

# LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK COMMITTEE

## 11 AUGUST 2008

*Present :-* Councillor Nick Cope (Chairman)  
Councillors Robert Davidson, Martin Goss,  
John Jowers, Kim Naish and Terry Sutton

*Substitute Members :-* councillor Lissimore for Councillor Christopher Garnett  
councillor Barton for Councillor Henry Spyvee

### 3. Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 17 March and 14 May 2008 were confirmed as a correct record, subject to the interests declared for minute no. 21 of the meeting held on 17 March 2008 being amended to read as follows:-

"Councillors Jowers (in respect of his membership of Essex County Council), Turrell (in respect of her memberships of Essex County Council and Myland Parish Council) and J. Young (in respect of her membership of Essex County Council) each declared their individual personal interests in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)."

Councillor Lewis attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Committee in respect of the third paragraph of minute no. 21 of the meeting held on 17 March 2008. Subsequent to that meeting she had learned that the parcel of land in Landseer Road which she had believed was in Christ Church Ward had in fact been correctly identified in the report as being in Lexden Ward.

**Councillor John Jowers (in respect of his role as an Essex County Council Cabinet member for Planning, and his membership of the Regional Planning Panel) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

### 4. Local Development Framework - Update

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration providing an update on progress of the Council's Local Development Framework which provides the planning framework for the future development of Colchester.

Mrs Louisa White addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3). She had ongoing concerns about the congestion in Mile End which she believed was generated from the increase in housing in the area. She also had ongoing concerns about the lack of facilities and infrastructure such as the bus lane on the Northern Approach Road (NAR) and the park and ride facility. Whilst she was not against the Haven Gateway in the long term she was concerned about any impact on Mile End as a result of any additional growth required. Another concern was in respect of the locational annotations on the maps included in the Core Strategy document. It was her view that Mile End was in the centre of an area which had

received a great deal of new housing, but some of the maps included in the Core Strategy document made no mention of Mile End whilst other areas such as Braiswick, Highwoods and Colchester Hospital, not subjected to so much development had been mentioned. Colchester Community Stadium was indicated as being near the A12 or near Cuckoo Farm and again she considered that it was appropriate to mention its proximity to Mile End.

Karen Syrett, Spatial Policy Manager, and Paul Wilkinson, Transportation Policy Manager, attended to assist the Committee in its deliberations. In response to Mrs White, it was explained that in terms of infrastructure detailed work had been undertaken and submitted as part of the Core Strategy. It was hoped that further detailed work would be undertaken to supplement the work already done in time for the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy next year. It was regretted that Mrs White felt that Mile End was not mentioned sufficiently. In respect of the progress of the Core Strategy document, the Council was waiting to see whether the Inspector would make any comments or recommended any changes to the document.

It was explained that the Local Development Framework (LDF) was a different document from its predecessor, the Local Plan, which had been 'saved' until it has been replaced by documents in the LDF. The LDF comprised a number of documents which were at varying stages in the consultation process. Members of the Committee expressed concerns about the amount of consultation undertaken and the Government had recognised that the amount of consultation being undertaken was disproportionate in some instances; consequently it was seeking to streamline the process. However in respect of controversial issues there would remain the need for an appropriate level of consultation to be undertaken.

The Core Strategy was a borough wide strategic document which could be compared to the County Structure Plan. Preferred Options for the Site Allocations document and the Development Policies document would be considered by the Committee later this year and then there would follow a further round of consultation. The Site Allocations document would identify sites for housing, employment land, etc. The Development Policies document would include all the detailed policies against which applications for planning permission would be decided. The North Station Development Brief was a new piece of work on an area around North Station and extending to the Cowdray Centre. The timetable for the North Station Development Brief had slipped because it had been considered important to ensure it was a comprehensive piece of work by including elements such as the public realm, links into the town centre and to reflect Colchester's recent Cycling Town status.

There was a degree of frustration from some members of the Committee in respect of earlier expectations of the Northern Approach Road (NAR) and elements such as the A12 junction, the bus lane, the park and ride and the prevention of access roads onto the NAR, all of which had been in the Local Plan but appeared not to have been achieved. The expectation now was that the A12 junction would be done first and then the bus lane put in place. It was explained that the Local Plan documents would carry through to 2011 so that everything that had not been completed would be taken forward as part of the Core Strategy and Site Allocations document; they were likely to be delivered but over a longer time period.

