

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK COMMITTEE  
1 FEBRUARY 2010**

*Present :-* Councillor Nick Cope (Chairman)  
Councillors Elizabeth Blundell, Robert Davidson,  
Christopher Garnett, Martin Goss, Chris Hall,  
John Jowers and Kim Naish

*Also in Attendance :-* Councillor Nick Barlow

**Councillor Christopher Garnett (in respect of his membership of Langham Parish Council) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

**18. Have Your Say!**

Parish Councillor Tony Ellis, Chairman of Langham Parish Council Planning Sub-Committee, addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3). The parish council is concerned at the procedures for the submission of the site allocations document to the Planning Inspector. The Committee signed off the document for consultation in September and invited comments on whether the document was sound or unsound and provided supporting documents. This should not have been an opportunity to submit further proposals which have been passed to the Planning Inspector without the opportunity for people to comment upon them. This is a way of offering up additional proposals which should have been included by the 2009 deadline and on this basis they should not have been passed to the Inspector.

Members of the Committee questioned whether parish and borough councillors would have an opportunity to comment on such sites and requested that the Spatial Policy Team look at whether any other parishes were similarly affected.

Karen Syrett, Spatial Policy Manager, agreed with Parish Councillor Ellis. She explained that the process had changed recently by the introduction of a consultation stage immediately prior to the submission stage and she reassured him that his comments would be made known to the Inspector, particularly because land has not been allocated in Langham on the site proposals map and any new proposals will be resisted. This situation was slightly different because the parish council were in agreement with the Council's proposals for Langham. The Inspector has asked for a draft list of who will attend the hearing sessions, so where sites in Langham are included

she will be asking for either the borough councillor or a parish councillor representative to be part of the team for that discussion and to be able to attend in their own right. If that is not permitted she will ensure the views of the parish council are made known and requested that any comments be passed to her.

## **19. Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 28 September 2009 and 12 November 2009 were confirmed as a correct record.

**Councillor Kim Naish (in respect of being a private hire driver) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

**Councillor Nick Barlow (in respect of being a resident in North Station Road) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

**Councillor Martin Goss (in respect of his membership of Myland Parish Council) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

**Councillor John Jowers (in respect of his memberships of Essex County Council for which he is also the Cabinet member with responsibility for planning; the East of England Regional Planning Panel; the Regional Flood Defence Committee; the National Urban Design Commission; and the Essex Rural Communities Commission) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

## **20. Colchester North Station Master Plan - Supplementary Planning Document**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration together with the draft Colchester North Station Master Plan Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The Committee was requested to comment on the draft SPD and then to delegate authority to the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration to make minor amendments to the draft document, including the changes listed in Section 6 of the report, prior to the formal public consultation stage as prescribed by Regulation 17 of the Town

and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.

Karen Syrett, Spatial Policy Manager, and James Firth, Planning Policy Officer, attended to assist the Committee in its deliberations.

Patrick Mills, Chairman of Myland Parish Council, addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3). He asked the Committee to reject the draft master plan on the grounds that it lacked ambition, vision, imagination and aspiration. He believed that the terms of reference should encourage officers to strive for ambition and creativity. He was concerned about the lack of progression on traffic management at North Station which is very congested at peak times, and the prospect of further housing developments to the north of the town yet to be built which will lead to more traffic. He considered that the master plan offered only short term fixes and no long term solutions; that the street scene proposals were disappointing with little prospect of improvements to the gateway to Colchester from the Station. He was also concerned at the lack of consideration given to compulsory purchase which should be raised and discussed.

Karen Syrett urged the Committee to agree to the consultation to gather a wider set of views. She disagreed that the document only offered short term measures because it took a long term look traffic solutions and gave a good impression of how things could look in the future.

Councillor Barlow, Castle Ward, attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Committee. He considered that it was important that the consultation reaches as wide an audience as possible, particularly in an area such as this which is trying to create a sense of community. He also considered it important to look at priorities because the available resources will not be able to deliver everything, including traffic and transport. He considered the priority areas to be pedestrian and cycling links.

Members of the Committee made a number of observations, including:-

- traffic congestion in the area at peak times and at weekends was raised as a major issue in the area but did not appear to be included in the document for people to comment on. This should be rectified before it goes out for consultation,
- there may be a further traffic impact once the A12 junction is completed, and developments to the north of the town would result in more traffic in the area,
- there has been talk of changing the roundabout at North Station and even the rail bridge being widened, but these issues were not in the document. The roundabout at North Station should be completely redesigned,

