


**ESSEX PLANNING OFFICERS ASSOCIATION**

**Minutes of meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2014  
at the Discovery Centre, Great Notley, CM77 7FS**

<p><b>PRESENT:</b></p> <p>Andrew Cook (AC) – ECC (Chair)                  Dominic Collins (DCol) – ECC                  Dianne Cooper (DC) – Harlow                  Ian Vipond (IV) – Colchester                  Emma Gooding (EG) – Braintree                  Cath Bicknell (CB) – Tendring                  Nigel Richardson (NR) – Epping Forest                  Tony Pierce (TP) – Brentwood</p>	<p>Andrew Taylor (AT) – Uttlesford                  Steve Rogers (SR) – Castle Point                  Jeremy Potter (JP) – Chelmsford                  Shaun Scrutton (SS) – Rochford                  David Lewis (DL) - Basildon                  Jodie Allum / Matilda Hodnett – ECC                  (Minutes)</p>
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No.	Agenda item	Action
1.	<p><b>Apologies:</b>                      Richard Hatter – Thurrock                      Peter Geraghty - Southend                      Derek Lawrence- Maldon</p>	
2.	<p>AOB                      - DC raised a question about Payday Loans.</p>	
3.	<p><b>Minutes and actions from previous meeting (12.6.14)</b></p> <p>The minutes were agreed as an accurate record.</p>	
4.	<p><b>Building Information Modelling Presentation</b></p> <p>                      BIM presentation                      EPOA September 201</p> <p>AT provided the above presentation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government set up building information modelling task force, which is part of BiS.</li> <li>- Ability to construct, get consent, build &amp; manage a building within one suite of documents.</li> <li>- Idea of modelling is like a CAD system – can tweak, can change.</li> <li>- Developed over a number of years – UK current world leaders in this.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Idea to be able to do everything through BiM.</li> <li>- By 2016 all Government funded projects will have to do this- will have to be BiM enabled.</li> <li>- BiM enables a huge amount of information to be stored within the model.</li> <li>- Government just putting the Portal out to tender -as part of that there is a requirement to ensure that the Portal is being enabled so that you could submit your planning and building application through the Portal in a BiM enabled form.</li> <li>- Software &amp; Technical group – developing in validating a BiM application.</li> <li>- Can set parameters with BiM.</li> <li>- Difficulty is rolling it out.</li> <li>- Only looking at the English system at the moment.</li> <li>- Funding for this BiS work runs out next year</li> <li>- When &amp; How it will impact us is uncertain</li> </ul> <p><b>Questions/Discussion on BiM:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. DC – mentioned for building control it would be easier/more useful using BiM if it provides the structural Engineer calculations - provided everyone puts in correct sums.</li> <li>2. AT noted that this is currently in use in Singapore</li> <li>3. SR- 3x points: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Wondered if the COG(?) has been disinterested for any reason – e.g burden on businesses?</li> <li>ii) Could see there being some merit in developing further expert systems to answer questions – e.g. PD?</li> <li>iii) Funding issues – wondering if going to get to a point where it'll be put back on the shelf?</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. IV- Whole point of technology, in theory, should be able to do anything – to work out how it could be used to submit something that would be in the right format for local authorities, in a format that would be of maximum use in planning.</li> <li>5. CB asked if the technical group are engaging. AT confirmed that a presentation and workshops have been given.</li> <li>6. JP – Interested in the validation side of things – how would be used in future for floor space calculations. Most authorities who have this in place are not checking every single application. Was just wondering if there was an automatic process to check.</li> </ol>	
5.	<p><b>ARU Training Programme</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lewis Herbert from the ARU had circulated the draft programme.</li> <li>- AC wanted to confirm that everyone had seen it, noted it, received this &amp; wanted to know if any comments ahead of the first session.</li> </ul> <p><b>Actions:</b> AC to chase Lewis Herbert for information and dates for booking on sessions and to request confirmation on which courses are suitable for members.</p>	<b>AC</b>
6.	<p><b>Planning Update</b></p> <p>AC explained that this section is open to everyone to share any updates they have.</p>	

