

Central
Bedfordshire
Council
Priory House
Monks Walk
Chicksands,
Shefford SG17 5TQ



**TO EACH MEMBER OF THE
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

06 March 2015

Dear Councillor

**SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - Friday 20
March 2015**

Further to the Agenda and papers for the above meeting, previously circulated, please find attached the following additional report:-

4. Minutes

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 19 February and to note actions taken since that meeting.

Should you have any queries regarding the above please contact the Overview and Scrutiny Team on Tel: 0300 300 4193

Yours sincerely

Rebecca Preen
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CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Thursday, 19 February 2015.

PRESENT

Cllr D McVicar (Chairman)
Cllr A R Bastable (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs	D Bowater	Cllrs	K C Matthews
	C C Gomm		B Saunders
	Ms A M W Graham		P Williams

Apologies for Absence: Cllrs A Shadbolt

Substitutes: Cllrs R W Johnstone

Members in Attendance:	Cllrs	P N Aldis	
		T Brown	Deputy Executive Member for Regeneration
		N B Costin	
		P Hollick	Chairman of General Purposes Committee
		M R Jones	Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Corporate Resources
		T Nicols	
		B J Spurr	Executive Member for Community Services
		Mrs P E Turner MBE	Executive Member for Partnerships
		R D Wenham	Deputy Executive Member for Corporate Resources
		B Wells	Deputy Executive Member for Community Services
		J N Young	Executive Member for Regeneration

Officers in Attendance:	Ms S Duncan	– Senior Planning Officer, Local Planning and Housing Team
	Mrs S Farrier	– Acting Senior Planning Officer, Local Planning and Housing Team
	Mr R Fox	– Head of Development Planning and Housing Strategy
	Mrs S Frost	– Local Planning and Housing Manager

Mrs C Frost-Bryant	– Principal Planning Officer, Local Planning and Housing Team
Mr J Goody	– Principal Planning Officer, Local Planning and Housing Team
Mr J Longhurst	– Director of Regeneration and Business
Mr J Partridge	– Corporate Policy Manager
Mrs R Preen	– Scrutiny Policy Adviser
Mrs G Stanton	– Chief Communications Officer

Public 4

SCOSC/14/71. **Members' Interests**

None.

SCOSC/14/72. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

The Chairman commented that whilst it was not an item on the agenda he would invite the Executive Member for Regeneration to provide an update regarding the Development Strategy at the appropriate item (Minute SCOSC/14/78 refers). Members were also requested to retain their agenda papers for items later on the agenda for the Executive meeting on 31 March 2015.

SCOSC/14/73. **Minutes**

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting of the Sustainable Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 22 January 2015 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

SCOSC/14/74. **Petitions**

None.

SCOSC/14/75. **Questions, Statements or Deputations**

None.

SCOSC/14/76. **Call-In**

None.

SCOSC/14/77. **Requested Items**

None.

SCOSC/14/78. **Executive Member Update**

The Executive Member for Regeneration informed the Committee that a Planning Inspector had recently concluded that Central Bedfordshire had not co-operated sufficiently with other local authorities with regards to the Development Strategy. The Council was considering a challenge of the decision in court, if it was decided this was the prudent course of action the Executive Members would request support at the next Full Council meeting. In response to a query the Executive Member confirmed there were good grounds for a challenge to the court, which was likely to take approximately four months.

Cllr Nicols raised concerns regarding the quantum of housing that had been proposed in the Development Strategy (28,500) and commented on the significant proportion of homes that had been allocated within his ward. Cllr Nicols requested that if additional sites were to be identified for additional homes these should be identified in other areas of Central Bedfordshire. In response to a query, the Head of Development, Planning and Housing explained that if the Council were to withdraw the Development Strategy they would be vulnerable to speculative development and may find it difficult to refuse planning permission on such applications

In light of the conversation the Committee commented that they would support a proposal from the Executive Member to Council seeking a legal challenge on the Planning Inspector's decision.

SCOSC/14/79. **Community Infrastructure Levy and Planning Obligations Strategy**

The Head of Development, Planning and Housing Strategy delivered a presentation regarding the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and revised S106 Planning Obligations Strategy. The report set out proposals for implementing CIL charging rates to replace tariff based planning obligations, which could no longer be used after 06 April 2015.

In light of the presentation and report Members discussed the following issues in detail:-

- The basis for determining the CIL rates, which officers confirmed were based on overall viability evidence and the housing price index. Affordable housing would be exempt from CIL to ensure the delivery of an appropriate percentage of affordable homes on-site which in turn encouraged mixed and diverse communities
- The likelihood of the CIL charging rates failing to be approved by a Planning Inspector. The Head of Service commented that if the Planning Inspector concluded that based on the submitted evidence the rates needed to be revised, it was within his authority to make recommendations to vary the rates proposed. The charging schedule could then be approved subject to modifications.
- Whether other neighbouring local authorities had adopted CIL charging rates. The Head of Service explained that each local authority could choose a CIL that met their needs and whilst other local authorities may take a different approach, this was considered to be the most appropriate option for Central Bedfordshire.

- The collection dates for CIL, which were detailed within the body of the report for receipt of payments from commencement of a development.
- That whilst a 30% buffer would be more robust in that it followed the recommendations set out in the consultant's report, the Council should explore the possibility of a 20% buffer in order to achieve a higher income from CIL.

