

## LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE 17 DECEMBER 2012

*Present :-* Councillor Bill Frame (Chairman)  
Councillors Elizabeth Blundell, Andrew Ellis,  
Martin Goss, John Jowers and Kim Naish

*Substitute Member :-* Councillor Nick Cope for Councillor Colin Sykes

### 16. Have Your Say!

Louisa White, addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3) in respect of sustainable development. She was principally concerned about the development currently under construction on the Severalls site and the apparent lack of appropriate arrangements for drainage. She had also noted a large mound of earth which was nearly three quarters the height of the houses. She had contacted the Council about these matters but there did not appear to be any improvement in the situation.

Members of the Committee confirmed Mrs White's observation of the pile of earth which was located adjacent to residents' houses. It was understood that the earth would be moved by March 2013. In respect of the absence of drainage, members believed that it was rainwater which was being discharged into fields and not sewage and that relevant council officers were aware of the situation which was under investigation.

### 17. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 October 2012 were confirmed as a correct record.

### 18. Tiptree Jam Factory Plan // Development Plan Document

**Councillor Jowers (in respect of being a member of Essex County Council with a Cabinet responsibility for Communities and Planning) declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).**

The Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration submitted a report on the draft Tiptree Jam Factory Plan Supplementary Planning Document together with the report on the examination into the Tiptree Jam Factory Plan and the draft Development Plan Document. The Committee was requested to agree to recommend to Council that the Tiptree Jam Factory Plan Development Plan Document be adopted in accordance with Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).

Laura Chase, Planning Policy Manager, and Karen Syrett, Spatial Policy Manager, attended to assist the Committee with its deliberations.

Paul Munson, Melville Dunbar Associates, addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3) on behalf of Wilkins and Sons. He wished to thank members and council officers for their support, guidance and advice in enabling the company's proposals for a new factory in Tiptree to be supported through the Local Plan. The Inspector's report gave a resounding endorsement of the Council's approach and he urged the Committee to approve the officer recommendation for the Plan to be submitted for approval at the next Council meeting. The Council's approval would enable the company to bring forward its planning applications early in 2013.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the ten main amendments to the Plan had come forward through the process. All the issues had received a thorough airing at the two-day examination including the financial justification and requirement for supporting infrastructure. The Plan would provide the Council with guidelines for conditions in any subsequent planning applications.

Members of the Committee fully endorsed both the process and the draft Development Plan Document. There were some concerns regarding whether the intended highways infrastructure would be appropriate for the levels of vehicle movements and it was hoped that council officers would have a dialogue with the Highway Authority to ensure the formulation of proper arrangements. In response to a query on whether there would be any charging schedule for the development, the Spatial Policy Manager explained that there was no charging schedule in place at the current time.

*RECOMMENDED to COUNCIL (UNANIMOUSLY) that –*

(a) The Tiptree Jam Factory Plan Development Plan Document be adopted as recommended by the Inspector in accordance with Section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).

(b) The Spatial Policy Manager be authorised to deal with all the necessary adoption documentation and other consequential matters in accordance with the appropriate regulations.

## **19. Colchester Local List**

The Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration submitted a report on a review of the Colchester Local List, together with proposed formal procedures in relation to making changes to the List, and whether any necessary changes were required to the Council's Constitution.

Karen Syrett, Spatial Policy Manager, attended to assist the Committee with its deliberations. She stated that it was intended that the term 'Colchester Local List' would encompass the whole geographical area within the Borough Council's area of responsibility. The List would be reviewed annually in March to determine the need to

add or delete properties or amend descriptions of properties. In response to queries she reminded members that whilst the document was a consideration in assessing planning applications, it had limited weight, although there had been examples where the weight had been significant enough to have had an impact on a planning decision. She also explained that the initial survey had been carried out by volunteers and any cost to the Council as a result of a review would be in terms of officer time required to make any changes to the list and to transfer the information onto the Council's Geographical Information System. She agreed to send a copy of the criteria used for determining which properties would be included on the list to the members of this Committee.

Members of the Committee noted that the website was not easy to navigate and it was hoped that improvements would be made in due course.

*RESOLVED* (UNANIMOUSLY) that –

(a) It be noted that in this review no buildings on the Colchester Local List had been altered to the point where its architectural or historic interest has been lost nor had any buildings been demolished, therefore no changes would be made to the Colchester Local List.

(b) The procedures to enable new assets to be added to the Colchester Local List and existing assets to be removed from the Colchester Local List be approved and any necessary changes be made to the Council's Constitution.

## 20. Better Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document

**Councillor Jowers (in respect of being a member of Essex County Council with a Cabinet responsibility for Communities and Planning) declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).**

The Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration submitted a report on the Better Town Centre Plan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) together with the draft SPD for approval and adoption. The document was intended to set out the Council's aspirations and plans for the town centre and provide a guiding framework for a range of initiatives which were described within the document.

