

Planning Policy Forum

**10.00 am, Tuesday February 12th 2013, Art Gallery, Chelmsford Museum,
Moulsham Street, Chelmsford, CM2 9AQ**

NOTE OF MEETING

1. Attendance & Apologies

Attendance

Jeremy Potter (Chair)	Chelmsford CC
Laura Percy	Chelmsford CC
Paul Macbride	Harlow DC
Amanda Thorn (Notes)	Epping Forest DC
Sam Hollingworth	Rochford DC
Amanda Raffaelli	Castle Point DC
Eleanor Dash	Braintree DC
Melanie Jones	Uttlesford DC
Zhanine Oates	Essex County Council
Matthew Winslow	Basildon BC
Richard Hatter	Thurrock
Tim Parton	Maldon DC
Phil Drane	Brentwood BC
Laura Chase	Colchester BC
Gary Guiver	Tendring DC

Apologies received from Roy Lewis, Essex County Council & Ian White Epping Forest DC

2. House keeping Matters

- a. Terms of Reference agreed by EPOA 13/12/12 – will be placed on website (<http://www.the-edi.co.uk/essexplanningpolicyforum.php>)
- b. Further meetings are booked prior to main EPOA meetings: 14th May, 3rd Sept, 12th Nov all at 10am at Chelmsford Museum
- c. Standing items for the agenda:
 - i. Duty to Cooperate – see item 7 below

Actions:

ALL to forward items for the agenda to J Potter as necessary

3. National Planning News

- o Consultation on changes to PD rights for homeowners – EPOA submitted response raising a number of concerns, which appear to be repeated around the country. Not clear that full implications have been realised by government/public.
- o Growth & Infrastructure Bill (<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2012-13/growthandinfrastructure.html>) due to be debated by House of Lords 27th Feb. Makes clear the Treasury impetus on growth and achieving nationally

- significant infrastructure. Further changes to PD also indicated, but no suggestion of timescale for implementation as yet.
- o Temporary relaxation of PD rights – permit change from B1(Office) to C3 (Residential). Case for any exemption must be made to CLG by 22/02/13. Insufficient time to put together a joint response, but individual submissions to CLG could be circulated for information. Concerns raised about potential impacts including on regeneration/redevelopment schemes for existing offices where s.106 is relied on to deliver other elements.
 - o Regional Strategy: East of England Plan revoked 03/01/13. Issues raised include lack of strategic retail policy for Lakeside, each authority now needs to determine their own objectively assessed housing need including GRT provision. Previous regional working groups for Minerals & Waste still in place – further discussion with GLA needed on dealing with waste from London.
 - o Neighbourhood Planning –announcement of further funding for areas with NPs (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/communities-to-receive-cash-boost-for-choosing-development>) to incentivise preparation and acceptance of growth. Some interest in NPs around Essex, with recent consultation on extent of areas in Colchester and Brentwood. Further interest following announcement, but not clear that communities recognise that funding is only available to them from development permitted in their area.
 - o CIL guidance (Dec 2012) has been revised, and makes distinction between s.106 & CIL clearer - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/community-infrastructure-levy-guidance>
 - Thurrock – consultation on levy recently – suggests rate is relatively low
 - Braintree – recent cost benefit analysis suggests that s106 for major development sites will better meet the requirements arising. CIL will not provide necessary funding for schools etc.
 - Uttlesford – do not consider CIL is cost effective at present
 - Colchester – currently a “frontrunner” but progress has paused on PINS advice that policy review should be completed first
 - Chelmsford – preparing a Draft Charging Schedule for Consultation.
 - Overall comment – where majority of development is on a large number of small sites, CIL is likely to work well, for major schemes s106 is more likely to be favoured
 - o “The Red Tape Challenge” invites comments on the administration of planning applications – consultation period closes 07/03/2013 <http://www.redtapechallenge.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/home/index/>
 - o Gilden Way, Harlow – permission granted at appeal for 1,200 homes & related infrastructure Site is a strategic reserve in the adopted Local Plan, grant of permission down to lack of demonstrable 5-year housing supply. Development at New Hall site is very slow, so delivery cannot be proven – possible implications for long term planning in and around Harlow.
 - o 1 year anniversary of NPPF looming – GRT issues particularly pertinent. Some very focused reviews of adopted Plans underway to ensure compliance – Chelmsford, Thurrock, Colchester

Actions:

Where relevant, ALL to send J Potter submissions to CLG on exemptions from change to PD rights (Office –Residential) for circulation to group.

