

ESSEX PLANNING OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

Minutes of meeting held on 3rd March 2015
at the Discovery Centre, Great Notley

<p>PRESENT: Andrew Cook – ECC (Chair) Shaun Scrutton – Rochford DC Jeremy Potter – Chelmsford CC Richard Hatter – Thurrock BC Simon Meecham – Maldon DC Cath Bicknell – Tendring DC Dianne Cooper – Harlow DC Andrew Taylor – Uttlesford DC Ian Vipond – Colchester BC Emma Goodings – Braintree DC Ken Bean – Epping Forest DC Gordon Glenday – Brentwood BC Sue Garwood – ECC (notes)</p>	<p>Guests: Jason Fergus – Active Essex (ECC) Rob Hayne – Active Essex (ECC) Roy Warren – Sport England Garry White – ECC Gwyn Owen - ECC</p>
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No.	Agenda item	Action
1.	<p>Introduction & Apologies: Introductions were made and the following apologies noted:</p> <p>Andy Millard – Thurrock Peter Geraghty – Southend Dominic Collins – ECC Steve Rogers – Castle Point</p> <p>Absence of a Basildon representative was also noted.</p>	
2.	<p>Notice of AOB:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - GLA and Wider South East meeting on 19 March (AT) - ECC Waste Plan (AC) - Letter from ELAF (AC) - AC on leave for Sept EPOA meeting – AT to chair. 	
3.	<p>Minutes and Actions from Previous Meeting – 4.12.14 RH requested an amendment to the previous minutes – it was not TGSE that was out to tender but a specific piece of evidence base work.</p> <p>The rest of the minutes were agreed as an accurate reflection of the previous meeting.</p>	

4.

Planning for Sport & Physical Activity in Essex (*Jason Fergus, Rob Hayne & Roy Warren*)

Jason, Rob and Roy gave a joint presentation to explain the benefits and support available for strategic planning around sport and physical activity. (presentation attached below).



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IV raised a query about authorities having to go through specific consultants to get studies done - there were only a couple in the country and this was causing long delays. JF confirmed that they were no longer recommending consultants and there is a more competitive wider market now.

SM mentioned Garden City developments and new towns and the provision of open space, not just for sports but for health reasons. JF confirmed that they were currently having those discussions with developers.

GW raised the query of whether it would be beneficial to speak to PROW officers about making use of the volunteer sector. Active Essex confirmed that they do use a big workforce of volunteers called Essex Ambassadors but would be happy to have a conversation with PROW officers in this respect.

AT mentioned the huge amount of open space and network of footpaths and bridleways in Uttlesford which are never taken into consideration. He suggested that Active Essex seemed to be focused on a more formal provision of sport and AT urged them to follow a more traditional path of encouraging people to use the open spaces already there. JF confirmed that there is recognition that those open spaces exist and they are currently working with the National Trust about running events in their parks.

IV spoke about the possibility of making better use of schools' facilities for the wider community. With more and more schools becoming academies, ECC has less control over those facilities. KB asked whether Active Essex would be encouraging schools and teachers to up their game, JF explained they have introduced part time Competition Managers in schools and there is lots going on in that respect.

Active Essex have a database of facilities and guidance to assist local authorities and are more than happy to have a chat with authorities about how they can help.

(Please see document below which includes contact details and links)



