

Thurrock - An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future

Extraordinary Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The meeting will be held at **7.00 pm** on **17 October 2018**

Committee Room 2 & 3, Civic Offices, New Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 6SL

Membership:

Councillors Martin Kerin (Chair), Peter Smith (Vice-Chair), Alex Anderson, James Baker, Terry Piccolo and Jane Potheary

Substitutes:

Councillors Qaisar Abbas, Mike Fletcher, Graham Hamilton, Andrew Jefferies and Sue MacPherson

Agenda

Open to Public and Press

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Queries regarding this Agenda or notification of apologies:

Please contact Wendy Le, Democratic Services Officer by sending an email to Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk

Agenda published on: **8 October 2018**

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Breaching those parts identified as a pecuniary interest is potentially a criminal offence

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- *Is your register of interests up to date?*
- *In particular have you declared to the Monitoring Officer all disclosable pecuniary interests?*
- *Have you checked the register to ensure that they have been recorded correctly?*

When should you declare an interest at a meeting?

- **What matters are being discussed at the meeting?** (including Council, Cabinet, Committees, Subs, Joint Committees and Joint Subs); or
- If you are a Cabinet Member making decisions other than in Cabinet **what matter is before you for single member decision?**



Does the business to be transacted at the meeting

- relate to; or
- likely to affect

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Disclosable Pecuniary Interests shall include your interests or those of:

- your spouse or civil partner's
- a person you are living with as husband/ wife
- a person you are living with as if you were civil partners

where you are aware that this other person has the interest.

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Our Vision and Priorities for Thurrock

An ambitious and collaborative community which is proud of its heritage and excited by its diverse opportunities and future.

1. **People** – a borough where people of all ages are proud to work and play, live and stay
 - High quality, consistent and accessible public services which are right first time
 - Build on our partnerships with statutory, community, voluntary and faith groups to work together to improve health and wellbeing
 - Communities are empowered to make choices and be safer and stronger together
2. **Place** – a heritage-rich borough which is ambitious for its future
 - Roads, houses and public spaces that connect people and places
 - Clean environments that everyone has reason to take pride in
 - Fewer public buildings with better services
3. **Prosperity** – a borough which enables everyone to achieve their aspirations
 - Attractive opportunities for businesses and investors to enhance the local economy
 - Vocational and academic education, skills and job opportunities for all
 - Commercial, entrepreneurial and connected public services

17 October 2018		ITEM: 4
Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 2)		
Wards and communities affected: All		Key Decision: Key
Report of: Sean Nethercott, Strategic Lead - Strategic Services		
Accountable Assistant Director: Andy Millard, Assistant Director - Planning, Transportation and Public Protection		
Accountable Director: Steve Cox, Corporate Director Place		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

This report provides an update on the preparation of the Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 2) Document (IO2) and a revised programme for public consultation. This follows the decision taken to remove consideration of the item from the agenda for Full Council at its meeting held on 25th July 2018 in order to provide Officers and Members with an opportunity to consider the implications arising following the Government's publication of the new National Planning Policy Framework on 23rd July 2018. This report sets out the key changes set out in the revised NPPF and provides an overview of their implications for the preparation of the IO2 Consultation Document and the plan-making process in Thurrock.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 Comment on the approach being taken to progress the Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 2) Consultation Document.

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 At its meeting on the 25th July 2018, Full Council planned to consider a report seeking authorisation to commence public consultation on the Thurrock Local Plan IO2 Consultation Document. However, on 23rd July the Government published the long awaited revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). The Framework sets out how the Government's planning policies for England should be applied and must be taken into account in preparation of the development plans, while also being an important material consideration in planning decisions. In view of the possible significance of any new policy changes set out in the revised NPPF and their potential

implications for the plan-making process, it was considered necessary to withdraw the IO2 Consultation Document from the Council agenda in order to provide Officers and Members with an opportunity to consider whether there was a consequential need to amend the Consultation Document, to ensure it remained properly consistent with the language and approach set out in the revised NPPF.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) July 2018

- 3.1 A summary of the key policy changes and messages contained in the NPPF is set out below in Figure 1. Additional information on the Government's changes to the NPPF can also be found in Appendix 1 to this report.

