

# Local Plan Committee

Monday, 27 March 2017

**Attendees:** Councillor Nick Barlow, Councillor Nigel Chapman, Councillor Nick Cope, Councillor Andrew Ellis, Councillor Adam Fox, Councillor Martin Goss, Councillor John Jowers, Councillor Sue Lissimore, Councillor Gerard Oxford, Councillor Martyn Warnes

**Substitutes:**

## 103 Have Your Say!

John Akker addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3). He explained that he had attended the last meeting of the Panel making representations in relation to the housing proposals for East and West Mersea and he had been asked to provide additional information about alternative housing proposals. He had requested a meeting with the Planning Officers as he was of the view that there was considerable potential for development on Mersea Island which warranted further investigation. He was concerned about the impact of the addition of at least 100 additional houses during the lifetime of the Plan which would bring pressure on local services. He sought clarification on the likely density of housing proposed and he was also of the view that the expansion of multiple caravan parks in East Mersea needed to be taken into account

The Chairman confirmed that the Local Plan was not proscriptive regarding the number and density of houses, these being matters dealt with in the planning application process.

The Place Strategy Manager confirmed that the proposals regarding East and West Mersea were being reviewed and investigated further. She also indicated that further information was being sought in relation to caravan parks and their impact on development. She explained that officers would contact Mr Akker should a meeting be considered necessary. She confirmed that the number of houses identified in the Plan would be determined as a consequence of the outcome of further investigations. She also reminded those present of the next round of consultation which would be undertaken in the Summer months and encouraged people to use this further opportunity for making representations.

James Elmer, on behalf of residents of Great Tey, addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3). He referred to a late

submission for housing development, including affordable units at Brook Road and explained that the proposal was not supported by residents on the basis that it was too large and in the wrong location whilst the proposed West Tey Garden Community development would more than satisfy the 6% future growth rate for the Great Tey community. The plot of land was to one side of the village with a poor quality road network and infrastructure and the proposal would have a negative impact on the health and well-being of residents. He explained that Great Tey Parish Council had formally objected to the proposal and residents felt strongly that it was not acceptable.

The Chairman confirmed that it was not possible for the Committee to consider the fine detail of each proposal at this stage of the Local Plan process. He encouraged the formal submission of views by residents as part of the forthcoming consultation exercise. The Committee would, in due course, consider the outcome of the consultation but the final arbiter of the Plan would be the appointed Planning Inspector following submission of the Plan. He confirmed that it was still permissible for development proposals to be submitted for inclusion in the Plan, responses to which would be captured in the next consultation round.

The Place Strategy Manager confirmed that local authorities were required to accept 'late' submission of development proposals as part of the proscribed Local Plan process. She explained that the Brook Road proposal was for a mixed tenure development which would be reviewed by the Council in terms of various matters including infrastructure requirements and she went on to confirm that the reference to a 6% growth rate was not to be taken as a measure of the maximum number of dwellings to be allocated within an area. She also confirmed her awareness of Great Tey Parish Council's intention to formulate a Neighbourhood Plan.

Rosie Pearson, on behalf of Campaign Against Urban Sprawl in Essex (CAUSE), addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3). She explained that residents had recently resorted to submitting their views on the Local Plan to the local newspapers and that this was symptomatic of residents' belief that they weren't being listened to. She asked why the West Tey Garden Community proposals continued to be considered within the draft Local Plan given the presentation of information at previous meetings highlighting that development in this location had been considered unacceptable since 2008. She was of the view that the unacceptable location issues remained the same as they were in 2008 and, as such, the proposal should not be considered any further. In terms of infrastructure, the budget would be insufficient and the risks of failing to deliver the necessary requirements were considerable. She was of the view that the timescale for the re-routing of the A120 would not be complete in time for the Local Plan proposals. She considered that the Committee was under pressure to make difficult decisions and, as a consequence, the views of residents were being ignored. She concluded by stating her view that a West Tey Garden Community development was not needed, she considered that the level of assessed housing need was higher than it needed to be and urged the Council to utilise

more brownfield site options. She was also of the view that, should West Tey proceed, it would be a monumental mistake which would affect the lives of many thousands of residents.

