

ESSEX DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT FORUM

Date: 19/10/15

Time: 10am

Venue: Chelmsford Museum, Oaklands Park

Attendance List:-

Nigel Richardson (Chair & Minutes)	Epping Forest
Sarah Hill-Sanders	Chelmsford
Mark Lawrence	Essex CC Highways
Derek Walker	Tendring
Tessa Lambert	Braintree
Andrew Tyrrell	Colchester
Richard Greaves	Essex CC Waste & Minerals
Kat Goodyear	Essex CC Sustainable Drainage
Tim Simpson	Essex CC Sustainable Drainage
Kate Rodgers	Rochford
Andrew Jarrett	Harlow
Karen Denmark	Uttlesford,
Kim Fisher	Castle Point
Jonathan Keen	Thurrock

1. Apologies for absence

Caroline McCaffery	Brentwood
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2. Minutes

The minutes of meeting on 10/07/15 were agreed.

3. Matters arising

ML stated that there was no further update in respect of draft parking standards and DM policies, neither the Essex Design Guide draft, which are all still to go out to consultation.

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

KG - 6 months in and she has written to each authority for an individual meet to see how its progressing. She will send standard conditions and a link to their website. They are turning around about 15 consultations a week. Concern though that awareness of need to submit SuDS is not being picked up by developers. Open to suggestions how this can be made more aware. Councils also consider service level agreement re: non-statutory drainage matters.

Action: KG to resend standard conditions and link to website for SuDS requirements

5. Air Quality Management Areas

TL asked if any Essex authority has a AQMA.

KD - One in Saffron Walden, which is large AQMA and asked the developer to do a air quality management assessment. - worked closely with the Env. Health Officer.

AT stated Colchester has a few AQMAs, one example of an issue caused being a development site near roundabout where the Environmental Health Officer asked for housing development to be set back from the road; however, this caused conflict with Essex Design Guide and streetscene. They also wanted no opening windows on the front elevation.

6. Recruitment and Retention

RG has asked other authorities to provide info of staff details, which some have done, but asked the others to provide asap so that he could take the item to main EPOA meeting and then distribute the information.

Asked what recruitment methods were being used: Some examples:- Braintree have “additional payments” for planning officers; Tendring had recruited and trained up non-planner graduates and a former committee clerk; Chelmsford and Rochford have career-grade planning posts which is good motivator for progression, which he had raised the issue of recruitment difficulties. Gaining RTPI Technical Membership was also highlighted.

7. District Planning Authorities Performance

AT sent around Table P120 of District Council performance over the last 10 years and whilst this covers the years of economic peak, the downturn, streamlining etc, the percentage of planning approvals has only increased by 5% and whilst majors dealt with in time are up by 21%, there are less applications received and decided in the same time. Very little change over the same period for Minors and Others. Questioned whether there had been improvement overall in terms of speed from the Government changes.

8. Intentional Unauthorised Development or Not

Dear Chief Planning Officer letter of 31-08-15, which makes intentional unauthorised development a material consideration in the determination of all new planning applications and appeals since this date. Seems to be a follow on from enforcement/deception/proceeds of crime act.

Questioned whether there would be any issued guidance by the Government on how to define weight of this against other material considerations and policies. General feeling was that it will be given very little weight in deciding a planning applications. Most likely cases would be retrospective applications where there is blatant ignoring of enforcement notice. Magistrates Courts are generally ignorant when it comes to planning.

9. Planning Performance Agreements

Being more regularly used. Colchester has a Charter and Template available on their website.

10. Completion Notices

Not clear why these were put forward at last meeting as an item, but think it is related to extension of times, which appears to be being used regularly when required throughout the authorities.

11. Prior Approvals - Any Issues?

AJ - Harlow have had some issues with a couple of prior approval changes of use from office to residential - one had planning permission for 2 extra floors, whilst the other case was a conversion only but it did not have a cross-section and showed floor areas that did not exist.

12. Interesting Appeal Decisions - None

13. Planning News - Attached

AT added that changes to Part G (Water Efficiency) and Part M (Access) of Building Regs means LPA's can have a local standard through planning policy if can justify a local reason. See link:

http://www.labc.co.uk/sites/default/files/content/building_regulation_update_2015_final.pdf

15. Reports from Other Groups -

- a) EPOA – Minutes of 03-09-15 meeting were noted.
- b) Enforcement Liaison Group – next meeting to be arranged - not clear who is doing this, but comment made that topics are few and regular meeting not required.
- c) Essex Planning Administration officer forum – Next meeting in December 2015.

16. AOB

Appears to be some resource issues in respect of DM Highway advice in northern part of Essex. **ML** stated that they are looking at the possibility of introducing pre-app charging for highway advice. **KG** confirmed that SuDS team has brought this in and paying for resource.

Duty Officer - Rochford no longer have one but have customer survey team. Thurrock have also closed there duty officer reception down. Harlow do not have one either. Braintree have phone duty only. Colchester have a call-centre, with duty planners only operating in the afternoon. Epping still have a duty system but looking to centralise reception for Council - currently have a separate planning reception with morning duty officer.

Home Working - Epping's CE is very keen. Colchester is home-working and office space does not have room for all staff. AT stated that you need to be very organised in terms of site visits, dealing with customers, team meetings, phone calls etc. Also need hardware up to spec. and they use generic in-box. However it does work well.

RG reminded all that if you have an AD facility (Renewable Energy) please consult ECC. If District Authority deal with it, you need to put on a condition requiring from feed to waste.

Water Companies looking to put up solar panels, but has to be operational land to be permitted development.

TL advertised a Biodiversity in Planning Conference that is to be held at Braintree offices. It is free and a full day on December 4th. Copy attached.

Action: TL to send details around.

TS - Brownfield discharge surface water runoff rates back to Greenfield rates being questioned by developers as no extra harm caused. No pre-April guidance available.

17. Items for Next Agenda

- Presentation by Design South East - design review in East of England.

18. Date of next meetings – Friday 15 January 2016

Chelmsford Museum, Oaklands Park – 10am