Figure 1: Key Changes to National Planning Policy Framework

- The introduction of a Housing Delivery Test which will penalise local authorities who fail to meet their housing delivery targets
- The introduction of a new standardised method of calculating housing need for all local authorities
- The requirement that development plans, must as a minimum “seek to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs” to be declared sound
- Changes to the NPPF’s definition of affordable housing to include homes for social rent
- Larger-scale developments (Urban extensions and new settlements) must be well located and designed and supported by necessary infrastructure
- Planning performance agreements (PPAs) are likely to be needed for very large or complex applications
- The introduction of minimum density standards for city and town centres and other locations well served by public transport
- Increased recognition of the importance of the warehousing and logistics sector
- The need for planning policies to promote and support town centre diversification
- The need for Local Plans to clearly identify what infrastructure is required to support future development and the role that developer contributions will play in funding their delivery

- 3.2 The key changes in the NPPF relate to housing development and the need to boost levels of housing delivery. The NPPF recognises the key role that Local Plans have to play in bringing forward new sites for housing. Reflecting this

priority, the NPPF sets out a more nationally prescriptive ‘top down’ approach for calculating housing need which then challenges local authorities to allocate sufficient land to meet the need identified or provide strong and compelling evidence why cannot do so.

- 3.3 The previous (July) version of the IO2 Consultation Document set out an Objectively Assessed Housing Need up to 2037. This was based on forecasts of future housing need set out the South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2017). However, with the publication of the new NPPF and the introduction of the new Standard Methodology for assessing housing need, the IO2 Consultation Document will need to be revised to incorporate a new local housing needs figure which the Government intends to publish for each authority. It is intended that this will follow further consultation on an up-dated methodology and approach to calculating the scale of future housing needs. However, no date has been given by the Government for publication of the revised methodology or housing needs targets. In addition, the new assessment of housing need will need to take into account the recent revisions to projected household rates from the ONS.
- 3.4 The introduction of the Housing Delivery Test will also have significant implications for Thurrock with the Council becoming increasingly vulnerable of being penalised by the Government for failing to provide sufficient land to boost housing delivery and meet the Borough’s current and future housing needs.
- 3.5 The new NPPF requires Local Plans to identify a supply of specific deliverable sites to meet the housing needs of the area for 5 years with a further supply of developable sites (or at least locations for them) for years 6-10 and, where possible for years 11-15. A Local Plan that does not meet these requirements is likely to be found unsound at examination.
- 3.6 Under the Housing Delivery Test, local authorities who fail to meet their housing targets and provide a rolling 5-year housing land supply (plus 20% buffer) will effectively lose their ability to determine where development goes. To put this in context, Thurrock currently has a 1.2 year five year rolling land supply and would therefore be liable to sanction under the proposed Housing Delivery Test.
- 3.7 For those authorities who fail the Housing Delivery Test there will be a presumption in favour of sustainable development which would make it potentially easier for developers to get planning permission for housing development on appeal to the Secretary of State where it can be demonstrated that the Local Plan is either out-of-date or fails to allocate sufficient land to meet future housing needs. This could lead to sporadic development (including in the Green Belt) and fail to maximise the benefits that future housing growth could bring to the local community in terms of infrastructure and place-making.

- 3.8 In addition to the threat of intervention and possible sanctions from Government, an ongoing failure to adopt a sound and deliverable Local Plan would also:
- Lead to a whole generation of local people being put at risk of not being able to find decent or affordable housing in the Borough;
 - Undermine efforts by the Council to boost the supply of affordable housing through a lack of viable and deliverable sites for development;
 - Undermine opportunities to support the future regeneration and renewal of existing local centres and communities;
 - Prevent the provision of new community infrastructure which requires large sites including primary and secondary schools to meet existing and future needs due to the constraining nature of the Green Belt boundaries in Thurrock and a lack of suitable sites in the urban area; and
 - Raise a serious risk that, without an adequate supply of housing to meet workers needs locally, firms could relocate or switch investment to other locations as workforce availability declines.
- 3.9 Alternatively, if job growth continues without the necessary housing growth, increased levels of in-commuting are likely to result, thereby putting additional strain on existing transport networks and further congestion on the roads.
- 3.10 In addition to the substantive changes required to amend the Consultation Document to reflect the implications of the new housing needs figure, further more minor changes are required to update the document to be consistent with the language and approach set out in the NPPF, as set out in Figure 1 above