	<p>One item raised regarding letter that was circulated by Sefton Council. TP- Letter expresses general frustration, atmosphere and complexity of the planning system. Chairman picked it up and wants to use it to have a go at Pickles. TP had mentioned that the letter had been tinkered with over years.</p> <p>TP mentioned that Leonora Rozee, last Chief Planning inspector, was calling for complete re-writing of the planning system- he asked for views on this.</p> <p>AC ran through brief description about what was contained in the letter. IV mentioned that if the letter was going to be used to have a go at Pickles, there was no point as it would not affect him. Suggested it would just end up being a “political theme”. Suggested issues be raised differently other than having a “pot shot” at Pickles. SR- mentioned that his Chairman had picked up on the letter. He was asked to do a brief summary of the Technical reforms – SR mentioned that reaction from members was interesting (lack of appreciation of nature of changes to system). SR mentioned that some members think there was some merit to allowing changes to Residential use. SR mentioned the CLGs 3 Tiers of Development approvals - this would slowly nibble away at planning fee Income. Amount of work will increase without the fee Income. SS mentioned he had circulated the letter to his members – said that members just accept that changes will happen and that very little can be done to influence it.</p> <p>DC asked if other Councils’ members had mentioned concerns over Payday loans Uses Class (A2). Harlow was top in the number of payday type uses in Essex town centres. Currently government was consulting on extending permitted development to allow A2 uses to A1. Councillors have decided to take this up as an issue. DC asked if anyone else had issues with building society’s being taken up by payday loan shops/ betting shops/pawn brokers- (No one had the same issues).</p> <p>TP mentioned would need thorough review of planning/development control on new system.</p> <p>DC raised that having experience of LDO for brown and green field employment sites, she did not think that was solution to encourage housing on brown field sites. It would need careful consideration not to result in implications to adjacent house owners, if LDO relinquished control. Also, where there are several land owners, clear guidance is required such as roads to prevent land owners ransoming each other. A planning brief for the site could achieve the same aims and be more flexible as future changes to LDO was cumbersome, the planning process was quicker.</p>	
7.	<p><b>EPOA Budget</b></p> <p>AC noted that invoices should have gone out or in the process of going out for the Edge Analytics work. Invoices have not been raised for general subscription but hopefully will be for December meeting. It was also noted that no invoices have been received for the ARU training programme but that will continue to be paid for by EPOA group and also the sub groups’ meetings costs.</p>	

	<p>JP raised that Maldon has asked for the Edge Analytic work to be brought forward. DC wanted to know if this would mean that the invoices were brought forward, as that would have ramifications in terms of next round of invoicing. All agreed that will stay with current timetable for the demographic work so there are no implications for invoices.</p>	
<p><b>8.</b></p>	<p><b>Planning Compact Sup Group Update</b></p> <p>DCol, Commissioner for Place Services and Head of Economic Growth and Future Development, introduced himself to the group.</p> <p>DCol spoke about Planning Compact – This will be a way of working with districts and boroughs. We need to have a discussion amongst ourselves as to what the barriers are and what we can do to support developments.</p> <p>It was agreed in last meeting to create a sub group to look at this.</p> <p>DCol mentioned John Mitchell (Chief Executive of Uttlesford and leading this workstream for the Essex CEs) attended meeting. He discussed the concept and options paper and ran through the report mentioning capacity issues.</p> <p>DCol would like to take concepts to next group meeting. He mentioned joint planning unit and strategic approach to infrastructure delivery.</p> <p>AC asked if those who were present in sub group meeting, if they were comfortable that the paper was a reflection of the debate in the conversations that had. All answered yes.</p> <p>AC asked group if they wanted to discuss the meeting with Braintree. DCol mentioned that it was a “follow up meeting, to a follow up meeting”. Discussed letter of recognition joint work on SMAR. Initial member meeting held. Mentioned housing issues, joint infrastructure issues.</p> <p>DCol mentioned housing and infrastructure – how to get together?</p> <p>All discussed technical work, strategic approach, planning, infrastructure, non-plan development, transport, congestion, housing, schools, health planning, need to work with people better, getting police/fire departments involved, getting water/utilities involved. Sub regional approach – not 1 document for everyone.</p> <p><b>Actions:</b> AC asked if everyone could make sure that their Chief Executives were briefed ahead of the 18<sup>th</sup> September meeting.</p> <p>AC mentioned that next sub group meeting is on 25<sup>th</sup> September.</p>	<p><b>All</b></p>
<p><b>9.</b></p>	<p><b>Local Plan Progress and Duty to Co-Operate</b></p> <p>AC ran through summary and asked SS to give brief overview.</p> <p><b>a) Duty to co-operate</b> SR gave brief description about this and discussed the key headings that</p>	