Laura Chase, Planning Policy Manager, attended to assist the Committee with its deliberations. She explained that the document before the Committee was substantially the version circulated at the meeting in June.

Members of the Committee made the following observations on the proposed document:-

- Some of the content represented a huge step change which many people may not like;
- Closing off the High Street could cause congestion elsewhere;

- The town needed a transport system that worked efficiently;
- People need to get into the town centre which would require somewhere to park their car;
- If people found it difficult to get near the town centre they may go elsewhere;
- Disappointment that no progress had been made on the Park and Ride facility;
- The prohibition of cars carrying disabled people to the High Street was an issue;
- The removal of Colchester Borough Council Customer Services Centre from the High Street may impact on footfall;
- The possible use of upper floors in buildings along the High Street for residential purposes was also discussed.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that this SPD expands on how existing Local Plan policies could be applied and explains the ambitions for the town to stay active, alive and important.

In response to a comment from the Committee that planning documents seem to focus on the central part of the town and something comparable was needed to address problems encountered by local centres in rural areas, the Spatial Policy Manager explained that documents tend to focus on growth which is located in the urban parts of the Borough . There are however other documents which relate specifically to the needs and aspirations of smaller settlements and the open countryside between those settlements. Examples include Parish Plans, Village Design Statements, Development Briefs and Rural Workers Guidance.

*RESOLVED* (UNANIMOUSLY) that the draft Better Town Centre Plan Supplementary Planning Document be approved and adopted.

## 21. Annual Monitoring Report

**Councillor Jowers (in respect of being a member of Essex County Council with a Cabinet responsibility for Communities and Planning) declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).**

The Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration submitted a report inviting the Committee to approve the 2011-2012 Annual Monitoring Report for publication on the Council's website.

Laura Chase, Planning Policy Manager, and Karen Syrett, Spatial Policy Manager, attended to assist the Committee with its deliberations.

Members of the Committee considered the Annual Monitoring Report to be a very useful document.

*RESOLVED* (UNANIMOUSLY) that the 2011-2012 Annual Monitoring Report be approved for publication on the Council's website.

## 22. Statement of Community Involvement

**Councillor Jowers (in respect of being a member of Essex County Council with a Cabinet responsibility for Communities and Planning) declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).**

The Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration submitted a report inviting the Committee to approve the draft Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for publication for a six week consultation period.

Karen Syrett, Spatial Policy Manager, and Laura Chase, Planning Policy Manager, attended to assist the Committee with its deliberations. The Planning Policy Manager explained that the document submitted to the Committee was a draft for consultation. The original SCI document was published in 2005 and it had been updated regularly since then. It was last updated in 2011, but since then the National Planning Policy Framework had been introduced and the text had been shortened to make it easier to use.

Pete Hewitt, Myland Community Councillor, addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3). The objectives of the Statement of Community Involvement were clear. It was important to have a dialogue with community groups, some of which is under way and in Myland it is working in practice with monthly planning liaison meetings. He recognised that this Statement of Community Involvement was a draft in preparation for consultation. He commented that the Community Infrastructure Levy was vital for local communities, but the draft statement did not appear to involve parish or community councils at this stage. He believed that parish or community councils should be invited for discussions on the Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 Agreements. He was also of the opinion that the current public speaking arrangements at the Planning Committee permit one speaker in opposition to an application which was wholly impractical, especially for large applications. On occasions three speakers are permitted in support and in opposition to the application and this enables a greater range of speakers to have a voice. He suggested that paragraph 5.22 be amended to reflect the practice.

Members of the Committee supported Mr Hewitt's suggested amendment to paragraph 5.22 so that the Chairman's discretion was reflected in the text. They also requested that Vuncent Pearce, Development Services Manager, be invited to attend the next meeting to discuss the issue of member call-in of planning applications. Members also highlighted some of the organisations which appeared to be either irrelevant or non-existent– The Mayor of London or the Coal Board for example.

The Spatial Policy Manager updated the Committee on the situation with the Community Infrastructure Levy. Further regulations on CIL were still awaited although some had been published within the last week additional regulations were expected on the amount of the Levy which would be passed to Town and Parish Councils. Where there was no parish or community council, it would be possible for local residents to form themselves into a neighbourhood forum which could fulfil the same role as parish

or community councils for this purpose. The Planning Policy Manager explained that the list of consultees was prescribed and there was no alternative. The current list reflected the organisations that councils were currently required to consult.

*RESOLVED* (UNANIMOUSLY) that the Statement of Community Involvement be approved for publication for a six week consultation period.