The Chairman confirmed that a Brownfield Site Register was maintained by the Council and that the Council had already prioritised brownfield sites such that these options were now considerably diminished.

The Place Strategy Manager confirmed that a very detailed written response to the submission made by CAUSE had been issued. She explained that the situation regarding development in the Marks Tey locality had changed since 2008. At that time a number of viable brownfield sites were available for development which meant there was no necessity to consider development at Marks Tey at that time, whilst in addition, recent improvements had been made and further progress planned in relation to the A12 and A120. It was not correct to say that a higher than necessary Objectively Assessed Housing Need figure had been accepted. A figure of 920 had been agreed by the Committee based on robust and accepted evidence. The contents of the Council's Brownfield Site Register had been considered by the Committee on two occasions. It was a living document which would be reviewed to ensure it complied with current and any future changes in legislation so that it remained fit for purpose.

Councillor Chillingworth attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Committee. He considered it was important for the Committee to be aware of public opinion regarding any new sites which had been identified since the last round of consultation. He confirmed that Laura Chase, the Council's Planning Policy Manager, had attended a recent Great Tey Parish Council meeting giving details of the development proposal at New Barn Road, including 17 dwellings in Brook Road. He was of the view that the proposal involved an increase in numbers which would be out of proportion for the community. He was also concerned that the proposal would be very conspicuous when viewed across the Roman River Valley and that the access to the development would be from an existing narrow road which would cause serious concern for residents. He asked the Committee to consider the removal of the proposal from the Plan. He also mentioned the intention of the Parish Council to develop a Neighbourhood Plan which may not be of use in relation to the current Local Plan timescale but would be an important element for the future.

The Chairman confirmed that the removal of sites from the Plan at this stage was not an option that the Committee could consider as it was necessary for the due Local Plan process to be adhered to.

The Place Strategy Manager supported the intention for Great Tey to develop a Neighbourhood Plan and she confirmed that the allocation of additional sites for future development would be considered.

**104 Minutes of 7 February 2017**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 February 2017 were confirmed as a correct record.

**105 Coastal Protection Belt Review**

**Councillor Warnes (in respect of his spouse's ownership of property at Mersea Road, Langenhoe) declared a pecuniary interest in this item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Commercial Services requesting the deletion of certain locations from Colchester's Coastal Protection Belt (CPB) policy and map, following a review.

Beverley McClean, Coast and Countryside Planner, presented the report and, together with Karen Syrett, Place Strategy Manager, responded to Councillors questions.

Beverley explained that, as a result of a review a new Coastal Protection Belt (CPB) designation had been presented and discussed at Local Plan Committee on 7 February 2017. Four new areas of land were proposed for addition to the CPB and four areas were proposed for deletion. The proposed additions had been agreed but the Committee had sought further justification regarding the four areas which were recommended for deletion.

Details were provided to explain why the sea area below low water mark around Mersea Flats had been recommended for deletion from Zone 1 which was essentially on the basis that it did not fall within Landscape Character Type C, D, and E (which had a defined estuarine/coastal character) and it was not within a coastal change area likely to experience significant physical change as a result of inundation. As such, it did not satisfy criterion A or C in the revised CPB document. In addition, it was explained why three areas of land around Wivenhoe and Rowhedge in the vicinity of the Upper Colne Estuary had been recommended for deletion from Zone 4. The land at Bowes Road, Wivenhoe, the land to the north west of Wivenhoe and the land to the south/south east of Rowhedge all fell outside the Landscape Character Types C, D and E (which had a defined estuarine/coastal character), were not designated for any coastal ecological interest or maritime heritage interest and did not fall within a coastal change area likely to experience significant physical change as a result of inundation. As such they did not satisfy criterion A, B or C in the revised CPB document.

