

## EPOA: CHIEF OFFICERS' GROUP MEETING

Action Notes: 9 December 2021

10:00am – 12:30pm

### Future Meetings:

Thursday, 17 February 2022

Thursday, 21 April 2022

Thursday, 21 July 2022

### Attendees

Alethea Evans (AE) - ECC  
Amanda Parrott (AP) – Castle Point  
Britney Lees (BL) - ECC  
Connie Kerbst (CK) – ECC  
Daniel Goodman (DG) – Rochford  
David Coleman – DAC Planning  
Emma Goodings (EG) - Braintree  
Graham Thomas (GT) - ECC  
Gary Guiver – (GG) Tendring  
Jeremy Potter (JP) - Chelmsford  
Katherine Wilkinson (KW) - ECC  
Kayra Salih - ECC  
Karen Syrett (KS) - Colchester

Kevin Fraser (KF) – ECC  
Kevin Walters (KW) – Southend-on-Sea  
Leanne Brisland (LB) – Bird Aware Essex (RAMs)  
Natalie Blaken (NB) – Epping Forest  
Neil Harvey (NH) – ECC  
Peter Dawson (PD) – ECC  
Phil Drane (PDr)– Brentwood  
Philip Bylo (PB) – Basildon  
Richard Greaves (RG) - ECC  
Richard Hatter (RH) - Thurrock  
Steven Miles (SM) - Uttlesford  
Tanusha Walters (TW)– Harlow

	Agenda Item	Action
1.	<b>Introductions &amp; Apologies</b>	
2.	<b>Notes and Actions arising from previous meeting on 29/9/21</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• AP has had a conversation regarding water quality. A body is already involved and a consultation will be held early next year.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ GT: Natural England have a requirement for water neutrality. If the Local Authority cannot provide evidence that they are water neutral then they will not issue planning permission.</li></ul></li><li>• CLG: They have stated that each local authority should take their own legal advice. This advice has been circulated to GG who is chairing the working group.</li><li>• ECAC: GT is providing guidance on the Climate Action Charter. It has been suggested that each local authority signs the Charter, however it may be easier if EPOA sign it.</li><li>• Three Dragons Study: This needs as much engagement as possible.</li></ul>	
3.	<b>Notice of AOB</b>	

4.	<p><b>PAS Local Plan Route Mapper and Toolkit</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• DAC Planning provide plan-making support to local authorities and communities. They are based in the University of Essex’s Innovation and are an associate of Place Services.</li> <li>• Route Mapper and Toolkit aids the assessment of soundness and legal compliance of Locals Plans, helping to create quality plans in an efficient and effective way. It replaces the PAS compliance checklist and soundness assessment.</li> <li>• It responds to the publication of the revised NFFP in July 2018.</li> <li>• The Local Plan Route Mapper and Toolkit was piloted with a number of local authorities are different stages of the Local Plan process and the finding were used to update materials.</li> <li>• The Toolkit is made of four parts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Local Plan Review and Assessment</li> <li>2. Local Plan Form and Content Checklist</li> <li>3. Local Plan Process Requirements Checklist</li> <li>4. Local Plan Soundness and Quality Assessment</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Route Mapper has three main sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reviewing the need to update your Local Plan policies</li> <li>2. Project Planning and Management</li> <li>3. Updating your Local Plan</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The Route Mapping is supplemented by the Toolkit</li> </ul>	<p><i>DC to circulate presentation.</i></p>
5.	<p><b>EPOA MNO 5G Guidance</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The project objective was to support the involvement of local authorities in the delivery of mobile network infrastructure.</li> <li>• A perceived ‘inefficient’ planning engagement was seen as a barrier to delivery.</li> <li>• The main part of the project was to facilitate an accord between the planning authorities and 5G network providers.</li> <li>• The guidance sets out: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Why it is required and the benefits</li> <li>2. National Policy and Guidance</li> <li>3. The role of Mobile Network Operators (MNOs)</li> <li>4. The Essex Approach</li> <li>5. Engagement, maximising feedback, stakeholders and checklist</li> <li>6. Key contacts both ECC and LPAs signpost to specialist advice</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The guidance will provide a best practice guidance tool for both LPAs to determine applications for mobile network infrastructure and for the MNOs to reference when submitting applications.</li> <li>• The guidance is ready to be published on the supplementary section of the Essex Design Guide.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Chief Officers to review guidance and feedback to PD by COP 16/12/2021</i></p> <p><i>Chief Officers to review LPA contacts listed in guidance</i></p> <p><i>PD to circulate presentation</i></p>

