Meeting Note

Local Plan Developer Forum

24th February 2017 Committee Room 1

14:00 - 16:00



Attendees:

Chris Pattison	Turnberry	Andy Butcher	Strutt and Parker
Andrew Garraway	Turnbury	William Wood	Strutt and Parker
P Milazzo	UK Salads	T M Nicholls	Leaside Leisure Ltd
Kevin Ellerbeck	ELA Design	Andrew Hodgson	Savills
Danny Simmonds	RPS Planning and Development Ltd	Peter Heaney	Pace Interiors Ltd
Rachel Bryan	Sworders	Richard Clews	Strutt and Parker
Clare Hutchinson	Sworders	Rob Scott	
Martin Friend	Vincent and Gorbing	Jessica Mcsweeney	Carter Jones
John Tarvit	Vincent and Gorbing	Daniella Persaud	Savills
Charline Brown	David Lock Associates	James Wood	Lambert Smith Hampton
Olivier Spencer	AM Planning	Peter Heawey	
Elaine and Steve			
Marsh		Graham Bridgman	
Jane R Orsborn	Prospect Planning	Sally Newton	
Richard Seamark	Carter Jonas LLP	Paul Wibsey	
Simon Butler-Finbow			

		Action
1.	Introduction DC welcomed attendees, and set out the scope and purpose of the meeting.	
2.	Notes of Last Meeting The notes from the previous Developer Forum (2 December 2016) were agreed as an accurate record. Matters arising were addressed through agenda items.	
3.	Terms of Reference (ToR) Following an invitation to provide comments at the previous meeting, ToR have been revised and circulated. AT outlined the amendment made to para 5.8 around publication of meeting minutes. Action: EFDC to circulate final agreed ToR with these notes.	EFDC

4. Update on HMA authorities and Garden Town Status

Epping Forest District Council (EFDC), Harlow District Council (HDC) and East Herts District Council (EHDC) jointly have received £500,000 funding to progress the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town, which includes the four strategic sites around Harlow within Epping Forest District.

The Garden Town partners are seeking to recruit a Programme Director with interviews scheduled shortly. This Developer Forum also provides an opportunity to give suggestions on the skills needed within the team in due course. Short-term priorities include developing a vision based on principles in the original bid, which are aligned with Garden City principles advocated by the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA), including improving sustainable transport corridors. This work is currently being assisted by ATLAS.

Work is commencing across the Functional Economic Market Area (comprising EFDC, HDC, EHDC and Uttlesford District Council) to better understand how the jobs and associated employment land requirement should be distributed across the area. It is envisaged that the authorities will develop a MoU to agree the quantum of jobs and employment land distribution. Additionally, further work will commence looking at wider infrastructure needs across the Harlow and Gilston Garden Town area. This will build on work already included in the Transport and Highways MoU. There are on-going discussions with the Princess Alexandra Hospital regarding its potential relocation; the initial Strategic Outline Case is expected in September 2017. EFDC & EHDC have made provision in their draft Local Plans for the relocated hospital at the two potential locations until a decision is made. Further work is required to explore possible equalisation of infrastructure contributions across the development sites.

Harlow District Council intend to publish their Pre-Submission Plan for Reg 19 Consultation shortly. East Herts District Council published their Pre-Submission Plan for Reg 19 Consultation in December, and are currently progressing the Local Plan for submission on 31 March to the inspector. Uttlesford have paused progress on their Local Plan, but aim to publish a Draft Plan for Reg 18 Consultation in summer 2017.

5. Draft Local Plan

ABC provided an overview of the Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation on the Draft Local Plan which ended in December 2016. Over 3,000 responses were received which are currently being processed and analysed by consultants and staff within EFDC policy team. An initial findings report based on the results from the consultation questionnaire will be reported to Cabinet on 9th March. This report also sets out a summary analysis of consultation responses from statutory consultees, town and parish councils and adjoining local authorities. More detailed analysis will follow to a subsequent Cabinet meeting. Responses to the Draft Local Plan consultation will be made available on the EFDC website in due course.

An update on the evidence base work currently being undertaken was also given, with the detail being available in the attached PowerPoint presentation.

Action: EFDC to provide a copy of the PowerPoint presentation to attendees

Action: EFDC to provide copies of the key responses from statutory consultees on request.

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The current LDS programme is being reviewed, and the revised LDS will be presented to Cabinet on 9th March proposing to amend the programme to publish the Regulation 19 Pre-Submission Plan in January/February 2018. It is expected that submission to the Planning Inspectorate will take place in May 2018, with Examination in Autumn 2018.

Question raised regarding a cut-off date for new or amended site proposals to be assessed through the Site Selection process, as there was concern that the process could be repeating earlier stages in the process. DC stated that the Council is obliged to consider all sites throughout the process, however following the recent consultation only amended sites or new sites would be assessed. There is a cut-off for inclusion in the site selection work of 31st January 2017.

Question raised regarding the time-frame for reporting on re-assessment of sites through the Site Selection process. CS confirmed that an updated methodology will be published prior to recommencement in April 2017. This does not involve significant amendments, but inclusion of clarity on the next steps. There will not be a period of formal consultation on this, as the opportunity for commenting on the methodology was via the Reg 18 consultation. The findings of this will be reported alongside the Reg 19 plan. The Developer Forum is intended as a channel to communicate this progress back to the group.

Concern raised that site promoters and landowners require certainty of their site's status in the Plan before investing further funds in masterplanning and other studies. DC stated that the Council cannot provide absolute certainty on any sites at the moment, given the stage of the Plan-making process, but that this will become more certain as the Plan progresses to Reg 19.

