

Local Plan Working Group



Forest Heath
District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Local Plan Working Group** held on
Tuesday 19 January 2016 at **6.00 pm** at the **Council Chamber, District
Offices**, College Heath Road, Mildenhall, IP28 7EY

Present: **Councillors**

Chairman Rona Burt
Vice Chairman Robin Millar

David Bowman	Christine Mason
Simon Cole	Bill Sadler
Carol Lynch	Reg Silvester
Louise Marston	

In attendance:
Brian Harvey

20. **Apologies for Absence**

There were no apologies for absence.

21. **Substitutes**

There were no substitutes at the meeting.

22. **Minutes**

The minutes from the meeting held on 30 June 2015 were unanimously confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

23. **Forest Heath District Objectively Assessed Housing Need - Update (Report No LOP/FH/16/001)**

The Strategic Planning Manager explained that the Working Paper to this report had been unable to be completed in time for consideration at this meeting.

Therefore, this item would have be deferred to the next meeting of the Local Plan Working Group on 15 February 2016.

24. **Core Strategy Single Issue Review (SIR) - Sustainability Appraisal of Housing Distribution Options (Report No LOP/FH/16/002)**

The Principal Planning Officer presented this report which explained that the Core Strategy Single Issue Review (SIR) revisited the quashed parts of the 2010 Core Strategy, as well as reassessing the overall housing need/numbers to ensure compliance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

An 'Issues and Options' (Regulation 18) consultation was completed on the Core Strategy Single Issue Review (SIR) from between July to September 2012, with a second consultation being held from between August and October 2015.

The 2015 Core Strategy SIR consultation document proposed four options for the distribution of homes across the Forest Heath district:

- *Option 1* – Focus on Mildenhall, Newmarket and Lakenheath
- *Option 2* – Focus on Lakenheath and Red Lodge, with a planned extension at Red Lodge and medium growth at Mildenhall and Newmarket
- *Option 3* – Focus on Red Lodge, with a planned extension and focus on Lakenheath and Mildenhall, with lower growth in Newmarket
- *Option 4* – Focus on Mildenhall, Newmarket and Red Lodge, with more growth in those primary villages with capacity.

The consultation document emphasised that these were alternatives for consideration and the final preferred option could be a combination of these four options, or even an approach that was entirely new and different.

364 individual consultation responses were received to the SIR consultation which, along with further evidence based work, had resulted in the identification of three distribution options, which varied slightly to those consulted on in 2015. These three options were:

- *Option 1* – Higher growth in Mildenhall and Red Lodge and Primary Villages, enabling lower growth at Newmarket
- *Option 2* – Higher growth at Newmarket, enabling lower growth at Mildenhall, Red Lodge and Primary Villages
- *Option 3* – Higher growth at Mildenhall (similar to Option 1) and Newmarket (similar to Option 2), enabling lower growth at Red Lodge and Primary Villages

It was the view of Officers and the consultants appointed to undertake the Sustainability Appraisal work that, in order to progress the Core Strategy SIR and to ensure a more engaging consultation, a smaller number of options for consultation should be included in the next Core Strategy SIR document (one to be indicated at the Council's preferred option and one as an alternative option).

In order to assist with deciding on the final options for inclusion in the Core Strategy SIR document, these three options had been tested to determine whether they could deliver the required level of housing in a sustainable manner. Part of this testing had involved a high level Sustainability Appraisal (SA) to ensure they were acceptable in terms of meeting the overall SA objectives. This SA summary was attached as Working Paper 1 to the report.

The SA conclusions to the three distribution options stated that the sustainability impact of the options varied between higher levels of growth in Newmarket and Mildenhall and to a lesser extent, the amount of growth directed to Red Lodge. Therefore, there was little potential to differentiate between the options in terms of the majority of objectives and there was no clear most sustainable option. There was also the ongoing uncertainty around the issuing and content of the Hatchfield Farm decision, which meant that it would be inappropriate, at this time, to consult on two options which proposed high growth in Newmarket.

The outcomes of the Sustainability Appraisal would inform the preparation of the Core Strategy Single Issue Review (CS SIR) Preferred Options document. This draft would be considered by the Working Group at their meeting on 15 February 2016.

The Council was currently finalising work on the Core Strategy SIR consultation document, with a view to selecting a preferred option and a non-preferred options. The results of this early SA work, would inform the Council's decision, along with other evidence based considerations.

Following this meeting, the final Core Strategy SIR document and Site Allocations Local Plan (SALP) would be prepared and presented in full to the following meetings of the Working Group:

- 15 February 2016 - Single Issue Review document and Officer responses to all of the comments received to the Single Issue Review and Site Allocations document
- 18 February 2016 - Site Allocations Local Plan

These documents would then be taken to Cabinet on 1 March 2016 to receive approval to go out to consultation. The consultation was planned to take place from the end of March 2016 to the end of May 2016. Comments received during this next consultation would be considered and brought back to the Working Group, before being fed into the final consultations for both the Site Allocations and Core Strategy Single Issue Review in later Summer/Autumn 2016. Submission of the document for Independent Examination would follow in December 2016.

Whilst considering this report, Members expressed concerns over the costs to Council, as a result of the High Court Challenge on the 2010 Core Strategy. Therefore, Members requested for the cost of the commissioning of the Sustainability Appraisal (as set out in Working Paper 1 to this report), along with the other costs to the Council, in relation to the preparation of the Local Plan documents, which had emanated as a result of the High Court challenge.

Officers confirmed that these costs would be brought back to the meeting on 18 February 2016.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. The progress made on the Core Strategy Single Issue Review (CS SIR) Sustainability Appraisal, specifically the outcomes for the housing distribution options be noted.
2. The costs borne by the Council, as a result of the High Court challenge on the 2010 Core Strategy, be provided to the meeting of the Local Plan Working Group on 18 February 2016.

25. Date of Next Meetings

It was noted that the dates of the next meetings of the Local Plan Working Group would be held as follows (all meetings to be held at 6.00 pm):

Monday 15 February 2016

Thursday 18 February 2016

The Meeting concluded at 6.45 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