Lower Thames Crossing

- 3.11 The proposed alignment of the Lower Thames Crossing threatens to significantly undermine the efforts of the Council to plan to meet its housing needs in full and to support economic growth and the regeneration of local communities. The current alignment will have an adverse impact on the potential to bring forward sites for development along the length of its route for a number of reasons. These include:
- The sterilisation of development opportunities in sustainable and deliverable locations around existing settlements;
 - Poor local connectivity and a failure to explicitly plan for and design a scheme with the objective supporting the delivery of strategic sites for housing and economic development;

- The need to mitigate the impact of noise, air quality, severance and flood risk considerations which has led to an increase in land take in locations where future development capacity exists.
- 3.12 The full extent of these impacts on the availability of land for development will need to be assessed in more detail through the plan-making process and the ongoing detailed design work and environmental impact assessment work associated with the Lower Thames Crossing. The outcome of this work will help inform decisions on whether the identification of broad locations for growth or specific sites can be taken forward as development plan allocations.
- 3.13 It is clear that the current alignment and design of the Lower Thames Crossing Scheme is failing to maximise the opportunities to support future housing and economic growth in both Thurrock and across the wider South Essex area and will instead have an adverse impact on the ability of the Council to plan to meet its development needs in a sustainable and deliverable manner. In doing so, the scheme being promoted by Highways England actively prevents the Council from following the advice set out in the NPPF which requires local authorities to maximise investment in new nationally significant infrastructure in planning for growth.
- 3.14 Given the complex interrelationship which exists between the Local Plan and Lower Thames Crossing Development Consent Order processes, and having taken advice from leading Counsel, it is now clear that while the Council should proceed with the planned IO2 Consultation, it will not be possible for Thurrock to submit a Local Plan to the Secretary of State until after the conclusion of the DCO process (expected in 2021) because of the potentially adverse impacts of the scheme, including any future design changes, on the ability of the Council to prepare a sound and deliverable Local Plan. As a consequence of this, consideration will need to be given to amending the Thurrock Local Development Scheme to reflect the further delays to the possible submission and adoption of the Local Plan due to continued uncertainties over the route and alignment/design details of the proposed Lower Thames Crossing.

Feedback from Member Ward Meetings

- 3.15 In addition to the reports and presentations that have been made to this Committee, the Local Plan Group and various Group meetings, a series of meetings have been recently held with Ward Members to discuss how the Local Plan is being prepared and the key issues arising as the Local Plan is taken forward. A summary of the outcome of those discussions is set out below:
 - It is important to undertake this IO2 consultation, in order for residents to have a direct say and input on the future of their areas
 - Concerns over the amount of growth in the Borough can only be progressed if there is evidence to support this. The outcome of the IO2

consultation will be pivotal in providing evidence on the growth capacity of the Borough

- Growth will need to focus on community needs and be infrastructure led. The IO2 consultation will need the promoters of new development to illustrate how they are addressing these matters, through the development of master plans and accompanying infrastructure delivery plans that will need full engagement with the Council, service providers and the wider community
- New development should be of the highest quality, both in terms of design and place-making and should respect the character and identity of existing areas
- The delivery of affordable housing, transport interventions, education facilities, health facilities and open spaces are key components of infrastructure provision
- Urban sprawl should be prevented and existing town centres enhanced.

- 3.16 At the meeting of the Council held on 27th June 2018 a motion was carried which read as follows:

Council requests that Planning, Transport & Regeneration Overview & Scrutiny Committee consider adding to its work programme at its next meeting on July 4th 2018 research into the feasibility of building 8,000 council, housing association and low cost homes within the next 5 years without such buildings threatening the character of any settlements within the Borough and to seek to explore the extent to which Thurrock Regeneration Limited could input into such a target.

