

**LOCAL COUNCILS' LIAISON FORUM held at COUNCIL CHAMBER -
COUNCIL OFFICES, LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on
TUESDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 2023 at 7.00 pm**

Present: Councillor Maggie Sutton (Chair), Councillors Susan Barker, Judy Emanuel, John Evans and Martin Foley.

UDC Officers in attendance: Clare Edwards (Democratic Services Officer), Sue Hayden (Communities Development Officer), Dean Hermitage (Strategic Director of Planning), Peter Holt (Chief Executive), Andrew Maxted (Interim Policy Manager), Demetria McDonald (Senior Policy Planning Officer), Charles Welland (Planning Policy Officer) and Anthony Whittaker (Principal Planning Policy Officer).

Representatives of: Ashdon, Broxton, Chrishall, Elsenham, Felsted, Great Dunmow, Great Easton & Tilty, Hadstock, Hatfield Heath, Hempstead, Henham, Little Dunmow, Newport, Saffron Walden, Swards End, Stansted Mountfitchet, Takeley, Thaxted and Wimbish.

1 INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

Councillor Maggie Sutton welcomed all attendees.

Apologies for absence had been received from representatives of Berden, Clavering, Great Dunmow, Great Hallingbury, Hatfield Broad Oak, High Roding, Little Canfield and Thaxted.

2 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting on 5th June 2023 were agreed.

3 LOCAL PLAN WORKSHOP

The presentation was introduced by the Interim Policy Manager he explained the Local Plan process and said it would shape the planning strategy for the district for the next 20 years.

The meeting was opened for questions.

General issues raised and discussed were as follows: -

- The presentation would be shared after the meeting.

- The Local Plan process would move forward as quickly as possible, whilst ensuring that it was robust, followed national policy guidance and legislation and that it would be accepted by the Inspectors.
- The finalised Local Plan was due to be published Summer 2024, followed by the Inspectors examination during 2025.
- The 5 year land supply was important as it helped to protect the Council from speculative development while there was not an up to date Local Plan in place.
- An up to date 5 year land supply statement would be published alongside the Local Plan papers for the Cabinet meeting on 16th October.
- There was a government proposal that as long as Councils had an up to date Local Plan renewed every 5 years that they would not need to report on a 5 year land supply however, it would be prudent to continue to have one in place – this does not currently apply to Uttlesford as the Plan is more than 5 years out of date.
- There would be a mixture of sites put forward in terms of size, type and location, but there would not be a need for any new settlements (Garden Communities) in this plan.
- The 5 year land supply would follow the fiscal year, for example, 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.
- The upcoming consultation was a key stage of the draft Local Plan and it was important to comment on it as it could still be amended.
- The Local Plan would not carry full weight until it was adopted. The Plan would have some weight once the Inspectors Report was received, but policies could start to have some weight at an earlier stage, depending on the level of comments or opposition raised at the Regulation 19 stage.
- There could be scope for there to be contributions addressing infrastructure problems that had arisen in the past, however only through new developments.
- The importance of ensuring that water supply within developments could be provided for was understood.
- The public consultation was a statutory requirement and would take 6 weeks. Following the consultation, the comments would be compiled and a further draft report would be ready for consideration by Councillors within 3 months and a further draft plan in 6 months.
- The draft Local Plan would be published with Cabinet documents on 9th October 2023.
- The site at Little Easton that had just received approval for 1,200 houses was not currently included in the figures.
- The emerging strategy does not recommend any development allocations (strategic or non-strategic) at smaller villages.
- Demographics of the villages would be considered.
- If the housing methodology was changed by the Government in the future and numbers reduced the Council would need less housing in the future. It was important to have a Local Plan in order to prevent speculative development.
- The 'open countryside' definition used in the presentation refers to any settlements, such as hamlets, that fall below the 'smaller village'

threshold and where the Council would not expect development to come forward. The term was commonly used in planning.

- There were several Members who said that they did not agree with the placing of villages into the various categories, the Interim Policy Manager said that there would be an opportunity for Parishes to send comments in within the consultation process as it was understood that they had the best local knowledge.
- The 100 houses quoted for larger villages was an indicative range and there would be variants depending on circumstances. Each village would be looked at individually, the figure had been provided to give some sense of what would be needed.
- The Local Plan would have policies in place regarding the mix of houses so that they would not be exclusively larger executive homes.
- The larger villages would have a specific number allocated within the regulation 18 documents. The Parishes could propose sites or alternatively the Planning department would work with them to make up the required allocation.
- The Key Settlements and Local Rural Centres would have proposed strategic allocations.
- The demographics of the villages would be considered when planning for development.
- The plan was to consult younger people on their views through youth groups but going into schools and colleges would be considered.
- There was a request for one of the roadshows during the consultation to be held in Saffron Walden.

Meeting closed at 9pm.