It was further explained that, although the four areas would no longer be within the CPB, they continued to be green field sites outside of any area designated for development and would still be afforded protection from inappropriate development. In addition it may be that some areas would also be protected by other designations such as the Colne

Protection Belt being proposed in the Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan.

The Coast and Countryside Planner explained that the land the subject of proposed removal from the CPB had not met the Coastal Character criteria which had been used to define those areas meriting inclusion. She went on to explain that the Council was working with the Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan Group to identify an alternative approach for protecting the land to the south east of Wivenhoe to avoid inconsistencies between the Coastal Protection policies in the Local Plan and the Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan.

Julie Baker addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3). She explained that residents of Dawes Lane, West Mersea had produced a report with supporting evidence demonstrating how the Dawes Lane site was subject to serious surface water flooding problems which had a negative impact on properties in the location. Residents were fearful at the prospect of a large development being built close to their homes and considered it was essential for an environmental impact assessment to be made

The Chairman passed the report submitted by Julie Baker to the Place Strategy Manager for consideration.

Councillor J. Young, in her capacity as the Essex County Councillor for the Wivenhoe St Andrew Division, attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Committee. She was concerned regarding the deletion of land at Bowes Road, Wivenhoe from the Coastal Protection Belt and questioned whether this would impact on the Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan which had included the Bowes Road CPB designation within its evidence base. She considered the character of Bowes Road had remained unchanged and. As such, did not understand the proposal to change its designation.

The Coast and Countryside Planner explained that she had worked closely with the Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan Group and it would be possible for the site to be identified within the Neighbourhood Plan as being of value to the community and requiring protection. The recommendation to remove Bowes Road from the CPB did not imply that the character of the location had changed but was an acknowledgement that the CPB no longer protected coastal views.

David Cooper addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3). He acknowledged the creation of a new Criteria A within the CPB policy and, as a consequence, the loss of CPB designation for land benefitting from coastal views. He referred to areas of undeveloped coastal farmland and requested clarification regarding sites for future generations to develop for housing.

Councillor Lilley attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the

Committee. He referred to the land in Rowhedge which was recommended for removal from the CPB and the concern of local residents that this may lead to future development proposals for the site. He questioned the potential for the remaining protection measures to be subject to future legislative changes and asked whether it would be possible for the Committee to be prompted to reconsider the status of the four areas of land to be removed from the CPB should the protection measures lose their effectiveness.

The Place Strategy Manager confirmed that it was possible that future legislative changes may reduce the effectiveness of protection measures and, as such, the suggestion to review the status of the four areas of land in this eventuality was a valid one.

Councillor Liddy attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Committee. He considered the omission of land with coastal views from the CPB was regrettable and that it would weaken the protection afforded to the sites in question, meaning it may be harder to resist proposals for development, especially if they were referred to an Inspector at appeal. He also referred to the decision by Tendring District Council to retain the designation in relation to land on the river slopes and questioned whether the differing recommendations were incompatible.

The Coast and Countryside Planner confirmed that she would continue to work with the Neighbourhood Planning Group as this would be a key document for the future against which planning applications would be determined.

Councillor Scott attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Committee. She was a member of the Steering Committee for the Wivenhoe Neighbourhood Plan and, as such, was aware of the requirement for the Neighbourhood Plan to address the development needs of the community as well as protection needs of the coastal areas. She was frustrated that the Neighbourhood Plan had not yet been adopted and was also concerned that the changes to the CPB policy may be seen as subjective. With this in mind she welcomed the work undertaken in the context of the Neighbourhood Plan to form other protection measures. She also asked for clarification regarding the surveys undertaken in formulating the revised CPB policy.

The Coast and Countryside Planner confirmed that a Landscape Character Assessment had been used to standardise the evidence for the review of the CPB policy and views of the sites had been taken which had contributed to, what she considered to be, a robust evidence base. She did not consider that approval of the Neighbourhood Plan was being delayed but that it was necessary to ensure that the evidence would stand up to scrutiny.