- 3.17 Thurrock has a significant need for more affordable housing. This need was calculated in the 2016 South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and updated in May 2017 in response to new demographic projections. Based on that evidence available the net annual affordable housing need for the next five years would be 472 dwellings per year rising to 663 per year for the remainder of the plan period. If the identified annual requirement for affordable housing requirement for affordable housing was applied to the previously identified overall housing need, it would mean that 48% of the total number of new dwellings built would need to be affordable
- 3.18 In responding to the motion it should be recognised that one of the biggest constraints facing the Council and the ability of its partners to increase the rate and scale of affordable housing provision is the lack of readily developable and deliverable sites available to accommodate new housing development in Thurrock. This is illustrated by the findings of the latest draft of the Thurrock Housing Land Availability Assessment (HLAA) which indicates that within the Thurrock urban area there is only capacity to deliver

approximately 6,500 new homes of all types and tenures. It is therefore evident that without a significant general uplift in housing land supply it will not be possible for the Council or other parties to increase the rate and delivery of affordable housing in Thurrock without the release of land in the Green Belt for new housing development.

- 3.19 Based on the information gathered from the Local Plan Call For Sites process there are likely to be significant opportunities available to increase not only the overall level of house building in Thurrock, but also the provision of affordable housing through the identification and allocation of new sites around the Thurrock urban area on Green Belt sites. However, as virtually all of these sites are in private ownership, the ability of the Council to directly provide a significant uplift in new housing will continue to be limited. It should also be recognised that generally in order for Green Belt sites to be brought forward for development they must first be allocated for development in an adopted Local Plan. This means that until such time as the Thurrock Local Plan has been formally adopted it will not be possible for the Borough to meet its affordable housing needs due to a lack of site availability. Further delay in progressing the plan to adoption will also push back the timescales for the actual completion and delivery of new affordable housing given the time lag between the plan being adopted, the submission and approval of a planning application and the commencement of development on site. As a result even if the Thurrock Local Plan is adopted in 2021/22 any further appreciable increases to the stock of affordable housing in Thurrock are unlikely to occur for a period of 2-3 years after the adoption of the Plan.
- 3.20 A further consideration which needs to be taken into account when discussing the opportunities for building more affordable housing is the fact that in order to increase the scale and rate of affordable provision in Thurrock there also needs to be a parallel increase in the overall rate of house building in the Borough. This reflects the important role that the private sector house building plays in providing affordable housing products through planning obligations associated with the development of new sites for housing.
- 3.21 In considering what percentage of all new residential should be affordable, the Council has to consider a number of things including land supply, viability and the availability of alternative delivery models. National policy states that pursuing development requires careful attention to viability and costs in both plan-making and decision-taking. Therefore, the sites and scale of development identified in the plan should not be subject to such a scale of obligations and policy burdens that the ability for them to be developed viably is threatened.
- 3.22 The Local Plan Viability Baseline Report tests the current affordable housing target of 35% against several generic housing typologies and concludes that this level of affordable housing is generally only viable when looking at green belt sites. This finding is consistent with delivery patterns over the last few years as a majority of sites in the urban area are supported by viability statements indicating that the required amount of affordable housing cannot

be met on brownfield sites without impacting the viability of the overall development.

- 3.23 The IO2 consultation document will enable engagement with communities and providers in order to identify the most appropriate solutions to addressing this recognised need.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

It is essential that the Council has an up to date Development Plan in place and the supporting documentation that will help drive its delivery.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

The Local Plan has been previously subject of formal consultation (Issue and Options 2) and engagement with the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Committee, the Local Plan Group, Group meeting and Ward meetings.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

The Local Plan has an impact on the delivery of all of the Council's corporate objectives.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Laura Last**
Management Accountant

There is a dedicated budget for plan making to cover the basic costs of preparing planning policy documents. This budget is supplemented by a separate YPYV consultation funding pot that was allocated to the service by Cabinet early this year.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Benita Edwards**
Interim Deputy Head of Law (Regeneration)

The current system of plan making is contained in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and the Town & Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 ('2012 Regulations') and supported by the National Planning Policy Framework and Planning Practice Guidance. The Issues and Options Consultation Stage 2 is a preparatory step for the production of a draft Local Plan as required under Regulation 18 of the 2012

Regulations. In due course, the draft Local Plan shall be prepared and publicised in accordance with the statutory and policy frameworks.

The Authority has a statutory duty pursuant to Section 13 of the PCPA 2004 to keep under review matters which may affect the development of its area and it should be noted that the Secretary of State's powers pursuant to Section 27 of PCPA 2004 apply where they think that the Authority are failing or omitting to do anything necessary in connection with the preparation, revision or adoption of a development plan document or local plan. In such cases, the Secretary of State may prepare or revise a plan or direct that the Authority or another do so.

