November/December 2015, putting forward the Council's preferred sites and other land use allocations.

The Local Development Scheme (LDS) anticipated the following timeline:

- Pre-submission (Regulation 19) consultation for both documents taking place in April/May 2016
- Submission to the Secretary of State in July 2016
- Examination in Public in November 2016, and
- Adoption in 2017.

Members asked whether the Working Group would have the opportunity to comment on the finalised consultation documents prior to the consideration by Cabinet on 2 June 2015. Officers explained that, in order to meet the LDS timetable and also taking account of the forthcoming District Council Elections on 7 May 2015, it would not be possible for the Working Group to be able to formally comment on these documents beforehand. However, it would be the intention for these documents to be made available to the Working Group, following the publication of the Cabinet agenda papers and Members would be able to address the Cabinet meeting, if they so wished.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

That:-

1. Progress made to the Core Strategy Single Issue Review (SIR) and Site Specific Allocations (SSA) Further Issues and Options Local Plan Documents be endorsed.
2. The Core Strategy Single Issue Review (SIR) and Site Specific Allocations (SSA) Further Issues and Options Local Plan Documents be prepared alongside the Sustainability Appraisal (SA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and be approved for public consultation.

13. Any Other Business

There were no items of Other Business raised.

The Meeting concluded at 6.45 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
