

## ESSEX DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT FORUM

Date: 17/07/15

Time: 10am

Venue: Chelmsford Museum, Oaklands Park

Attendance List:-

Nigel Richardson (NR) (Chair)	Epping Forest
Sarah Hill-Sanders (SHS)	Chelmsford
Mark Lawrence (ML)	Essex CC Highways
David Lewis (DL)	Basildon
Derek Walker	Tendring
Tessa Lambert	Braintree
Andrew Tyrrell (AT)	Colchester
Richard Greaves (RG)	Essex CC Waste & Minerals
Kat Goodyear	Essex CC Sustainable Drainage
Caroline McCaffery	Brentwood
Kate Rodgers	Rochford

## 1. Apologies for absence

Phil McIntosh - Southend-on Sea; Jonathan Keen - Thurrock; Nigel Brown - Uttlesford, Kim Fisher - Castle Point

## 2. Minutes

The minutes of meeting on 10/04/15 were agreed.

## 3. Matters arising

- a) **ML** informed that there is a draft highway element of the Essex Design Guide in circulation for consultation, particularly in respect of road types. Parking standards are also to be looked at. **AT** raised concerns that ECC have progressed documents that are now in the hands of agents and architects without any consultation with LPAs and that these have significant impacts. Concerns were shared by others around the table.
- b) **Epping** has defined when Vacant Building Credit is required in respect of exemption from affordable housing. **NR to send round.**

## 4. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) Update– Kat Goodyear (TS).

**KG** gave an update and would like to attend this meeting regularly so as to provide update briefings and seek feedback. Essex CC adopted SuDS by exception in the same way as the Highways Act. **KG** stated that they have about 10 standard conditions and she can forward these on. Also, they have a charging schedule for pre-apps that she can also forward.

## 5. Neighbourhood Plans

**RG** asked how we are all treating Neighbourhood Plans now NPG states that they are part of the statutory development plan. Not much discussion, as there are not sufficient number across the Essex authorities at present. Epping stated that 7 out of their 24 local council's had applied for and been granted

designation, but so far had only seen one draft NP which will soon be submitted for independent examination. We have advised on process and procedure matter.

## **6. Recruitment and Retention**

**RG** raised the issue of recruitment difficulties. Lack of undergraduate courses for Planners makes it difficult to get planning graduates. ARU only do a masters course, Similar recruitment issues in Herts who have done a study comparing staffing and salaries across their county. **RG** will raise support for similar for Essex at the main EPOA meeting in September.

**Braintree** had recently spent £10,000 on advertising for jobs which was successful and offered £1,200 market retention. **Chelmsford** provide internship. **Epping** had recruited planning officers with lower qualifications and concentrating more on experience to “hit the ground running”, but can offer training.

## **7. Mineral Safeguarding Issues**

**RG** reminded the Forum that Essex has a good supply of Mineral Safeguarding Areas. Currently working on a SPD and had run a pilot with **Chelmsford** which are looking now to role out.

## **8. ECC: Changes to small learning disabilities/care homes**

**AT** stated that ECC will no longer be funding property owners who have people with learning difficulties living together with some communal arrangements and each person that receives care will require a self-contained flat within the landlord's premises; that may require planning permission as a change of use.

## **9. High Speed Broadband Connections**

**AT** brought to the Forum's attention to letter from Brandon Lewis that Council's should ensure that all new-build properties granted through planning process have access to super-fast broadband, to avoid tenants having to struggle with poor

connectivity. Opportunity for Council's to address this at pre-planning application stage. It was agreed unanimously that conditions cannot be used to make any individual house be provided with a connection and that this was broader infrastructure levels.

## **10. Self-Build Register**

**NR** asked who in their Council's is compiling this, as **Epping Forest** has been asked by two individuals to add their name to it. The Forum did not consider this was a Development Management matter and should be part of a SPD for delivering custom and self-build housing in the Local Plan. Teignbridge District Council in South Devon has a draft SPD and has a Self Build Register of Interest.

## **11. File Destruction and Scanning**

**NR** outlined the vast amount of hard file and microfiche planning development control related scanning that Epping Forest had done over the last 5 years and are just about to start on Building Control, but running out of resources and therefore wondered if necessary to back scan all records. Some Council's had retained only the last 15 years of Building Control files, which lead onto a discussion regarding what hard copies do planning officers have when they are given a planning application to deal with. **Braintree and Colchester** only has a copy of the relevant plans in the case officers file, **Chelmsford** destroyed the file after the decision is made because all forms, plans etc. have been scanned. Basildon only retained the statutory required documents. **Colchester** has sent documents to the local Museum. Others destroyed after time period for appeal has gone.

## **12. Prior Approvals - Any Issues?**

No new issues, but questioned whether can agree an extension of time with the applicant/agent?

## **13. Interesting Appeal Decisions - 1 CLD appeal attached = Basildon**

**Colchester** showed a quashing order that they had been granted after they took the Planning Inspectorate to the High Court through JR.

**14. Planning News - Attached**

**15. Reports from Other Groups**

- a) EPOA – Minutes of 04-06-15 meeting were noted.
- b) Enforcement Liaison Group – next meeting in September.
- c) Essex Planning Administration officer forum – Minutes of previous meeting of 07-04-15 attached and noted.

**16. AOB**

- Ombudsman investigation brought to the Forum's attention by **AT** that it is not a statutory requirement for an officer to make a site visit to the property.

**17. Items for Next Agenda**

- PPA's
- Completion Notices

**18. Date of next meetings – Monday 19 October 2015**

- Friday 15 January 2016

All meetings at Chelmsford Museum – 10am start to 1pm