

Minutes of the Meeting of the Local Development Plan Task Force held on 8 March 2021 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Joycelyn Redsell (Chair), Martin Kerin (Vice-Chair), Gerard Rice and Luke Spillman

Apologies: Councillors Alex Anderson and Andrew Jefferies

In attendance:

Leigh Nicholson, Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection
Sean Nethercott, Strategic Lead of Strategic Services
Mat Kiely, Transportation Services Strategic Lead
Navtej Tung, Principal Transport Planner
Adrian Neve, Stantec Representative
Wendy Le, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being live streamed and recorded, with the video recording to be made available on the Council's website.

22. Minutes

The minutes of the Local Development Plan Task Force meeting held on 11 January 2021 were approved as a true and correct record.

23. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

24. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

25. Thurrock Local Plan - Next Steps

The report on pages 9 – 30 of the Agenda was presented by Sean Nethercott.

The Chair questioned how housing needs would be assessed to identify the number of homes to deliver; the affordability of affordable homes; and if the medical hubs had been considered in the housing process. She also asked if smaller developers were considered for housing developments. Sean Nethercott explained that the methodology for housing needs had changed over the last 10 years which had considered factors such as demographic changes, economic growth and a Local Authority's (LA) local policies and

plans. He said that 2017 was the most recent study which had looked at the demographics of the Borough and the market uplift had given a figure of over 1,000 and the further economics assessment had indicated a further 300 dwellings per year. He went on to say that national government had recently set out a standard methodology for housing assessment to use but it would not change figures by much and that the Council would have the baseline figure by autumn this year. In regards to the Chair's query on whether affordable housing was affordable, he said that it was a wider issue for the Council to address. He also said that the Council encouraged SMEs to build with the Council but that in the short – medium term, the need was for 'shovel ready' sites that SMEs could get involved in which was difficult as this was dominated by big volume builders. He said that the Council was in discussions with Homes England to diversify this and make small parcels of sites available for SMEs. In regards to the medical hubs, he said that these were part of the infrastructure planning work with the assumption that the medical hubs would be built so was factored into what future facilities would be needed.

Councillor Kerin questioned whether the types of housing needed had been identified yet and said that the quality of housing needed to be considered. He commented that Thurrock had a broad range of salaries with the different types of employment that people were in and asked if housing affordability would be based on this. Sean Nethercott answered that once the baseline figure was identified in autumn, it would help to identify housing needs and affordable housing and what housing could be delivered. He said that the charrette process had collated a lot of information which would help in terms of affordable housing and that the Local Plan would take into account the housing from big sites. Further work would need to be undertaken before it could be confirmed what the Borough's future needs would be and had to be considered alongside good quality housing in sustainable locations and infrastructure. He went on to say that even with the identified number of housing needed, this would need to be monitored yearly as it could fluctuate. In regards to housing quality, he said that through the charrette process, landowners and house builders had been shown examples of poor housing and good quality housing in areas similar to Thurrock in order to prevent the same type of developments that had been produced in Thurrock over the last decade. He went on to say that in addition to good quality housing, the environment within the location of the housing was important such as having walking and cycling amenities in place. The service wanted to ensure that places met people's needs and also their health and community wellbeing needs.

Members commented that examples of good quality housing included a new development in Chadwell St Mary and one in Grays near Seabrooke Rise. Sean Nethercott said that various documents from South Essex authorities also highlighted these developments.

Councillor Rice highlighted that there were issues of affordable units which he felt should be managed by the Council and not by developers. This was to ensure that these units would be available for the people on the Council's

housing waiting list. He said that there were two disused pits in Chadwell St Mary that could benefit to have housing units built on and that the service needed to look at other areas within the Borough to contribute towards the housing target. He highlighted that some areas of the Borough were once marshland such as Stifford Clays before it went through regeneration. Sean Nethercott explained that each area had been looked at in detail through the charrettes process and had identified where potential housing could be brought forward but it was a case of what scale of development was appropriate for those sites. Landowners were promoting sites and the service was considering these properly and submitting these based on a rational judgement of deliverability.