Under the Council's Constitution and in accordance with the statutory provisions contained in section 9D of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000, Full Council has the power to make decisions in relation to the preparation and adoption of the Development Plan.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project
Monitoring Officer

The Council has a statutory duty under the Equality Act 2010 to promote equality of opportunity in the provision of services and employment opportunities. The adoption of a new SCI will ensure that the consultation process associated with the emerging Development Plan will provide an opportunity for all sections of the community, including harder to reach groups, to become fully involved in helping to shape the future planning and development of Thurrock.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

There are no other implications associated with the report.

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- None

9. **Appendices to the report**

- Appendix 1 – Summary of the National Planning Policy Framework – Implications for the Thurrock Local Plan and the Issues and Options (Stage 2) Consultation Document.

Report Author:

Sean Nethercott

Strategic Lead – Strategic Services

APPENDIX 1 - Summary of the National Planning Policy Framework – Implications for the Thurrock Local Plan and the Issues and Options (Stage 2) Consultation Document

Context

A revised version of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published by the Government on 24 July 2018 and sets out how the Government's planning policies for England should be applied. The NPPF's policies come into effect immediately.

The publication of the NPPF came two days before Full Council was due to consider a Report seeking authorisation to publish the Thurrock Local Plan Issues and Options (Stage 2) Consultation Document. The NPPF must be taken into account in preparing the development plan, and is a material consideration in planning decisions. In view of the significance of the changes set out in the new NPPF for the plan-making process, it was considered necessary to withdraw the Issues and Options Stage 2 Consultation Document from the Agenda in order to provide Officers and Members with an opportunity to consider whether there was a need to update the Consultation Document to ensure it was consistent with the approach set out in the Framework.

This Note sets out the key policy changes included in the revised NPPF and identifies their implications for both the Thurrock Local Plan and the Issues and Options Stage 2 Public Consultation Document.

1. A housing delivery test will be introduced for local authorities in November 2018.

This will measure the number of built against housing need and penalise councils that under deliver against various thresholds over a three-year period. This includes applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development where delivery is below 75 per cent of the housing requirement from 2020. However, this year the presumption penalty threshold kicks in at 25 per cent, rising to 45 per cent next year.

Implications for the Local Plan and Issues and Options (Stage 2) Consultation Document

The Government had already signalled its intention to introduce the Housing Delivery Test (HDT) when it consulted on the Draft Revisions to the NPPF in March 2018. The potential impact of HDT on Thurrock has already been taken into account in preparing the Issues and Options Stage 2 Consultation Document and no further changes are required to reflect the publication of the NPPF. However, it should be noted that the Council faces being sanctioned under the HDT within the next 3 years for failing to meet the HDT due to the lack of sites available for development in Thurrock to meet future housing needs.

2. The Framework introduces a new standardised method of calculating housing need.

This takes the government's household growth projections and applies an affordability ratio, comparing local house prices with workplace earnings, to produce a need figure. It is hoped it will end protracted arguments on housing need at Public Examination. The Government has said that it will adjust the methodology to meet its annual target of 300,000 homes in the light of new household growth projections that are likely to be lower than previous figures. It

will “consult on specific details “when the new projection figures are published at the end of September 2018.

Implications for the Local Plan and Issues and Options (Stage 2) Consultation Document

The assessment of housing need for Thurrock using the standard method is 1,173 dwellings per annum which is less than the annual requirement of 1,381 identified by the South Essex Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) (2017). This partly relates to the fact that the SM figure does not take into account the need to boost housing supply in Thurrock to support economic development objectives (307 dwellings a year). The Government intends to provide each authority with an updated SM housing number by the end of September 2018 and the revised housing need figure will be set out in the Issues and Options Stage 2 Consultation Document to replace the housing need figure derived from the SHMA.

Further technical work will then need to be commissioned to evidence whether it remains appropriate to add the 307 housing need requirement to support economic growth onto the SM housing need figure.

3. Development plans must, as a minimum “seek to meet the area’s objectively assessed needs” to be declared sound.

In determining the minimum number of homes needed, strategic policies should be informed by a local housing need assessment prepared using the standard methodology. It adds that “any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring authorities should also be taken into account in establishing the amount of housing to be planned for”.

