

Local Plan Working Group



Forest Heath
District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Local Plan Working Group** held on
Monday 15 February 2016 at **6.00 pm** at the **Council Chamber, District
Offices**, College Heath Road, Mildenhall, IP28 7EY

Present: **Councillors**

Chairman Rona Burt

David Bowman
Simon Cole
Carol Lynch

Bill Sadler
Reg Silvester

In attendance:
Brian Harvey

26. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Robin Millar and Christine Mason.

Councillor Louise Marston was unable to attend the meeting.

27. **Substitutes**

There were no substitutes at the meeting.

28. **Minutes**

The minutes from the meeting held on 19 January 2016 were unanimously confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

29. **Forest Heath District Objectively Assessed Housing Need - Update (Report No LOP/FH/16/003)**

The Working Group received this report which explained the changed position regarding the 'all homes' need and affordable need, in advance of the next steps in the Local Plan preparation process.

Officers explained that the updated evidence (as set out in Appendix 1 to Report No LOP/FH/16/003) had now amended Forest Heath District Council's objectively assessed housing need (OAN) to 6800 dwellings over the plan period from 2011 to 2031. This updated the previously assessed need of 7,000 dwellings in 2013. This updated figure would be used to inform the setting of an appropriate housing target provision for the replacement Policy

CS7 of the Single Issue Review and to assess the Council's five year land supply.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RESOLVED:

That:-

1. The updated evidence which had amended Forest Heath District Council's objectively assessed housing need (OAN) to 6800 dwellings over the plan period from 2011 to 2031 be noted (This updated the previously assessed need of 7,000 dwellings in 2013 and, therefore, it was appropriate to plan for the updated figure).
2. The updated OAN of 6800 dwellings be used to assess the Council's five year land supply.

30. **Responses to Consultation and Engagement on the Core Strategy Single Issue Review (SIR), Site Allocations Local Plan (SALP) and Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) (Report No LOP/FH/16/004)**

The Strategic Planning Manager presented this report which explained that the Core Strategy Single Issue Review (CS SIR) revisited the quashed parts of the 2010 Core Strategy as well as reassessing 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 SIR in July to September 2012, with a second Issues and Options (Regulation 18) consultation taking place between August and October 2015.

An Issues and Options draft of the Site Allocations Local Plan (SALP) was prepared but did not proceed to consultation in 2013. A Further Issues and Options (Regulation 18) draft was completed, and consultation took place concurrently with the SIR between August and October 2015.

A first draft of an Infrastructure Development Plan (IDP) was prepared to accompany the Issues and Options consultation drafts of both the Single Issue Review (SIR) of Core Strategy Policy CS7 – Overall Housing Provision and Distribution, and the Site Allocations Local Plans. The IDP would be updated and refined as the local plan documents progress through the planning process (to the Preferred Options and Submission draft stages). Consultation took place on this first draft of the IDP concurrently with the Regulation 18 consultations on the SIR and SALP between August and October 2015.

Working Papers 1, 2 and 3 of Report No LOP/FH/16/004 set out summaries of all the responses received to the SIR, SALP and IDP documents that were the subject of an eight week consultation period between August and October 2015, together with Officer responses and comments and/or actions on each.

There were a total of 364 representations (of support, objection, or comments) from 98 respondents to the Core Strategy Single Issue Review of CS7; 893 representations on the Site Allocations Local Plan Further Issues and Options document from 133 respondents; 11 people responded to the Draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan submitting 46 representations.

Responses to all three documents had been received from statutory consultees, such as the Environment Agency, Historic England, Natural England etc., town and parish councils, interest groups, and individual residents and landowners.

Consultation responses to the Sustainability Appraisal and the Habitats Regulations Assessment would be considered by the Council's Consultants preparing these documents and would be addressed as part of the next iteration of each of these documents.

Following approval by Cabinet on 1 March 2016, of the final CS SIR and SALP consultation documents, the design and printing of the documents would take a further few weeks and, therefore, the consultation was planned to be held from 4 April 2016 until 8 June 2016. Comments received during this next consultation will be considered and brought back to the Local Plan Working Group before being fed into the final consultations for both the Site Allocations and Core Strategy Single Issue Review in late summer/autumn 2016. Submission of the documents for independent examination would follow in December 2016.

The Working Group then considered the responses, comments and actions as set out in Working Papers 1, 2 3 of the report and recommended that these be endorsed.

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RECOMMENDED: (Cabinet: 1 March 2016)

That:-

1. The consultation responses to the Core Strategy Single Issue Review (CS SIR), Site Allocations Local Plan (SALP) and Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).
2. The comments and actions contained in Working Papers 1, 2 and 3 of Report No LOP/FH/16/004 be endorsed.

31. Core Strategy Single Issue Review (SIR) Preferred Option - (Regulation 18) Consultation Document (Report No LOP/FH/16/005)

The Working Group received this report which explained that the Core Strategy Single Issue Review (CS SIR) revisited the quashed parts of the 2010 Core Strategy as well as reassessing 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 SIR in July to September 2012, with a second Issues and

Options (Regulation 18) consultation taking place between August and October 2015.