Active Essex_ Sport
England contacts and

<p>5.</p>	<p>Development & Public Rights of Way Guide (Garry White – PROW & Highways Records Manager)</p> <p>GW explained his purpose of attending today was to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline the consultation process for updating the Development & Public Rights of Way Advice Note • Encourage authorities to implement all possible measures to identify and safeguard PROW routes when determining planning applications. <p><i>(Copy of transcript below. Draft PROW Advice Note to be circulated under separate cover)</i></p>  <p>EPOA - PROW.docx</p> <p>The Definitive Map was fully digitised in 2012. A working copy is on the ECC PROW website and the Map Info file has been distributed to all authorities with the latest update being distributed in January 2015. GW expressed concern that not all authorities have Map Info but the majority of attendees said they are able to download the information.</p> <p>The revised draft of the Development & PROW Advice Note will be sent to EPOA members on 4th May 2015 followed by a one month consultation period. GW will collate any feedback from EPOA members prior to the EPOA meeting in June and will attend the meeting prepared to answer any queries raised – SG to add to next agenda and invite GW along.</p> <p>AT queried whether the document would be going out to public consultation and GW confirmed that it would go to the Local Access Forum - a statutory body under the PROW Act. It was agreed it would be a good opportunity to consult with the development industry and it was queried whether it should go to EEAWP members. DC mentioned that they couldn't ask for Section 106 payments if it wasn't going through a formal process. Discussion was had over whether a link to the PROW digital map could be added to the guidance notes attached to a planning application form as it wasn't possible to add one directly onto the form.</p> <p>http://www.essexhighways.org/Transport-and-Roads/Getting-Around/Walking/Public-Rights-of-Way/Interactive-map.aspx</p> <p>GW mentioned some missing parts of the PROW network that weren't on the digital map and DC asked whether there was any work going on to identify where they were. GW replied that the want to manage it on a hierarchy basis as per the road network – however, the timescale for this is 2-3 years.</p>	<p>SG/GW</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Joint working, shared resources, Duty to Co-operate activity and Planning Sub Group progress</p> <p>AC gave an update in Dominic's absence. Planning Sub Group has been postponed to April but draft terms of reference for the Infrastructure Plan will still be circulated this week for comment. Devolution discussions going on at CE level about combined authority activity so it was suggested that clarity was required over the direction of travel before going ahead with the next Planning Sub Group meeting. It was agreed that it is important the districts and unitaries are aware of the debate going on. More information</p>	

	about what is going on is required and the opportunity to discuss this sooner rather than later. AC will pass these concerns to Dominic.	
7.	<p>Discussion on emerging legislation on SUDS approval and its impacts for EPOA members</p> <p>A joint response from EPOA has been issued about the revised proposals. AC asked if anyone had any news on the latest position but people appeared to be looking to ECC for advice. National guidance has not been forthcoming – people have been left with ambiguity. Confused picture at national level with no advice.</p>	
8.	<p>Planning update</p> <p>Discussions took place about current and recent national consultations and announcements and the group shared their views and responses.</p>	
9.	<p>EPOA Budget Update and Subscription Reminder</p> <p>Budget almost fully expended, based on ARU training and support for EPOA meetings.</p> <p><i>Post meeting note: The outstanding subscription payment from Maldon has now been settled.</i></p> <p>AC had investigated the quality of the Local Plan training to find out if it was a reflection on the rest of the training being provided by ARU or a one off. Anglia Ruskin had shared the course feedback forms and it was apparent there was a dip in quality with that particular course and it was not up to the standard they wanted to provide. No further negative responses had been received about any other courses so this will be taken as a one off. AC will invite Lewis to a future meeting to try and improve that element of training next year.</p>	AC
10.	<p>Local Plan Progress and Duty to Co-operate</p> <p>Epping Forest (KB) In relation to the joint SHMA, (with Uttlesford, Harlow and East Herts), it was anticipated that this work would be finalised and reported to members for sign off and adding to the evidence base shortly. Stage 1 of the Green Belt review (assessment of GB parcels against each of the NPPF 5 GB objectives) was also being finalised and a DtC meeting had been arranged with neighbouring authorities to share the findings and ensure consistency of approach and methodologies.</p> <p>Braintree (EG) Compiling a lot of evidence at the moment. Assessment work with Colchester and Chelmsford. I & O consultation out now, closing 5 pm Friday.</p> <p>Colchester (IV) I & O - consultation last Friday. Will be progressing that.</p> <p>Uttlesford (AT) Progressing again following the recent inspectors decision. Next big thing is SCI and SCR. Will go out to consultation on housing sites late summer.</p> <p>Harlow (DC) Waiting for transport models in order to understand the infrastructure</p>	

requirement then going back out to consultation again. Green belt – members met last night to look at criteria for judging sites around Harlow.

ECC (AC)

Work continuing on the Waste Plan. Work proceeding on Employment Land review - AC asked for authorities to be receptive when they receive requests from ECC policy team. Will be a relatively quick turnaround required.

Tendring (CB)

Work has slowed down but this has provided a good opportunity to update the evidence and may do a very quick I & O in the summer. Nothing new but has provided a chance to bring it all together. Third options consultation next year hopefully.

Maldon (SM)

Jan & Feb been looking at housing allocations - critical as part of DTC. Inspector has been very helpful in giving suggestions to make report sound. Going to publish report on 8th May. Dealing with lots of live applications. One area inspector refused to support examination until he had completed his full report on the local plan – currently writing his report up. Difficult few months. Not much activity on neighbourhood plans in Essex – can assist if anyone wants help.