Implications for the Local Plan and Issues and Options (Stage 2) Consultation Document

The Issues and Options Stage 2 Consultation Document already recognises the expectation from Government that local authorities should plan to meet their area’s objectively assessed needs. However, minor changes to the text will be required to ensure consistency with the language and approach set out in the NPPF.

4. The framework supports build to rent and other specialist housing formats. Social rent has been reinstated in the NPPF’s definition of affordable housing.

The revised NPPF exempts purpose build-to-rent housing and accommodation for students and the elderly from the 10 percent affordable housing requirement in major schemes. Build to rent is also recognised as a form of affordable housing. Furthermore the NPPF says that Councils should make sure that “the size, type, and tenure of housing” meets the needs of “people who rent their homes”, as well as older people and students, among other groups.

Implications for the Local Plan and Issues and Options (Stage 2) Consultation Document

Minor changes are required to the text in the Consultation Document to reflect the language and approach set out in the new NPPF.

Further more detailed technical work is also required to re-asses future affordable housing needs within Thurrock based on the new SM generated housing needs figure. This also includes the need to consider the viability issues associated with the different forms of affordable housing across the Borough. This work will inform the preparation of the draft Local Plan and help ensure that the full range of housing needs in the Borough are considered as part of the plan-making process.

5. Larger-scale developments must be well located and designed and supported by the necessary infrastructure.

The NPPF says that large numbers of new homes “can often be best achieved by new settlements and “significant” extensions to existing towns and villages. Before proposing such development, it advises that strategic policy makers should consider the opportunities presented by existing or planned investment in infrastructure, the areas economic potential and the scope for net environmental gains.

Planning authorities are also told to ensure that the size and location of such developments will support a sustainable community, make a “realistic assessment” of likely delivery rates and identify opportunities for supporting rapid implementation, “such as through joint ventures or locally led development corporations”. The NPPF also reinserts a reference to garden city principles, to illustrate how “clear expectations” for quality can be set.

Implications for the Local Plan and Issues and Options (Stage 2) Consultation Document

The Issues and Options Consultation Document identifies a series of potential strategic development locations across the Borough where there is developer support for new urban extensions and a new settlement. Minor changes are required to the text in the Consultation Document to reflect the language and approach set out in the new NPPF.

6. Planning performance agreements (PPAs) are likely to be needed for very large or complex applications.

The revised NPPF sets out the Governments view that applicants and local planning authorities should consider voluntary PPAs where this might achieve a “faster and more effective application process”

Implications for the Local Plan and Issues and Options (Stage 2) Consultation Document

The Council already promotes the use of PPAs to help fund the delivery of an effective development management service. It is now proposed to extend this approach to help assist the plan-making function and ensure that the plan-making process delivers the high quality development and the infrastructure needed to support housing and economic growth.

7. The NPPF introduces minimum density standards for city and town centres and other locations well served by public transport.

The framework states that where there is an existing or anticipated shortage of land for meeting identified housing needs, it is especially important that planning policies and

decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of the potential of each site. Local Plans should set out standards which seek a significant uplift in the average density of residential development within these areas, unless it can be shown that there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate. Local planning authorities should refuse planning applications which they consider fail to make efficient use of land.

Implications for the Local Plan and Issues and Options (Stage 2) Consultation Document

The Governments support for increasing the development densities particularly within the urban area and around transport hubs is to be welcomed. Minor changes are required to the text in the Consultation Document to reflect the language and approach set out in the new NPPF. Consideration will be given to including a further question within the Consultation Document to obtain views on viability and deliverability of increasing development densities across the Borough.

8. The importance of Warehousing and Logistics development is highlighted.

The NPPF requires that storage and distribution operations' specific locational requirements should be recognised in planning policies and decisions. The framework says policies and decisions should make provision for storage and distribution operations "at a variety of scales and in suitably accessible locations". This also includes new support for lorry parking facilities.

Implications for the Local Plan and Issues and Options (Stage 2) Consultation Document

The importance of warehousing and logistics activity in Thurrock to the national and local economy is fully recognised and the Issues and Options Stage 2 Consultation Document considers the need for additional land, premises and lorry parks to support the sector. Minor changes are required to the text in the Consultation Document to reflect the language and approach set out in the new NPPF.