A third Issues and Options consultation was scheduled to take place between 4 April 2016 and 8 June 2016 and it was the preferred option consultation draft of the Core Strategy SIR, attached as Working Paper 1 to Report No LOP/FH/16/005.

A report had also been presented to the Local Plan Working Group on 19 January 2016, which set out the Sustainability Appraisal work undertaken during the development of the refined housing distribution options. Three potential options were proposed, but it was the view of Officers and the consultants appointed to undertake the Sustainability Appraisal work, that in order to progress the CS SIR and to ensure a more engaging consultation, a smaller number of options for consultation should be included in the next CS SIR document (one to be indicated as the Council's preferred option and one as an alternative option).

The report stated it was likely that Option 1 (Higher growth at Mildenhall and Red Lodge and Primary Villages, enabling lower growth at Newmarket) would be presented as the Council's final preferred Option, a decision which was reinforced by this Option ranking mostly highly in terms of performance against the SA objectives. Option 2 (Higher growth at Newmarket, enabling lower growth at Mildenhall, Red Lodge and Primary Villages) would be presented as an alternative option, but would not be preferred.

A summary of Options 1 and 2 were:

- (a) Option 1 (preferred option)
- Environmental designations around Brandon would be protected from negative effects of development.
 - Opportunity for growth to the west of Mildenhall for planned mixed use development.
 - Growth in Newmarket would balance the need to protect the Horseracing industry, whilst delivering additional growth (allowed for 400 homes on the Hatchfield Farm site)
 - Growth in Red Lodge and Lakenheath would be the maximum growth that these settlements could deliver in the Plan period.
 - The primary villages would be protected from any further large increases in growth.
- (b) Option 2 (alternative option)
- The majority of growth would be concentrated in Mildenhall and Newmarket where a good range of services and facilities existed.
 - The majority of growth in Newmarket would be on the Hatfield Farm site to the north-east (800 homes). Given the past issues of trying to deliver this site, it might be appropriate for a lower growth in the town.
 - This option did not allow for the additional capacity available to the west of Mildenhall on a relatively unconstrained site.
 - Growth at Red Lodge and the primary villages would be lower than Option 1, as a consequence of higher growth at Newmarket.

Officers explained that in comparison to Option 1, Option 2 was proposing:

- 200 fewer homes at Mildenhall.
- 400 more homes at Newmarket.
- 100 fewer homes at Red Lodge.
- 100 fewer homes across the primary villages.

Working Paper 1 to Report No LOP/FH/16/005 was the third 'Issues and Options' (Regulation 18) CS SIR consultation document. This document considered one option for the overall level of housing to be provided in the District from 2011 to 2031 and two reasonable options (one of which was the Council's preferred Option) for its distribution between towns and villages.

The purpose of the consultation document was to stimulate further debate on housing quantum and the most appropriate way to distribute the housing need throughout the district. The document asked questions and invited comments from both the public and statutory stakeholders. The Council was still evidence gathering at this stage and was not making a final decision on the distribution of housing, but was giving an indication of its preferred strategy.

Officers explained that a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) was a tool for appraising policies to ensure they reflected sustainable development objectives. Sustainability Appraisals are 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. Consultants had been appointed to undertake the full SA and SEA work in relation to the next consultation draft of the SIR document. A full report setting out the findings of the SA and SEA and the proposed CS SIR Regulation 18 consultation would accompany the document for consultation in April 2016.

Following consideration by the Local Plan Working Group, the final CS SIR consultation document would be presented to Cabinet for approval on 1 March 2016. The design and printing of the documents would take a further few weeks, therefore, the consultation was planned to run from 4 April 2016 until 8 June 2016.

Comments received during this next consultation would be considered and brought back to the Local Plan Working Group before being fed into the final consultations for both the Site Allocations and Core Strategy Single Issue Review in late Summer/Autumn 2016. Submission of the documents for independent examination would follow in December 2016.

The Working Group then considered the CS SIR consultation document in detail and proposed that the document be approved for consultation, subject to additional text being included within the document to provide further clarity and context for Newmarket in relation to Option 1 (the Council's preferred option) and Option 2 (the Council's non-preferred option).

With the vote being unanimous, it was

RECOMMENDED: (Cabinet: 1 March 2016)

That:-

1. The progress of the Core Strategy Single Issue Review (CS SIR) be endorsed.
2. The Core Strategy Single Issue Review (CS SIR) Preferred Option document (as set out in Working Paper 1 to Report No LOP/FH/16/005) and accompanying Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)/Sustainability Appraisal (SA), together with supporting documents, be approved for consultation, subject to additional text being included within the document to provide further clarity and context for Newmarket, in relation to Option 1 (the Council's preferred option) and Option 2 (the Council's non-preferred option).

(Councillor Bill Sadler left the meeting at 6.45 pm, during the discussion of and prior to, the voting on this item.)

32. Date of Next Meeting

It was noted that the next meeting of the Working Group would be held on Thursday 18 February 2016 at 6.00 pm.

The Meeting concluded at 6.48 pm

Signed by:

Chairman