RECOMMENDED to Executive:-

- 1. That the Committee support the CIL charging rates detailed in the report with a buffer of 30% on residential rates but that the Executive should review the evidence base and explore the feasibility of a 20% buffer.**
- 2. That the Draft Charging Schedule be approved for formal publication and submission for Examination as detailed in the report; and**
- 3. That the Strategy be approved for consultation alongside the publication of the Draft Charging Schedule as detailed in the report.**

SCOSC/14/80. Wixam Park Masterplan

The Senior Planning Officer delivered a presentation regarding the Wixam Park Masterplan, which proposed 1,500 new homes, 5 hectares (ha) of employment land and a countryside park. The Committee also received a summary of the key findings from public consultation and the subsequent amendments to the plan.

Members raised concerns with regards to the size of the proposed primary school and whether it would be able to accommodate the recommended level of growth proposed in the Masterplan. The Local Planning and Housing Manager assured the Committee that whilst exact figures were not yet available it was felt that the proposed school would be of a sufficient size.

Members commented it was positive and encouraging to see the outcomes of the public consultation and that amendments had been made to the Masterplan as a result.

RECOMMENDED that the Masterplan be endorsed and that it be adopted by the Executive as technical guidance for Development Management purposes.

SCOSC/14/81. North Luton and Sundon Rail Freight Interchange Draft Framework Plan

The Local Planning and Housing Manager delivered a presentation setting out the Draft Framework Plan for the North of Luton and Sundon Rail Freight Interchange (RFI), an overview of the key issues raised during public consultation and amendments to the Plan as a result.

In light of the presentation and reports Members discussed the following issues in detail:-

- Whether the strategic M1-A6 Link Road would be built prior to the housing development in order to ease pressure on the transport network and confirmation of its status. The Local Planning and Housing Manager confirmed the Link Road would not be completed before the development commenced but would be delivered in a phased manner, commencing from the west. It was confirmed that the Link Road was being considered as strategic given its importance and the Executive Member for Regeneration confirmed that the Department for Transport were very supportive of the Link Road and recognised its significance to the area.
- Concerns regarding the statement there would be at least 13ha of employment land and that numerous developments could start prior to the road being built. In response the Local Planning and Housing Manager confirmed that there would not be significantly more than 13ha of employment land on the North of Luton site. It was also explained that in light of comments made through the consultation the Concept Plan had been changed to show the land to the west of the North of Luton site as employment, rather than mixed use. The phasing of the development was yet to be clarified due to the nature of plan being at high level “framework” stage and any development in advance of the Link Road being built would need to demonstrate that it wouldn’t have an unacceptable impact on Luton and the surrounding area.
- The potential pressure on other existing schools within the area as a result of developing additional homes. The Local Planning and Housing Manager confirmed that the development would provide three primary schools and a secondary school with sixth form provision to cater for the development. The Executive Member agreed to discuss this further with the Head of School Organisation and Capital Planning. The Committee also discussed the proposed location of the new secondary school as two options were presented on the Concept Plan. The central location was preferred by the Committee due to its integration into the heart of the development and ease of access by walking, cycling and public transport and it was recognised that further technical evidence was required to determine the final location.
- Whether any S106 obligations had been confirmed on the sites and would CIL be applicable. The Local Planning and Housing Manager confirmed that planning obligations would be sought through S106 and that as the Framework Plan was drafted before the approach to CIL had been determined, paragraph 6.3.2 of the Plan would be amended to reflect the approach to planning obligations for the developments.
- Concerns regarding the existing levels of lorry and HGV traffic on the nearby road network and whether any thought had been given to a further link to the A505. The Local Planning and Housing Manager confirmed that the Link Road would alleviate HGV movements on the existing road network and that consideration had been given to traffic concerns on the A6. It was also confirmed that a link between the A6 and A505 had been considered in the past but the cost was substantial and there were significant landscape constraints. This additional road link was not required to support the North of Luton and Sundon RFI developments and fell

outside the remit of the Framework Plan. It could be pursued separately with Luton Borough Council.

During the course of the discussion the Chairman invited a representative from Prologis to speak who explained that the company were in regular contact with Network Rail, who had confirmed in writing that they were supportive of a Rail Freight Interchange (RFI) at Sundon. It was confirmed that the Sundon site met all of the requirements for this type of development. The RFI was not dependent on East/West rail as it purely served the Midland Main line and it was also confirmed that it was complimentary to Radlett as it served a different market and the southern Central Bedfordshire sub area.

RECOMMENDED:-

- 1. That the Framework Plan be endorsed and the Executive be recommended to adopt it as technical guidance for Development Management purposes;**
- 2. That the Framework Plan written document should specify the Council's preferred location for the secondary school in the centre of the development, whilst retaining the option of the alternative location on the A6 as proposed in the report; and**
- 3. That the Framework Plan be amended to clarify the approach to planning obligations.**

SCOSC/14/82. Work Programme 2014/15 and Executive Forward Plan

The Committee considered its current Work Programme and the latest Executive Forward Plan.

RECOMMENDED that the Sustainable Communities OSC Work Programme be agreed.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 2.00 p.m. and concluded at 5.05 p.m.)