Councillor Jowers acknowledged the concerns expressed by speakers but considered it was necessary for the CPB policy to be adequate to stand up to the appeal process. He was of the view that the land at Mersea was adequately covered by other protection

measures and noted the concern regarding the site at Dawes Lane. He was particularly concerned regarding the multiple caravan parks which generated around 20,000 additional residents during the summer months. He referred to the former power station at Bradwell and potential future development of the nuclear power industry.

The Coast and Countryside Planner acknowledged the issues in relation to caravan parks and the misleading public impression that these sites were being promoted by the Council. She confirmed the need for the policy to be reviewed in order to ensure its ability to withstand challenge.

Councillor Fox referred to residents' concerns in relation to the removal of CPB designations, especially given the value attributed to land with coastal views by both residents and visitors. He supported the suggestion for the land status to be reconsidered in the event of future changes which may weaken the protection measures but sought clarification as to how this would work in practice.

The Place Strategy Manager acknowledged the decision by Tendring District Council to maintain areas within its CPB policy and speculated that this was because that Council was relying on its pre-existing CPB policy dating from 1984.

Councillor Ellis acknowledged the importance of responding to residents' views especially given the value placed on the areas of land referred to. He, nevertheless, voiced his support for the changes given the justification now provided to the Committee and the need for the policy to stand up to future scrutiny.

RESOLVED (EIGHT voted FOR and ONE ABSTAINED) that –

- (i) The proposed deletions to the Colchester Coastal Protection Belt policy and map, together with the additions approved at the Committee's previous meeting, be agreed
- (ii) The Coastal Protection Belt Review be used to form part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan for Colchester
- (iii) The status of the four areas of land deleted in (i) above be reviewed in the future in the event that legislative changes result in the effectiveness of the remaining protection measures being lost.

## **106 Protected Lanes**

**Councillor Jowers (in respect of his Membership of Essex County Council's Development and Regulation Committee declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).**

**Councillor Lissimore (in respect of her membership of Essex County Council's Development and Regulation Committee, her responsibility as Essex County Council's Deputy Cabinet member for Lifelong Learning and her Vice-Chairmanship of Visit Essex) declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item**

**pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Commercial Services giving details of the contents of the Colchester Protected Lanes Assessment document and proposed revisions to the Protected Lane network in the Borough.

Beverley McClean, Coast and Countryside Planner, presented the report and, together with Karen Syrett, Place Strategy Manager, responded to Councillors questions.

Beverley explained that the original Protected Lanes Policy had been developed some 25 years ago by Essex County Council and policies to protect Colchester Borough's network of Protected Lanes had been incorporated in previous Local Plans. The County Council had recently developed and tested new criteria which had then been used to review all the Protected Lanes across Essex including in Colchester, with the aim to protect the integrity of historic lanes from inappropriate development and urbanisation.

The new criteria were based on the following factors:

- Diversity – consideration of lane form, carriageway surface, verges, banks and ditches, associated vegetation and biodiversity,
- Historic Integrity – extent of erosion, extent of improvements,
- Archaeological potential of the lane to contain important archaeological remains,
- Aesthetic Value - notable views.

A scoring system and minimum threshold was also devised to identify which lanes were suitable for designation as a Protected Lane. There had been 31 Protected Lanes designated across Colchester Borough which would be reduced to 24 following assessment against the new criteria and scoring and the report gave details of those to retain Protected Lane designation and those that would lose such designation.

Members of the Committee regretted the reduction in the number of lanes with protected status but acknowledged the importance of agreed criteria against which lanes would be measured. A proactive approach to future additions to the protected list was welcomed and clarification was sought as to whether this could be applied to lanes in urban areas. Reference was also made to the statement within the policy to 'exploring options and partnerships for influencing user behaviour and applying intelligent and positive measures of highway management that will serve to encourage local journeys to be made on bicycle or foot..'

The Coast and Countryside Planner confirmed that Essex County Council had agreed that it would give consideration to additional locations to be assessed for potential Protected Lane status and any suggestions, including those situated in urban areas, should be sent to the Planning Policy team for co-ordination prior to referral to Essex County Council. She also confirmed that she would make further enquiries regarding the options and partnerships available to influence user behaviour.



