

LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE

29 JULY 2013

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

5. Have Your Say!

Mr Mike Hardy, addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3) in respect of the Local List. He made reference to two previous planning applications involving locally listed buildings, one for a plastic window replacement, which was refused and one for the Drury Arms extension, which was approved. He was concerned that a precedent had been set which would allow any fashion of extension on locally listed buildings, as long as it did not interfere with the existing structure. He requested that guidance be published on what protection is provided to locally listed buildings, with regards to planning applications.

Ms Karen Syrett, Spatial Policy Manager, responded that this was something that could be considered and stated that she would discuss the prospect with the Planning Projects Team.

6. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 11 March 2013, 22 May 2013 and 3 June 2013 were confirmed as a correct record.

7. Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan Area

Councillor Frame (in respect of his position as non-executive director of Colne Housing), Councillor Jowers (in respect of his being an Essex County Council Cabinet Member with Strategic Plan responsibility and a Statutory Strategic Plan Consultee) and Councillor Naish (in respect of his role on the Environment Agency, Anglian Trust and East of England Fresh Water Forum) declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).

The Head of Commercial Services submitted a report requesting the formal approval of the Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan Area. A map of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan area and the application letter are attached as Appendices to the report.

Ms Karen Syrett, Spatial Policy Manager, attended to assist the Committee with its deliberations.

The Committee inquired about the remit of the Marine Management Organisation. It was suggested that a report on the matter be provided to the next meeting of this

Committee.

It was explained that the Ward Boundary Review would not affect the Neighbourhood Plan Area's.

RESOLVED that the Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan Area be approved.

8. West Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan Area

Councillor Frame (in respect of his position as non-executive director of Colne Housing) and Councillor Jowers (in respect of his being an Essex County Council Cabinet Member with Strategic Plan responsibility and a Statutory Strategic Plan Consultee) declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).

The Head of Commercial Services submitted a report to formally designate the West Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan Area as set out by Section 61G of Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Localism Act 2011). A map of the proposed Neighbourhood Plan area and the application letter were attached as Appendices to the report.

Mr Mark Edgerley, Planning Policy Officer, attended to assist the Committee with its deliberations.

Councillor Harrington attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Committee. He explained that the Neighbourhood Plan Area included the whole Parish in order to create a coherent development policy. He highlighted the importance of the Parish being able to influence its own development. He explained that a Steering Group had been set up in order to lead the Neighbourhood Plan development process.

In response to a query raised by the Committee, Ms Karen Syrett, Spatial Policy Manager, explained that they were currently able to aid the Parish Council's with their Neighbourhood Plan applications, however, if many Parish Council's applied at one time the team would struggle.

RESOLVED that the West Bergholt Neighbourhood Plan Area as set out by Section 61G of Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Localism Act 2011) be formally designated.

9. Draft Submission Focused Review of the Adopted Colchester Borough Local Plan

Councillor Jowers (in respect of his being an Essex County Council Cabinet Member with Strategic Plan responsibility and a Statutory Strategic Plan Consultee) declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).

The Head of Commercial Services submitted a report which sought agreement from the Committee of the content of the Draft Submission Focused Review, that the document and supporting information be published in order for representations to be made, that the review be submitted to Government for examination and that authority be delegated to the Spatial Policy Manager to make any minor revisions. The Draft Submission Focused Review document was attached as Appendix One to the report. An additional document was tabled at the meeting detailing policies in relation to Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople.

Ms Laura Chase, Planning Policy Manager, attended to assist the Committee with its deliberations. She explained that after a 6 week consultation from the 5 August to 16 September, the focused review would be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate who would appoint an Inspector to carry out an Examination in Public. She explained that this was a focused review only to ensure the Council's policies were fit for purpose.

Councillor Chillingworth attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Committee. He explained that he was speaking from his roles as a rural Ward Councillor and a Planning Consultant. He drew particular attention to Centres and Employment Policies (Appendix A to the report, p27), suggesting that "(E) Expansion of an existing business" should finish, "on to open countryside", for greater clarity. He also suggested several alterations to Housing Policies (Appendix A to the report, p37), which he would provide in writing.

Members of the Committee considered each of the topic areas of the focused review separately.

Planning Contributions/Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and Community Facilities

The Committee questioned what progress had been made regarding the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy charging schedule. The Spatial Policy Manager explained that the Council were not proceeding with it at the moment due to viability issues and that it was their intent to react to any national action made.

Centres and Employment

The Committee suggested that clarity would be needed when establishing which policies applied to different types of Centres.

Housing

The Committee commented that a requirement of 20% affordable housing rather than 35% was more practical in the current economic climate. It was suggested that this may result in greater affordable housing in the area, as more developers would be able to deliver at this level.

It was agreed that Councillor Chillingworth's suggestions were supported and would be circulated to Officers to include in the Draft Submission.

Energy

The Committee discussed the disadvantages of ‘expecting’ residential dwellings to achieve a level 4 rating within the Code for Sustainable Homes and zero carbon emissions. It was believed that this would place a significant financial burden on developers.

It was agreed that the word “expected” would be replaced with the word “encouraged”.

Gypsies, Travellers, and Travelling Showpeople

The Planning Policy Manager explained that this policy had been added to the focused review as the Planning Inspector had advised Chelmsford City Council to amend their policy in such a manner.

It was agreed that the phrase “Gypsies and Travellers” in the final paragraph would be replaced with “Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople”.

RESOLVED that –

- (i) the content of the Draft Submission Focus Review be agreed, subject to the additions discussed above;
- (ii) the document and supporting information, including the Sustainability Appraisal, be published and made available in order for representations relating to issues of soundness to be made;
- (iii) the Submission Focus Review subsequently be submitted to the Government for examination; and
- (iv) authority be delegated to the Spatial Policy Manager to make minor revisions to the document prior to publication and submission.

10. Tollgate Framework Vision

Councillor Jowers (in respect of his acquaintance with three Tollgate landowners his being an Essex County Council Cabinet Member with Strategic Plan responsibility and a Statutory Strategic Plan Consultee) declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).

The Head of Commercial Services submitted a report requesting that the Committee note the Tollgate Framework Vision, which had been prepared by landowners in the Tollgate area of Stanway to provide a guiding framework for future development in a key Urban District Centre and Strategic Employment Zone. The Tollgate Framework Vision document was attached as Appendix One to the report.

Ms Laura Chase, Planning Policy Manager, attended to assist the Committee with its

deliberations.

Councillor Colin Sykes attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Committee. He asked the Committee to welcome the Tollgate Framework Vision. He claimed that this was a good example of land owners and developers talking with Councillors, Planning Officers and the public. He explained that this was a framework and was only the beginning of a longer process. He suggested that the framework followed on from the Parish Plan and allowed for a much more flexible approach than the previous Core Strategy.

Councillor Laura Sykes attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Committee. She highlighted the similarities of the Framework to the Parish Plan with regards to shopping, leisure, the environment and flexibility. She spoke of previous developments in Tollgate and underlined the need for a bus interchange in the area. She emphasised the point that Tollgate was of a different nature to the Town Centre and aimed to complement the Town Centre, rather than compete with it. In response to Members' queries, she explained that space for sports facilities would be provided.

The Committee were encouraged by the Framework document and were impressed with the work that had been put in. It was suggested that the document would allow the development of the Tollgate area to be more transparent to the public. Several Members were, however, hesitant to believe that the development wouldn't detract from the Town Centre.

RESOLVED that the Tollgate Framework Vision be noted.