In respect of the A12 junction, Colchester had been shortlisted for a partial funding from the Community Infrastructure Fund for £10.2 million of the proposed new junction which would fund the bridge, two roundabouts and the four slip roads. The total cost would be approximately £24 million and the balance of nearly £14 million, to provide for the rest of the link roads southwards to connect with the existing NAR and for the implementation of the busway, would need to be funded by developers as part of Section 106 agreements attached to developments in that part of the borough.

Essex has been allocated 32% of the total Community Infrastructure Fund available across the country and this substantial proportion reflects the level of growth which the county has accepted, and recognises the amount of infrastructure required to support that additional housing. The next step would be to submit a business case based on sources of additional funding being identified in order for the award to be taken up. The business case would be developed in conjunction with Essex County Council and other major partners. There is a limited period of 2 years, to 2011, in which to identify sources of the additional funding. Members of the Committee acknowledged the work undertaken by officers at Colchester Borough Council and Essex County Council who put forward the schemes which would benefit from the funding.

*RESOLVED* that the progress of the Council's Local Development Framework be noted.

**Councillor John Jowers (in respect of his role as an Essex County Council Cabinet member for Planning, and his membership of the Regional Planning Panel) declared a personal interest in the following item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(3)**

**5. East of England Plan**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration on the implications of the publication of the final East of England Plan, otherwise known as the Regional Spatial Strategy, which sets out the regional planning policies for the East of England region. Appended to the report was a briefing note highlighting any sections of particular relevance to Colchester.

Mrs Louisa White addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3) in respect of the lack of facilities in Mile End, particularly the lack of a school, and too much traffic. Conditions placed upon planning permissions for elements of Colchester General Hospital and Colchester Community Stadium had not been implemented and there has been a failure to deliver a single facility for Mile End.

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

It was explained that the Borough Council had been provided with only two paper

copies of the Plan, one of which was in the Members Room. In response to a request for a top level diagram of the policies to illustrate how they were linked, it was explained that this was not available within this document. There were separate links to the various sections but there was no easy link to the list of policies.

In respect of housing for the elderly, the young and special needs it was explained that those criteria would be judged on a housing allocations policy using a housing needs assessment which might feed in through the housing need target. There was a reference to special needs in area strategy documents.

Also queried was the 35% affordable housing figure on housing developments, and whether it was higher than the rest of the country. It was explained that different targets were set for different areas but that 35% was the figure set for the whole of the East of England.

An explanation was requested in respect of social housing and the split between social rented and social affordable. There was a Supplementary Planning Guidance document which provided the detail of how affordable housing would be delivered; the type of affordable housing provided should be proportional to the type of market housing provided in the scheme. That is if the scheme was mainly four bedroomed homes then the affordable element provided would be mainly four bedroomed homes.

In respect of the targets for new housing and jobs, Colchester had exceeded the housing target and new jobs were just about on target.

*RESOLVED* that implications of the publication of the final East of England Plan be noted.

## **6. Sustainability Appraisal**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Strategic Policy and Regeneration giving an explanation of sustainability appraisals (SAs) and describing how SAs have informed the Core Strategy and how they will contribute to the Site Allocations Development Plan document and Development Policies document.

Shelley Blackaby, Sustainability Officer, attended to assist the Committee in its deliberations.

A member of the Committee requested information on how it would be possible to acquire sufficient knowledge about a community to be able to give an accurate sustainability appraisal, and on which stakeholders were being consulted. It was explained that the Sustainability Appraisal process adopted by the Council was in line with the process set out in regional documents. The first stage of the process draws in a substantial amount of information by reviewing relevant policies, plans and programmes. From this information a baseline report was generated which was the subject of a consultation process. There was a statutory requirement to consult a small number of specified stakeholders, but the council had made the decision to consult a greater number and wider variety of stakeholders.

*RESOLVED* that explanation of Sustainability Appraisal of Local Development Documents be noted.