The Chair said that some of the villages in the Borough should not lose their characteristics or community and that there could be another village built within the Borough. Sean Nethercott explained that development approaches looked at existing settlements to see what could be improved. In terms of new settlements, there was a potential new development in West Horndon which the Council was awaiting on for the Brentwood Local Plan and there was also South Fields to consider.

26. Thurrock Transport Strategy Refresh update

The report on pages 31 – 40 of the Agenda was presented by Mat Kiely.

The Chair was pleased to hear that the river was being included in the Thurrock Transport Strategy (TTS). In regards to the Freight Strategy, she asked whether more lorry parks were needed in Thurrock as she felt that the middle of the Borough would benefit from this particularly one on the A13 where most lorries passed over. Mat Kiely said that lorry parking provision was bespoke piece of work that needed to be considered in more detail alongside the TTS.

Councillor Kerin asked if the impact of the Lower Thames Crossing (LTC) had been considered within the TTS. Mat Kiely answered that the TTS took into consideration the LTC and other big infrastructure projects that would facilitate growth and improved access on the network. He said that the service was working with Highways England to identify where improvements to the road network could take place. He highlighted that sustainable modes of transport could significantly be impacted by the LTC and the service was working with Highways England to ensure that routes for non-motorised users were planned for with new or improved routes as the Council encouraged people to walk and cycle. He went on to say that the LTC could help to fund certain measures and to address access issues.

Councillor Spillman questioned the process and timescale of installing the electric vehicle charging points to the scale that was needed. Mat Kiely explained that a report on electric charging points had been through the Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee recently and considered the best way to bring forward the infrastructure in the right locations for this and also to be considered as part of new developments. The

service was also working with Highways England to identify where electric charging points could also be installed on the strategic road network. He went on to say that a procurement process for an electric charger provider was in place.

Adrian Neve gave a presentation on the Local Plan Transport Baseline Study.

The Chair commented that London Road was heavily congested and questioned if there were plans for that road. She highlighted that there were tunnels under parts of the road due to the sinkholes and that the pollution in the area was high. Mat Kiely said that London Road was part of the longer term transport strategy in how it could be accommodated to different ways of travel. He said that the maintenance and structure teams would be aware of any issues with the tunnels. He added that London Road was an identified AQMA and was taken into consideration in strategies.

27. Parking Policy and Strategy, Parking Design and Development Standards, and Parking Enforcement Strategy

The report on pages 41 – 156 of the Agenda was presented by Navtej Tung.

The Chair commented that people were currently working from home which caused parking problems as there were cars parked on grass verges. She said that this needed to be looked at alongside lorries parking on curbs and corners. She mentioned that a car parking survey in Blackshots had been undertaken in 2019 and questioned what the outcome of that had been. Mat Kiely said that he would look into this and report back to the Chair.

Councillor Kerin questioned whether this strategy would be featured in new developments and if it would be sustainable. He highlighted that in his ward, there were a lot of parking issues and too many cars for the amount of spaces that there was. He queried if there were any lessons picked up from these issues. Navtej Tung referred Members to the Parking Standards document which set out the minimum parking provisions and what was required. This would apply to all new developments once the parking standard documents were adopted. He said that it had been designed on some of the parking provision lessons learnt from the past and that it considered how a development fitted into the wider environment so that an appropriate level of parking provision could be determined.

Councillor Kerin commented that developments had to consider that there could be at least two cars in a household particularly where there were two adults even where it was close to a train station. He said that people would still use their cars when they were not commuting into work. Navtej Tung said that there was a changing trend in lower car ownership and the level of what was needed. He said that the document highlighted alternatives of not needing a second car such as a car club. He went on to say that there were considerations for further controlled parking zones so people could not just park on the streets and that the service recognised that these problems were occurring. He also referred Members to page 34 and said that the consultation

had highlighted significant emphasis on enforcing against parking on footways and grass verges.

28. Work Programme

The following items were added to the work programme for the next municipal year:

- Update on sustainable travel.
- The impact of COVID-19 on the Local Plan.
- Number of homes to be delivered.

The meeting finished at 8.53 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**