4. Development Plan Consultation Techniques (A Raffaelli)

General discussion around consultation methods used in Castle Point, using most recent example of “Local Plan Issues” consultation from Jan 2012. Key points of note:

- o Agreed consultation plan with Members prior to commencement of consultation period – helps prevent disagreements further down the line.
- o Different methods for different audiences – development industry received longer leaflet including statistics/detailed information ; residents received a shorter leaflet sent out to “the resident” using envelopes printed on the outside “Important Council information enclosed – please read”. Found that separate streams worked well.
- o Distribution using Royal Mail “walksort”, and prepaid envelopes for returns. Returns increased from previous rounds – 3,800 compared to 2,500. Required pre-sorting of post to match post routes.
- o Recognised missing young people – Twitter & the QR code didn’t reach many people. Gave out information at train stations and attended neighbourhood meetings, aligning with existing meetings where possible. Tried “Coffee mornings” but did not find useful. Youth Council was helpful.
- o Engaged with businesses by presenting to local forum and asking for feedback
- o Attended Age Concern lunch events – presentation not appropriate, but sought views from smaller groups over lunch.
- o Majority of responses were in hard copy – members were content not to push online responses as the preferred method of contact, despite this meaning more work to analyse responses. All input to Limehouse, then used text coding and reported by postcode.
- o Outcomes reported to Cabinet in June 2012
http://castlepoint.maximaasp.com/Committee/CastlePointTrove.ASP?_LVDDir=/CSTLEP/&P2=1&w=1920&h=1200&c=24&token=41330&HU=http://www.castlepoint.gov.uk/main.cfm?menuid=11567

Questions:

Is there any (national?) research around the best methods of consultation to use when preparing a Local Plan? No-one was aware of any such research – please forward to J Potter if any is discovered.

Further point that use of “non-standard” venues for displays / roadshows / handing out leaflets is useful e.g. supermarkets, markets.

5. EPOA GTAA

EPOA agreed the brief for the Essex-wide study on 13/12/12, and Andrew Taylor (Uttlesford) is now leading this work on behalf of the group. Procurement for consultants should be underway shortly.

Basildon BC have commissioned a separate additional study following a number of recent appeal & High Court decisions. ORS were appointed in December 2012. Some initial stakeholder events held – attendance was disappointing. Expecting draft report to officers April/May. Unclear as yet whether there will be consultation/discussion on the draft report, recognise the benefits around Duty to Cooperate but is a highly sensitive issue.

Actions:

A Taylor to forward final brief to J Potter for circulation

GRT working group to continue and report back as necessary

Further update on Essex-wide & Basildon GTAA at next meeting

6. EPOA Demographic Study

Stage 4 of the work complete – final presentation to Members/Officers on 18/03/13. Need to consider whether more work is needed across Essex, but warning that EPOA funds are tight and the priority is on the GTAA work at present.

The working group will meet again to provide a view on possible further & future work – matters to be discussed include possibility of a sub-regional approach, and appetite for a periodic review.

Action:

Working group representatives to report back to next meeting

7. Duty to Cooperate

Becoming increasingly obvious that this is not a “tick box” exercise and PINS are looking for comprehensive and robust evidence of proper cooperation. Useful to invite Keith Holland (PINS) along to a future meeting to learn more about how PINS are dealing with this matter.

Important that both officers and members are signed up to identified cross boundary matters, and that priorities/positions are agreed.

Thurrock are commencing a “Duty to Cooperate” process around the transformation of Lakeside into a town centre, and plugging the policy gaps left by the revocation of the RSS.

Braintree/Maldon are considering issues around population growth and housing distribution.

Role of LEPs is not clear in encouraging cooperation – planning matters do not appear to be high on the priority list, more of a transport focus.

There was a discussion about the Duty to Cooperate on the emerging Minerals Local Plan although there was not a specific ECC Minerals representative at the meeting. The following statement has been subsequently provided by ECC for information and inclusion in the notes.

The engagement exercise on the Replacement Minerals Local Plan: Pre-Submission Draft (MLP) closes on 28 Feb. Representations made will be forwarded to the SoS in July. The examination in public is scheduled Oct / Nov this year.

During the production of the MLP (preparation work on the MDD began in 2004) ECC has valued the inputs of district, borough & city authorities in Essex and in particular the involvement of Officers attending the District, Borough & City Stakeholder meetings.

ECC expect to receive representations from some Districts / Borough's &/or Cities in respect of the soundness of the MLP during the engagement process. Between the end of the engagement and submission to the SoS the Mineral Planning Authority envisages the need to identify either individually and together:

a) how the Councils within and adjoining the County intend to co-operate on common mineral issues

b) develop a joint position with regard to the key common mineral related issues facing the County perhaps formalised as Statement(s) of Common Ground.

This process is expected to begin shortly and in more detail at the next District, Borough & City stakeholder meeting which is due to take place on the 27 March.

Action:

**J Potter to contact Keith Holland (PINS) to attend meeting on 14th May
ALL to use this agenda item as a forum to discuss forthcoming events & arising issues**

8. Local Plan/LDF update

Schedule circulated prior to meeting

Action:

ALL to provide an update for the schedule to J Potter prior to next meeting

9. AOB

None raised

Date of Next Meeting – 14th May 2013, 10am