6. Discussion- Approach to Masterplanning and Delivery

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An overview of the approach being considered by EFDC was presented. It is expected that statements of common ground wil be agreed with developers in due course prior to examination. EFDC are seeking to sign PPAs with developers using a broad template, and to agree timetables, vision and objectives, responsibility for developing evidence preparation, resourcing, engagement and design review for individual sites.

Action: The Forum were invited to provide DC and AT templates or best-practice examples of PPAs for discussion.

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There was discussion regarding the site size threshold for which PPAs would be required. This is to be agreed between the Forum and EFDC. EFDC confirmed that PPAs will be agreed with a fee, but that this is limited to recovery of costs incurred by the Council in providing pre-application and determination services. It was noted that support for PPA charges would be dependent on the level of service to be provided, and it was queried whether fees could be reimbursed in the event that the agreed level of service is not met. DC noted that developers are not obliged to enter into PPAs, the purpose is to streamline and provide assurances, and that they should aim to avoid becoming legalistic. It was queried whether PPAs were expected to be signed prior to publication of the Pre-Submission Plan. AT noted that not all sites will come forward early therefore not all will be expected to enter into PPAs at Pre-Submission stage.

Action: EFDC to provide further information on PPA template and requirements.

EFDC

AT stated that site promoters for 'clusters' of adjacent proposed allocation sites will be expected to work together to ensure a coordinated approach to infrastructure, delivery and in the interests of proper planning. Some attendees expressed concern regarding which groupings of sites were expected to work together, and that discussions should be had with those particular site promoters, and further clarity required from EFDC regarding what would be required of strategic masterplans. For some sites, strategic masterplans may not be the most effective approach. DC explained that EFDC resources insufficient at present to take forward settlement specific meetings.

Action: EFDC to provide further clarity on future working arrangements in relation to consideration of site groupings. DC invited any further comments by email (ldfconsult@eppingforestdc.gov.uk) in relation to approach towards master planning and grouping sites for future planning purposes.

EFDC

AT noted that residents, elected Members and stakeholders will be required to have continued engagement in delivering sites, and that PPAs should set out how engagement should take place in order to coordinate efforts, avoid duplication of processes and reduce 'consultation fatigue'. EFDC will also be reviewing its own engagement protocols. It was queried to what extent EFDC will engage with statutory consultees to ensure timely and consistent commitment from them to be involved throughout the process. AT noted that the intention is to work as closely as possible with statutory consultees and where possible ensure that they are also included within PPAs. However, this requires further discussion and investigation.

AT outlined the need for masterplans and design codes to be produced where appropriate, to inform outline planning applications. Design coding is likely to take place at a settlement or large-site level to ensure continuity across sites but allowing for individuality. EFDC also wish to establish a Quality Review panel. It was queried who the Quality Review Panel would comprise of and what role it will have in the process. ABC stated that the NPPF and PPG encourages authorities to establish design review practices, and that EFDC would welcome suggestions on how it this can be developed in the District.

It was questioned whether outline planning applications are encouraged prior to examination, and for which sites in due course. ABC noted that the Council may welcome outline applications on some sites, but not until the Local Plan is progressed. At this stage the Council is yet to finalise the sites proposed for allocation in the plan or the infrastructure requirements associated with sites and settlements, and therefore planning applications may well be premature.

Question was raised regarding when masterplans are expected to be produced. DC stated that there is further work required by the Council to inform what will be required in the masterplans and when.

Action: EFDC to provide further details on this at the next meeting.

It was questioned whether there was a deadline for promoters to provide updated site specific information for consideration in the Site Selection process. AT confirmed that Reg 18 Consultation provided this opportunity.

EFDC

7. Key Themes for Discussion – Housing White Paper.

ABC summarised the key points arising from the HWP as they relate to the EFDC Draft Local Plan. In summary, the HWP is not considered to have any significant impact on the progress of the Local Plan or programme, and it reiterates much of the Council's strategy for growth. The Council was awaiting a standardised methodology for calculating objectively assessed housing need and confirmation on amendments to the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations which have been deferred. There is a continued risk of DCLG intervention in plan-making should there be further delay. There is currently no plan to bring forward a joint Local Plan with any neighbouring authorities. A report will be presented to Neighbourhoods Select Committee on 21 March 2017, setting out EFDC's response to the HWP consultation.

Question raised as to whether the HWP's focus on smaller and less contentious sites mean that they could be treated differently in the Local Plan process. DC stated that the HWP does not suggest this is required and confirmed that the Draft Plan already meets requirements regarding provision of sufficient small sites.

Question regarding whether the HWP's position on Green Belt would require the Council to reconsider its approach. ABC stated that the Council does not believe that any changes to the approach to Green Belt is required at this stage, however this issue will be included in the Council's response to the Government.

8. Discussions and Questions

It was queried whether, as a result of the consultation findings, that the OAN or Housing Target figure will be revised. ABC stated that it is a possibility for various reasons including future updates to population projections, consultation responses and when a standardised methodology is published. It is dependent on what transitional arrangements, if any, the Government puts in place, although at this stage no major change is anticipated.

A query was raised regarding the reporting of the initial findings from the questionnaire, and whether these findings would be given undue weight in decision making, compared with the more qualitative issues raised through other responses. DC noted this concern, and stated that the Council is undertaking much more detailed analysis of each response and will report on them fairly, having regard to the weight of the arguments presented.

9. Date of Next Meeting

Friday 19th May 2017, 2pm

Friday 8th September 2017, 2pm

Friday 24th November 2017, 2pm

		Action
1	. Any Other Business	
	None.	