RESOLVED that –

- (i) The contents of the Colchester Borough Protected Lanes Assessment document and revisions to the Protected Lane network in the Borough be noted and the revised Colchester Borough Protected Lanes Assessment report be used to form part of the evidence base for the emerging Local Plan for Colchester
- (ii) Future reviews of the Protected Lanes assessment document be submitted to the Committee for consideration
- (iii) Suggestions for additional locations for potential Protected Lane status, including those situated in urban areas, be forwarded to the Planning Policy team for co-ordination prior to referral to Essex County Council for assessment.

## **107 Colchester Local List**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Commercial Services giving details of proposed amendments to the adopted Colchester Local List.

Beverley McClean, Coast and Countryside Planner, presented the report and, together with Simon Cairns, Major Development and Projects Manager, responded to Councillors questions.

Beverley explained that the Local List comprised heritage assets not suitable for designation as Listed Buildings but considered historically or architecturally important at a local level, including individual buildings or whole streetscapes as well as individual features on buildings such as railings, lamp posts or post boxes and locally valued archaeological features such as crop marks. The important factor was that the assets were of historic interest locally and/or made a significant contribution to the character and setting of the area in which they were located and were valued by the local community. Inclusion on a Local List was a material consideration when planning applications affecting such buildings or features were being considered and Planning Inspectors would have due regard for buildings or assets on a Local List as part of an appeal process.

In 2016 there were 758 buildings/assets on the Colchester Local List and, if the recommendations in the report were approved, the total number of buildings and assets would increase to 765.

In response to a press release inviting nominations for inclusion on the List for consideration and an internal consultation, 15 changes had been proposed, eight of which were not considered suitable for inclusion. Details of the buildings/assets nominated together with reasons to either support or reject their inclusion were set out in the report.

The Coast and Countryside Planner further clarified the report explaining that it was

intended to review all the buildings on the Local List which also fell within Conservation Areas to ensure that only the best quality buildings were included in the Local List. The outcome of this review would be presented to the Committee at its next consideration of the List in 2018.

David Cooper addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3). He referred to the List being restricted to urban wards only. He explained that he was aware of a number of locations in West Mersea which, he considered, would merit inclusion and, accordingly, asked whether it would be possible for the list to be extended across the whole Borough.

The Chairman confirmed that the List could be extended across the Borough but this was dependent on nominations coming forward from local residents.

Tony Barker addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3). He welcomed the amended proposals in relation to buildings already falling within Conservation Areas but was concerned that this may lead to many buildings being removed from the Local List. He considered there was merit in groups of buildings being designated, not just individual buildings and queried the necessity of removing existing designations.

The Major Development and Projects Manager acknowledged the concerns expressed by Mr Barker but confirmed the need for caution in relation to the buildings included in the List. He explained that a statutory designation was provided by Conservation Area status and that this afforded protection against demolition. In terms of the Local List, buildings needed to be considered exceptional in order to be included and there were examples of buildings which did not warrant an exceptional description.

Councillor Moore attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Committee. She explained that she had previously understood that buildings in Mersea could not be included on the Local List. She had 14 suggestions to put forward for inclusion and asked for guidance to be provided to assist local residents in formulating further suggestions.

Councillor Chillingworth attended on behalf of all councillors from Rural North ward, and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Committee. He welcomed the inclusion of Boxted Methodist Church to the List and advised that the orientation of the building included in the description in the report needed to be reversed.

Members of the Committee welcomed the extension of the List across the whole Borough and the protection afforded to buildings included on the List at three recent appeal hearings.

RESOLVED that –

- (i) The proposed amendments which would add seven buildings / assets to the adopted Colchester Local List be agreed
- (ii) All the buildings on the Local List which also fell within Conservation Areas be reviewed to ensure that only the best quality buildings are included in the Local List and the outcome of the review be presented to the Committee at its next consideration of the List in 2018.