- the appearance of the North Station area is very poor as the main gateway from the main rail station to the town and needs improving; a covered walkway and cycle way from the station to the bridge were suggested. People with disabilities comment that North Station is impossible for them to use. Serious consideration should be given to the amount of parking at North Station, and to the distance between the station and the car park. The reason for the underuse of the car park was likely to be the high cost,
- there is a lack of parking in this area generally,
- partnership working with Network Rail, the bus companies and Essex County Council would be important for the masterplan,
- neither the park and ride nor the new A12 junction have been built, so people would be consulted on something without knowing the outcome. The park and ride facility in Chelmsford was being used by commuters to access the rail station,
- whilst bus and cycle facilities were supported, it should be recognised that people would still need a car to access other facilities. Buses were inadequate, expensive and unreliable and it is cheaper to take a family of four into town by car,
- the consultation would highlight the issues and traffic modelling would be inevitable, but that could take 3-4 months. There was support for a delay to enable traffic modelling if the work would provide a practical solution. There was a query on whether a consultation on a proposed solution could be done without first knowing whether the solution was workable,
- the Albert roundabout: the money spent here has not necessarily made the area pedestrian friendly; there was a request for shared space at this roundabout,
- there was support for better use of the underpasses under the railway track which needed to be improved. It was suggested that traffic could access the Cowdray Centre and the leisure centre via an underpass but a new road would require the co-operation of the rail company and its viability was questioned. This scenario was not mentioned,
- there was support for the sections on trees, the permeability of Cowdray Avenue, pedestrian access and cycle facilities,
- the document should contain a clear annotation so that consultees are aware that the Committee placed great importance to the management of traffic movements. As it is it does not give enough emphasis to traffic movements,
- the language in the document was an issue. The final document should be a well designed, thoughtful solution, and the basis of a thorough consultation. Every effort should be made to ask the right questions, to ensure that every resident in Colchester has an opportunity to respond, and due consideration should be given to responses.

Karen Syrett assured the Committee that Essex County Council have been involved from the outset; appointing consultants, steering group meetings and traffic modelling which will help inform the consultation. She confirmed that the public would be asked about traffic and that the road link between the Cowdray Centre and Turner Rise was mentioned in the document which would be amended to illustrate it prior to the consultation process. She also confirmed that the public would be asked about traffic and that Paul Wilkinson had been working with partners, particularly with the railway companies on the Station Travel Plan. She explained that the car park at North Station was not used to capacity so there was no justification for increasing it, but there may be better ways of utilising the land. The council would not want to spend too much money on traffic modelling when the results of the consultation could influence what the council wanted to model.

Paul Wilkinson explained that this was a very complex area in terms of transport and land use. The whole street scene from building line to building line will be under consideration. In terms of utilising the space, this would be an ambitious plan containing radical proposals. Bus priorities would be high profile in the plan and would link developments in the north through to the town centre. There were many pedestrian and cycle movements out of the railway station and a lot of short trips made by car when other modes of transport were available. Currently the street space does not work very well for anyone. There was a wish to see Network Rail take the space around the three buildings more seriously.

*RESOLVED* (ONE voted AGAINST) that –

(a) The Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration be authorised to make minor amendments to the draft Colchester North Station Master Plan Supplementary Planning Document prior to the public consultation, including the changes listed in section 6 to the report and the proposed annotation regarding the committee's view that not enough emphasis has been given to traffic management in the document.

(b) The amended draft Colchester North Station Master Plan Supplementary Planning Document be progressed to the formal public consultation stage as prescribed by Regulation 17 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.

**Councillor John Jowers (in respect of his memberships of Essex County Council for which he is also the Cabinet member with responsibility for planning; the East of England Regional Planning Panel; the Regional Flood Defence Committee; the National Urban Design Commission; and the Essex**

**Rural Communities Commission) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

**Councillor Robert Davidson (in respect of much of Pyfleet ward being coastline) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

## **21. Draft Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan (SMP)**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration together with the draft Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan (SMP). The Environment Agency as lead authority for the SMP project is seeking to secure partner support for the SMP prior to it being released for public consultation from 15 March to 18 June 2010. It is considered appropriate to report the document to the Committee prior to public consultation to provide an opportunity for the Committee to inform the Council's response to the formal public consultation. Following the consultation, the document will be amended by the Environment Agency and the intention is to publish the final SMP towards the end of 2010.

Beverley McClean, Coast and Countryside Planner, attended to assist the Committee in its deliberations.

The Committee were supportive of the SMP. The development of an SMP was not a statutory requirement but certain issues will fall into statutory areas, such as the Marine Bill, inter-coastal zone management and nature reserves. It has a significant resonance with climate change issues. There have been a number of debates and consultations and each one has been very well attended. The SMP will not impact on the Colchester Borough Council area as much as other areas. Whilst new walls would be built in some areas, it was understood that new armoured wall was not sustainable and costly. It was noted that West Mersea Town has no sea defences and there was a request that Mersea Island, and Cobmarsh Island in particular, be given more prominence. The Management Plan looks forward 100 years and will link into the strategic management plans. Beverley McClean was congratulated on her input to the Management Plan.

*RESOLVED* (UNANIMOUSLY) that –

- (a) The Committee's comments be forwarded to the Environment Agency for consideration.
- (b) The draft Essex and South Suffolk Shoreline Management Plan be endorsed for the purpose of a public consultation process.