6.	<p><b>Essex Solar Farm Guiding Principles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Essex Climate Action Commission and Cllr Wagland are keen for there to be a policy document on solar farms.</li> <li>• This proposal was taken to policy forum where the consensus was for guidance to be published on the Essex Design Guide at a high-level.</li> <li>• There are an increasing number of solar farm applications being submitted across Essex, increasing the need importance of providing consistent guidance.</li> <li>• This guidance can also be used as a tool by Planning Officers to inform Local Plan reviews, while minimising the need for individual LPA SPDs.</li> <li>• The guidance will comprise for thirteen “guiding principles”.</li> <li>• KF is looking for this guidance to be endorsed by EPOA.</li> </ul>	<p><i>KF to circulate draft guidance amongst Policy Forum members.</i></p>
7.	<p><b>RAMs Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LB has been meeting with stakeholders and landowners, reviewing and setting up systems and processes and delivering presentations to the Essex Coastal Forum and Blackwater Estuary Partnership.</li> <li>• £8,603.87 has been spent to date. LB will be creating a delivery plan to show how the RAMS money will be spent going forward</li> <li>• RAMs priorities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Set up a Delivery / Technical Group</li> <li>2. Recruitment of 2 x Coastal Rangers</li> <li>3. Draft Mitigation Action Table – 12 months, 2 years and 3 years</li> <li>4. Mapping</li> <li>5. Communications Plan</li> <li>6. Administration of the RAMS</li> <li>7. Start using the Bird Aware Essex Coast Branding for RAMS</li> <li>8. Draft Monitoring Plan</li> </ol> </li> </ul>	
8.	<p><b>Implications of Environment Act</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Environment Act 2021 Regulations 2021 came in to force on 17th November, but only deals with sections relevant to the Office for Environmental Protection.</li> <li>• DEFRA consultation on secondary legislation (regulations) for BNG was expected “Autumn 2021”, but no sign yet.</li> <li>• Section 104 inserts a Section 40A into the NERC Act requiring LPAs to produce a Biodiversity Report covering a period of up to three years of the section coming in to force, within 12 weeks of the end of the period and then every five years.</li> <li>• Section 103 also allows the Secretary of State to introduce regulations requiring Biodiversity Reports to include specified quantitative data relating to biodiversity.</li> <li>• Local Recovery Strategies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Consultation on how to prepare them and what to include in them closed at the beginning of November.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p><i>NH to circulate slides</i></p> <p><i>Arrange meeting with NH to discuss biodiversity metrics</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Regulations will be produced, but the outline of what the strategies will look like is set out in the Act.</li> <li>○ Responsible Authorities are likely to be set at whole county level and Local Nature Partnerships are likely to be preferred Responsible Authorities.</li> <li>● Schedule 14 inserts a new Schedule (Schedule 7A) into the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which imposes a general condition of planning permission.</li> <li>● Schedule 15 inserts a new Schedule 2A into the Planning Act 2008 to extend the biodiversity gain obligation to development consents for Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects</li> <li>● Applies to developments to which a DCO application may relate or any development that is not an excluded development</li> <li>● More complicated process involving National Policy Statement and Biodiversity Gain Statements for different descriptions of development, but still requires 10% (other metrics can be used)</li> <li>● Expected timeline: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Spring 2022 - Government response to consultation on BNG regulations</li> <li>○ Spring 2023 - BNG site register and statutory credits sales platform go live</li> <li>○ Winter 2023 - Biodiversity net gain to become mandatory for all TCPA developments and NSIP</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	
9.	<p>Other EPOA Working Groups Updates</p> <p>1. Essex Parking Standards Review:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There a number outstanding tasks, including the finalisation of parking standards table; gathering photographs and diagrams to best support the documents text; consultation in January.</li> <li>● Jacobs are no longer able to support the continuation of this review.</li> <li>● The available options are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Remain with Jacobs for a short amount of time and get the document to a place where it is almost ready to go. LPAs can then continue the work.</li> <li>○ Jacobs to get the document to a place where it is ready for consultation.</li> <li>○ Procure another consultant to complete the work.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Proposal: ask Jacobs for a proposal that will get the document to consultation.</li> </ul> <p>2. Gypsy and Traveller: KS to follow up and circulate update.</p>	<i>KS to follow up and circulate update on Gypsy and Traveller group.</i>
10.	<p><b>EPOA Forum Feedback</b></p> <p>1. Policy Forum: Recently had a session on design codes and how they can help us move forward.</p> <p>2. DM Forum: There is agreement within the DM Forum that it would be good to get more involved in other projects.</p>	<i>Chief Officers to consider what projects DM Forum could get involved with.</i>

11.	<b>Local Plan Preparation/Examination Updates/Appeal Update</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• EPDC: Post main modifications and awaiting Inspectors report.</li> <li>• Castle Point: Main modifications</li> <li>• Tendring: Looking to adopt</li> <li>• ECC Minerals: Looking to do call for sites early next year.</li> </ul>	
12.	AOB	