## **108 White Paper - Fixing Our Broken Housing Market**

**Councillor T. Young (in respect of his Chairmanship of Colne Housing Association) declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 7(5).**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Commercial Services giving details of the Government's Housing White Paper 'Fixing Our Broken Housing Market' along with other documents published on 7 February in order to inform the Council's response.

Karen Syrett, Place Strategy Manager presented the report and responded to Councillors questions. Karen explained the Government's view that the "housing market in this country is broken, and the cause is very simple: for too long, we haven't built enough homes." To address this issue, a White Paper 'Fixing our Broken Housing Market' and other documents had been published in February identifying three major problems to building enough new homes;

- The fact that 40% of local authorities do not have an adopted local plan that meets projected growth
- Development takes too long to get off the ground
- The very structure of the housing market makes it harder to increase supply.

The White Paper set out proposed solutions to the problems:

- From November 2017, a Housing Delivery Test would require local planning authorities to see the homes in their Local Plan delivered, not just planned for. Where authorities had an up-to-date plan, the new test would measure delivery against local plan target but where plans were more than five years old delivery would be measured against latest household projections until a new standardised methodology for assessing housing need was introduced in April 2018. In addition, where delivery fell below 95% an action plan would be required, where delivery fell below 85% an additional 20% buffer to the five year land supply would be required whilst tougher sanctions would be applied from November 2018;
- Increasing development density by amending the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to make it clear that both plans and individual applications should make efficient use of land, look to push higher densities around transport hubs, deliver densities in keeping with local character and allow flexibility in applying other policies that might lower densities. It also suggests introducing "indicative" density standards for different types of location, and amending planning guidance to support greater density,

particularly by proposing a new approach to deal with daylight considerations. It proposes a less prescriptive approach than PPG3 did;

- The government intended to consult on options for introducing a standardised approach to assessing housing requirements, with the results being fed into forthcoming revisions of the National Planning Policy Framework. There would be a requirement for Local Plans to be reviewed every five years with Plans covering the Local Planning Authorities' area but also the possibility of including a wider area, thus opening the way for joint Local Plans. At least 10% of sites allocated for residential development would be of half a hectare or less in addition to 10% of homes being on 'windfall' sites for small builders. In addition, housing land supply would be produced and fixed once per year by district councils and agreed with developers;
- Various measures relating to planning permissions such as a reduction to two years for the length of time a permission could be held before it expired; the ability of local authorities to increase fees by 20% together with a further 20% for authorities 'delivering the homes people need'; fees for planning appeals; the delivery record of developers being taken into account when deciding whether to grant planning consent; greater weight being attached to using suitable brownfield land; planning obligations test being strictly adhered to and pre-commencement conditions only being used if agreed with developers in advance and local authorities needing to work with Natural England to test the best habitats for Great Crested Newts;
- Withdrawal of plans to impose a legal duty on councils to ensure provision of at least 20% Starter Homes on all reasonably sized development sites. Instead, the government is proposing to amend the National Planning Policy Framework to introduce an expectation that councils seek to ensure that at least ten% of all homes on schemes of ten or more units or 0.5 hectares upwards are affordable home ownership products;
- Local authorities will be given the opportunity to have their housing land supplies agreed on an annual basis, and fixed for a one-year period;
- Recommendation that the Community Infrastructure Levy should be replaced with a hybrid system of a low level tariff for all developments and section 106 for larger developments, whereby all development (with no exceptions) would contribute towards a Local Infrastructure Tariff (LIT);
- An intention to encourage more active use of compulsory purchase powers to promote development on stalled sites for housing;
- An intention to consult on a new agricultural to residential permitted development right and amendments to planning guidance regarding farm shops, poly-tunnels and on-farm reservoirs to better support such development.

Details were also published of various funding schemes to support housebuilding:

- Launch a new £45m Land Release Fund;
- £25m of new funding to help authorities to plan for new homes and infrastructure;
- Target £2.3bn Housing Infrastructure Fund at the areas of greatest housing need and open it to bids in 2017, with money available over the next four years;
- £1.2bn Starter Home Land Fund to support preparation of brownfield sites.

