

ESSEX PLANNING OFFICERS ASSOCIATION**MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 13 March 2014 9:30am – 12:10pm**
AT THE DISCOVERY CENTRE BRAINTREE CM77 7FS

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| PRESENT: Catherine Bicknell (Tendring) Andrew Cook (ECC) Dianne Cooper (Harlow) Emma Goodings (Braintree) Katharine Harvey (SELEP) Richard Hatter (Thurrock) | Tony Pierce (Brentwood) John de Wilton Preston (Epping) Nigel Richardson (Epping) Steve Rogers (Castle Point) Shaun Scrutton (Rochford) Andrew Taylor (Uttlesford) Ian Vipond (Colchester) |
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| | Attention was drawn to the fire exits and location of toilets at the request of the Centre Manager | |
| 1. | Apologies Peter Geraghty (Southend) Andy Millard (Thurrock) Jeremy Potter (Chelmsford) Tony Pierce apologised for lateness. | |
| 2. | Notice of AOB No advance items were indicated. | |
| 3. | Minutes of meeting of 12 December 2013 and Action list, and matters arising The minutes were agreed and the action list had been completed. There were no matters arising. | |
| 4. | Planning update John Preston drew attention to the release of the National Planning Guidance and associated statements on 6 March, to the changes to arrangements concerning the demolition of certain buildings, and to recent changes to the Community Infrastructure Levy procedures. Some colleagues had struggled to find references to all of the Minister's bullet points within the guidance. | |
| 5. | Co-operation with South East Local Enterprise Partnership Katharine Harvey, who is the interim Assistant Director of SELEP attended to give an update, even though several on the group were heavily involved in some of the work going into the Strategic Economic Plan (SEP), and related work streams. Katharine reflected the significant work going on to gather information, amend the submission and to prioritise. This is a considerable effort for a large LEP, with a small secretariat still in relative infancy, and is in contrast to a single County LEP, or one which has arisen from previous significant arrangements which some combined authorities in the Midlands or North have had. None the less a bid in excess of £1billion can be expected in addition to what has already gone into the European Strategy. What emerges may depend on how Government sees a federated SELEP. | |

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| | <p>Katharine drew out that the housing component was being given particular emphasis over the next year; in particular, the accelerated delivery of housing rather than forcing higher numbers on top. There will be asks for greater flexibilities from Government to secure this. This in turn raises questions about the role being taken by ECEA/EPOA/EHOG and so on. Steve Rogers and Ian Vipond reported on the development surrounding SEFUND which may have a RED1, RED2 and RED3 component where monies are fully, partially, or never recycled back into these funds.</p> <p>Attention was also drawn to the 2015 houses by 2015 initiative involving public sector land, the amount of effort that had been involved in contributing to the plus or minus 20% prioritisation discussions, and the work on Garden Cities. It was recognised that it was easy to say deliver more housing and deliver it quicker, but that it was harder to achieve that “on the ground.”</p> | |
| 6. | <p>Essex Integrated County Strategy and Deal for Growth</p> <p>Steve Rogers reflected once more that the Officer working group on the ICS had been concentrating its efforts on the Economic Plan for Essex, with a key date at the end of this month. The Priority themes in the document were Economy, Place, Productivity, People and Housing. There are important links to the Strategic Local Growth fund.</p> | |
| 7. | <p>EPOA Budget</p> <p>The current payment of issued invoices for activities this year was now complete. The likely level of basic subscription for next year was agreed at £2,000 and any supplementary subscriptions for 2014/15 would need agreement, but depended to a degree on whether any extra work was required on GTAA3 and on what longer term arrangement might be secured for the ARU Training.</p> | |
| 8. | <p>Comfort Break/networking</p> | |
| 9. | <p>GRT Update</p> <p>Andrew Taylor explained that the first draft report from ORS on GTAA3 had been discussed in the steering group. It appears that ORS are working on quite a number of these and other assessments nationally, or are appearing at Planning Inquiries. This is adversely impacting on the timetable.</p> <p>Following the points made in the previous main EPOA meeting ORS had gone back to those on the County Council waiting list, and the list had shrunk as a result of that checking about up to date information.</p> <p>The steering group was considering a position statement that had been provided by Epping Forest District Council; this raised matters about whether all aspects of the original brief have been delivered, and some other matters where further work would probably be required by ORS to achieve a robust document, and which may then save time in Planning Inquiries in due course.</p> <p>The Group recognised the outstanding need for a joint meeting of officers from EPOA and EHOG, and the subsequent need for a timely meeting with Members.</p> | |
| 10. | <p>Future Demographic work</p> <p>In Jeremy Potter’s absence it was reported that the fifth update from Edge Analytics has recently been received in draft. Attention was drawn to the fact that the Cambridge Insight website contained useful population details. See http://www.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk//efm</p> | |