Thurrock (RH)

In terms of consultancy, workshop being held next week with local authorities and members - early stage methodology. Thames Gateway - work has slowed down on that – it is a living document.- looking across the authorities on the key areas in terms of technical work. Greenbelt - Thurrock has finally got a core strategy. Local plan work on CIL and viability work is out of date and out of sync - about to go out to do various technical studies. Next stage is to take SLAAR forward. Our own draft DTC document has been delayed because of the local changes in circumstances, unlikely to come out until end of this month.

Chelmsford (JP)

Our DTC strategy going to committee on Thursday for approval on consultation and assessment methodology. Open space, retail - all on line, leading to I & O consultation in October.

Rochford (SS)

Working on open space new look plan but members want to delay until after election. Will happen shortly after that. Still working on CIL.

Brentwood (GG)

Working on I & O document - consultation ended on 7th Feb. Joint consultation with Basildon due to end on 17th - want to extend that. Green Belt review - have been taking some legal advice recently on technical rather than legal aspects.

11. Gypsy & Traveller site provision within Essex
AT reported that provision of two transit sites is required somewhere in Essex. No-one can move forward until these two sites are found. As a result of a meeting last week, the Police & Crime Commissioner is doing a piece of work in conjunction with Julie Ellis. AC reported that Cllr Hirst is

	keen for the sites to be identified – conversations currently going on.	
12.	<p>Update on Housing and Public Sector Land Project (Gwyn Owen) GO reported back on the activity since his presentation to EPOA in December 2014 (see presentation below)</p>  <p>Public Sector Land 2015-03-03 - EPOA.p</p> <p>So far GO reported site identification processes has been undertaken in Tendring, Southend, Braintree, Epping Forest and Rochford.</p> <p>AT asked if GO would be approaching the other authorities and GO explained that it was an open door for people to volunteer sites. He was hoping to reach everyone via this meeting. However, it was agreed it would be useful to have something in writing setting out the service, so GO will send letters to all the authorities. He explained they are benchmarking activities against the market and providing a service so there is a cost associated with it.</p>	GO
13.	<p>Feedback from Essex Directors of Place meeting IV explained there were a number of attendees but people had different definitions of the title 'Directors of Place'. Some were from the operational side, so there was a real mix of directors there. Conclusion was that the agenda should be set up front so the relative director could attend from each authority. There appeared to be a lack of willingness to come forward and arrange the next meeting.</p>	
14.	<p>Development Management Forum Minutes (16.1.15) Minutes were circulated prior to this meeting – nothing raised.</p>	
15.	<p>Planning Policy Forum Minutes (17.2.15) JP mentioned the demographic forecast - ongoing work. Household projections came through on Friday 27th Feb – only interim as key information from the Census is not available yet - more data to come.</p>	
16.	<p>AOB:</p> <p>16.1 ELAF letter – copy attached below. ELAF are asking EPOA members to remind their respective authorities to consider PROW during the planning process. They would also like to invite a guest speak from EPOA to attend one of their two monthly public meetings to talk about planning issues.</p> <p><i>Post meeting note: AC circulated a copy of the letter to all EPOA members.</i></p>  <p>letter from ELAF to EPOA 150302.pdf</p> <p>16.2 Wider South East Summit – AT mentioned a meeting on 19th March in London which all leaders are invited to attend. The reason for the meeting is for the Summit to consider and decide how to take forward joint discussions between London, East and South East England, to</p>	

	<p>explore mechanisms to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Understand common issues underpinning the economic future of London and the wider South East ii. Seek more effective engagement in the London Plan review iii. Seek more effective engagement on strategic infrastructure provision. <p>AT felt it was important that a leader/portfolio holder and/officer should attend from each authority as, if not, decisions will be taken without Essex representation – a collective view needs to be put forward.</p> <p>Post meeting note: AT circulated the agenda and papers to all EPOA members.</p>	
17.	<p>Items for future meetings</p> <p>Due to time restraints at the meeting, AC requested members to send any items, presentations or requests for guest speakers for future meetings to him by e-mail.</p>	ALL
18.	<p>Date of next meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thursday 4th June 2015 - Great Notley Discovery Centre 	