In April 2017, the Government would introduce a Lifetime ISA to support younger adults to save flexibly for the long term. The future of the Help to Buy scheme beyond 2021 was being considered, Starter Homes would be required to be bought with a mortgage with a 15 year repayment period. The government also intended to make it easier for developers of purpose-built developments for the rental market to offer affordable private rented homes instead of other forms of affordable housing whilst other measures included proposals to ban letting agent fees to tenants and to ensure that family-friendly tenancies of three or more years are available for those tenants that want them.

John Akker addressed the Committee pursuant to the provisions of Meetings General Procedure Rule 5(3). He considered the report to be very helpful in setting out the issues of in the White Paper affecting the Borough. He was of the view that a very large amount of housing was proposed for the area, associated with the issue of affordable housing and people's ability to get on the housing ladder. He referenced a report by Shelter and an article in the Sunday Times on the high costs of housing land. He understood the difficult decisions faced by many local authorities and mentioned the partnerships between them and land owners.

Councillor T. Young attended and, with the consent of the Chairman, addressed the Committee. He partially welcomed the White Paper as it demonstrated a change in tactic from the previous Conservative Government. He didn't think it would fix the broken housing market but welcomed it as a step in the right direction. He referred to the recently published Essex County Council report containing arguments about density and designing out crime. Social rented housing was being brought back onto the agenda and he welcomed this. The contents of the report reflected officers' draft comments on the White Paper. He would be liaising with Councillor Bourne to determine a final response to the consultation which would take account of the salient views expressed by the Committee.

Members of the Committee discussed the report at length and generally welcomed the contents of the White Paper and the helpful background details provided. In particular, comments were made, as in relation to matters set out below:

- Support for the continuation of the Rural Exception Sites policy in providing housing for local people and the need for them to be removed from Right to Buy principles
- Housing Density
- Delivery Failure
- Formalising of Self Builds
- Cost implications of achieving higher green credentials
- Benefits of three year tenancies and the greater stability this could provide
- The need for more thought in relation to car parking facilities in order to overcome on-street parking problems
- The need for measures to force developers to commit to completing developments in a timely fashion

- Concern around the housing delivery test if another economic downturn is experienced
- Support for local nomination rights to be continued
- Support for higher densities in appropriate locations, such as around transport hubs, but not across the board
- The need for more significant quantities of social housing to be built
- The measures to be introduced to replace the Community Infrastructure Levy
- The need for a variety of tenures to be considered and for Council Housing to be a valid option once again in terms of delivering long term social housing
- Concern in relation to the emphasis on Starter Homes and the reliance on those who are able to secure a mortgage
- The over-riding importance of affordability
- Questions in relation to fixed term tenancies and how these would work in relation to Sheltered Housing

The Place Strategy Manager confirmed the possibility of the response being strengthened in relation to the Rural Exception Sites policy and its removal from the Right to Buy principles. She would elaborate further on references to higher housing densities being in appropriate locations, not across the board. She confirmed that further detail was awaited in relation to the replacement of the Community Infrastructure Levy. She explained that where developments met design standards refusal of applications was not sustainable. There would be a review of affordable housing viability and she was hopeful this may justify an increase in the percentage being sought from developers. She also agreed to emphasise the views expressed in relation to social rented housing and for Council Housing to be included as another valid form of tenure.

The Chairman also requested consideration to be given to seeking measures to ensure more prompt adoption of developments after their build completion. The measure to provide for a Financial Bond to be put in place had not worked successfully in practice and the establishment of Management Companies was now being used to overcome this problem but which wasn't necessarily to the benefit of residents.

RESOLVED that the details of the Housing White Paper 'Fixing Our Broken Housing Market', the changes to the National Planning Policy Framework and the 'Build to Rent consultation document be noted and the comments expressed by the Committee as detailed above be used to inform the Portfolio Holder report comprising the Council's formal response to the White Paper consultation to be sent to the Department of Communities and Local Government.