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| 11. | <p>Determining 5 year housing land supply</p> <p>On the basis of experience gained from their Local Plan examination, Uttlesford had sought to understand if there was a common approach in Essex. There appear to be two approaches in use nationally; a Liverpool approach where future supply is boosted going forward if there has been lower than expected performance in the past, or a Sedgefield approach. The Policy Forum have a sub group working on this to see if a pan Essex approach can be achieved, and what points it would include. The draft on this is coming together with the assistance of consultant working for the Planning Advisory Service (PAS).</p> | |
| 12. | <p>Health/NHS Planning Issues</p> <p>Information on this had been added to the website, however Graham Seward has left ECC, and the future co-ordinator/contact is not yet clear.</p> | |
| 13. | <p>Local Plan progress and Duty to co-operate; including strategic issues and the work for ECEA.</p> <p>The sub group would be reconvened shortly by Shaun Scrutton given that the National Planning Guidance has now been issued. Colleagues present gave a quick resume, although a full picture is in the spreadsheet with the Policy Forum minutes (further copy attached to these minutes).</p> | |
| 14. | <p>Website Update</p> <p>Andrew Taylor reminded everyone that the Uttlesford District Council website had been renewed and that it now contained the EPOA webs pages. Link attached. http://www.uttlesford.gov.uk/epoa The pages and the links to the old site are gradually being dismantled. Colleagues were reminded to ensure that there is an up to date link across to this from their own websites.</p> | |
| 15. | <p>Feedback on recent EPOA/ARU training</p> <p>Dianne Cooper, Steve Rogers and John Preston had attended a lunch at ARU the day before to recognise the tenth successful year of this training programme. They had then attended the afternoon training session on flooding; this was both topical and timely, as usual. As a result of the associated media activity John had gone on to be interviewed as Chairman of EPOA on BBC Look East.</p> <p>John suggested that there may be merit in seeking more than a year to year continuation of the training, as it was clearly a significant benefit. Steve and Dianne agreed reflecting that the training was local, relevant and cost effective.</p> | |
| 16. | <p>Joint EPOA and Cambridgeshire meeting</p> <p>John Preston had circulated the details and agenda of this first meeting scheduled for 14 March.</p> | |
| 17. | <p>Planning Policy Forum</p> <p>Minutes of meeting of 18 Feb which had been circulated separately were noted.</p> | |
| 18. | <p>Development Management Forum</p> <p>Minutes of meeting of 17 Jan which had been circulated separately were noted.</p> | |
| 19. | <p>Any other Business items for future meetings</p> | |

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| | <p>It was agreed to have a presentation at the June meeting about a pilot scheme in Harlow which is evaluating the extent to which Pre application charges for specialisms at ECC can be met by developers. Matt Searle of ECC is asked to attend to present on this at the next meeting.</p> <p>There was a brief discussion about how accessible and comfortable the Oaklands Museum venue was compared to the usual venue. It appears that several of the County Groups such as ECEA and the Policy and DM forums meet there. However, the cost was higher than the normal cost incurred at Braintree. Consideration can be given to the future use of Oaklands if a sensible price can be achieved. In considering future budget as the EPOA subscriptions pays for the venues for EPOA, DC and Policy Forums the venue cost for the meetings will have to be considered carefully.</p> <p>Replacement of Vice Chairman Andrew Taylor of Uttlesford was appointed as Vice Chairman of EPOA for 2014/15 for two years starting in April 2014. Andrew was thanked for taking on this role, and thereby ensuring a smooth transition.</p> | |
| 20. | <p>Items for future meetings John Preston and Andrew Cook are meeting to hand over the chairman's working documents and Andrew will consider what to include on the next agenda.</p> | |
| 21. | <p>Chairman's closing Ian Vipond reflected on John Preston's imminent retirement, his long contribution to the work of EPOA and the thorough way in which he had chaired and managed EPOA's arrangements. John replied in suitable terms, but then drew attention to the fact that Keith Lawson was also retiring, and that he was similarly a long standing contributor to EPOA activities, and often presented in his own special style. John also indicated that Dianne Cooper was about to commence a phased retirement, and that if she did not get to EPOA in future, that her contributions, including her period as Chairman, should not go unrecognised. Dianne replied in suitable terms.</p> | |
| 22. | <p>Date of Next Meeting The next meeting would take place on 12 June 2014 at 9:30am at the usual venue of the Discovery Centre Braintree</p> | |
| 23. | <p>Close of Meeting The meeting closed at 12:10</p> | |