	<p>colleagues are working through. Draft document should be ready for the TGSE planning and transport meeting towards the end of the month. After the above board information is to be shared to see how this looks to everyone else. This process is across Essex. TP advised that it's not just about showing the protocol, but it's about demonstrating, not just talking about it.</p> <p><b>b) Local Plan Progress</b></p> <p>SR advised about a media concern. A senior planning inspector had spoken at an informal meeting but due to a number of colleagues not being able to attend a recording had been taken for private internal purposes only.. Newspapers had picked up an extract from a copy. The extract, taken out of context appeared to contradict earlier advice concerning the duty to cooperate, housing need and the impact on green belt sites.</p> <p>Both Epping and Rochford are also involved in this.</p>	
<p><b>10.</b></p>	<p><b>GTAA – What next after the Member meeting</b></p> <p>AT circulated and asked for any corrections. A couple of changes were received. AT confirmed that there is a reduction of 9 in Colchester and an increase of 7 for Thurrock.</p> <p>AC confirmed that he had received a number of enquiries.</p> <p>TP confirmed that this has been received very badly in Brentwood. They were just about to take action but the GTAA goes against what their plans were. A discussion took place around the use of unauthorised sites and whether the GTAA document contradicts this.</p> <p>JP advised that the GTAA does represent the most up to date assessment which is a requirement of Government Policy.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> TP to share the legal advice.</p>	<p><b>TP</b></p>
<p><b>11.</b></p>	<p><b>London Infrastructure Plan to 2050</b></p> <p>AT advised that he went to FALP (London) and that the meeting was good, everybody wanted the London plan to succeed. While the need is 62,000 they have identified 42,000 with the possibility of 49,000. Everybody wanted the inspector to find it sound so that could go through; they wanted to commit to early review. The GLA argued that they are certain they could deliver the 49,000 but they haven't allocated this. Developers pushing for higher figure. Official migration from London pushing for supplies to be issued from outside. Local authorities around London are not filling the need, which is being identified by GLA. Strategic greenbelt review – should be 1 greenbelt review for whole lot – focus on future growth in London.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AC mentioned his team will be in London next week dealing waste and housing related issues at the examination.</li> <li>- IV mentioned the demographics work and asked the question, "Do we know that those aren't sufficient to accommodate what might be coming our way?" AT answered yes because GLA decided not to use the DCL figures they have used their own. London came up with their own methodology.</li> </ul>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- AC gave apologies and explained that he had to attend another meeting in County Hall and left the meeting. (time 11:55)</li> <li>- TP wanted to know what impact infrastructure plan would have on London- need of strategic review for greenbelt – once done local assessment of local greenbelt, can't assess with other reviews without doing proper reviews of other areas – Allocation would need to be reviewed.</li> <li>- JP mentioned diagrams on website – mentioned were worth looking at.</li> <li>- AT – mentioned the impact- all authorities would have to come together with a collective voice.</li> </ul> <p><b>Action</b> – JP to contact Lesley Stenhouse at ECC to investigate EPOA response to consultation to be agreed by e-mail prior to consultation closing date.</p>	<b>JP</b>
<b>12.</b>	<p><b>ECC Commissioning Strategies</b></p> <p>DCol provided a brief. DCol mentioned that ECC went through change last year where it became a commissioning led organisation and was split into 3; commissioning remit, operation to deliver and a support function. As part of this approach the concentration was to look at what ECC wants to deliver.</p> <p>An outcomes framework was developed, which identified 7 key outcomes which the authority has agreed. These are the core reasons that ECC exists and the 7 core areas that ECC should be influencing.</p> <p>Published 7 key strategies in July 2014 which were put out to consultation.</p> <p>There are common things that fit across all 7 strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Volunteering community</li> <li>ii) Public Transport</li> <li>iii) Housing</li> </ul> <p>It was noted that consultation closes next Friday.</p> <p><b>Action:</b> DCol to send link out to all &amp; to send out summary of the strategies.</p>	<b>DCol</b>
<b>13.</b>	<p><b>Planning Policy Forum</b></p> <p>JP advised that the Forum met on Tuesday (notes attached below)</p>  <p>EPOA PPF Final Meeting Note 2.9.14.</p> <p>In terms of the GTAA a number of authorities were taking it to relevant committees to get acknowledged.</p> <p>Demographic work, Forum welcomed the Phase 6 report. Forum to continue with this work and keep it on the radar on future budget.</p> <p>It was agreed that this is a valuable piece of work. The normal subscription is £1,300 for three additional pieces of work.</p>	

	<p>DCol noted the need within ECC for a single point of reference for demographics. Different departments currently use different demographics. If working together more on strategic issues, there needs to be a common usage across the board.</p> <p>Action: DCol to set up meeting with JP to look at some options to feedback to EPOA.</p>	<b>DCol</b>
<p><b>14.</b></p>	<p><b>Development Management Forum</b></p> <p>NR provided a general brief of this meeting. NR mentioned talks on Minerals in Essex – to many conditions attached to planning permissions. The main discussion was about recruitment difficulties, which is putting pressure on planning officers.</p> <p>He was asked to raise at EPOA meeting the following items:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i) Whether there were secondment opportunities?</li> <li>ii) Whether there was recruitment swop share for officers?</li> <li>iii) Is there a way of looking at some kind of strategy to why working in Essex is good?</li> </ul> <p>TP noted that they had advertised their position as graduate level and have had no response.</p> <p>A discussion regarding recruitment issues being experienced; how to make role's more attractive to graduates and how to make people apply for posts. Placement a big problem. All agreed that the private sector is causing a huge issue. Another issue discussed was that in the public sector it is much slower to progress where there is a flatter structure.</p>	
<p><b>15.</b></p>	<p><b>AOB</b></p> <p>It was agreed that all other items had been covered during the meeting.</p> <p>DCol mentioned they are going to be constructing a response to the Stansted plan and will share this with colleagues.</p>	
<p><b>16.</b></p>	<p><b>Items for future meetings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Presentation from Gwyn Owen re public sector land for housing</li> <li>- Invite speak from GLA and HBF to talk about the London issue.</li> <li>- Invite a CE or similar from a house builder (Countryside?) to talk about things from their perspective.</li> </ul> <p><b>Next meeting is on the 4<sup>th</sup> December 2014 (9.30 – 1pm) at Great Notley Discovery Centre.</b></p>	