9. Town Centre diversification promoted

The rapid changes that are affecting the retail sector and town centres are acknowledged in the NPPF which recognises that diversification is key to the long-term vitality and viability of town centres, to "respond to rapid changes in the retail and leisure industries".. Accordingly, planning policies should clarify "the range of uses permitted in such locations, as part of a positive strategy for the future of each centre".

Implications for the Local Plan and Issues and Options (Stage 2) Consultation Document

The Issues and Options Stage 2 Consultation Document considers the need for a different approach to managing the mix of uses within town centres to help maintain and enhance their vitality and viability. Minor changes are required to the text in the Consultation Document to reflect the language and approach set out in the new NPPF.

10. Viability and developer contributions

Plans should set out contributions from development. This should include setting out the levels and types of affordable housing provision required, along with other infrastructure

(such as the need for education, health, transport, flood and water management, green and digital infrastructure).

These policy requirements should be informed by evidence of infrastructure and affordable housing need, and a proportionate assessment of viability that takes into account all relevant policies, and local and national standards, including the cost implications of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and section 106.

Policy requirements, particularly for affordable housing, should be set at a level that takes account of affordable housing and infrastructure needs and allows for the planned types of sites and development to be deliverable, without the need for further viability assessment at the decision making stage.

Implications for the Local Plan and Issues and Options (Stage 2) Consultation Document

The Government has strengthened the need for Local Planning Authorities to undertake robust and comprehensive viability assessments of their Local Plans to ensure that homes and infrastructure needed to meet local needs can be delivered in the right place and at the right time. The Council has already produced a Whole of Plan and CIL Baseline Study to assess the viability of different type so development in different locations across the Borough. Minor changes are required to the text in the Consultation Document to reflect the language and approach set out in the new NPPF.

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17 October 2018		ITEM: 5
Planning, Transport, Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Establishment of a Task Force in relation to the Local Development Plan		
Wards and communities affected: All		Key Decision: Non-Key
Report of: Kallum Davies, Democratic Services Officer		
Accountable Assistant Director: David Lawson, Assistant Director of Law and Governance		
Accountable Director: Sean Clark, Corporate Director of Finance and IT		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

On 4 July 2018 Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee voted unanimously to establish a suitable body for the oversight of the Local Development Plan.

1. Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 **That the Committee establish a working group under the title of Local Development Plan Task Force.**
- 1.2 **That the terms of reference (attached as appendix 1) be adopted.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 Following an update on the Local Development Plan, presented at the first meeting of the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 4 July 2018, the committee moved unanimously to request officers draft a proposal for a Task Force for dedicated scrutiny of the Local Development Plan.
- 2.2 The Council has only ever created one Task Force in the past, the Lower Thames Crossing Task Force. In accordance with that precedent the proposed Local Development Plan Task Force will be a working group as defined by the Constitution, and membership will be appointed through nominations by group leaders.

- 2.3 The Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee will act as the parent committee to any working group it establishes.

3. Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 There exist three constitutional options for the desired discharge of functions as expressed by Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee, these are set out below:

- A Task and Finish Group
- A Sub-Committee
- A Working Group (labelled 'A Task Force')

- 3.2 Considering the above options in relation to the expressed wishes of the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee it is apparent that a working group is the most appropriate body for the discharge of functions in relation to the Local Development Plan. This option preserves the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's autonomy to undertake its own workload whilst minimising formality and bureaucracy by allowing public meetings to be convened as and when required.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

This recommendation would represent an effective way for the Council to discharge any formal Member related activity in relation to the Local Development Plan.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

- None.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

The recommendation is seeking to establish a group that will allow elected members, as well as members of the public representing relevant interest groups, to engage and shape the council response to the Local Development Plan. This promotes and increases democracy.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by **Carl Tomlinson**
Management Accountant

There are no financial implications in the establishment of the working group/task force as no Member will receive a special responsibility allowance

for the duties. Officer time will be required to attend and carry out the work of the group. Any financial implications arising from recommendations of the group would need to be assessed when appropriate.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by **Matthew Boulter**
Deputy Monitoring Officer

The establishment of a working group complies with Chapter 4 Rule 8 of the constitution.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by **Roxanne Scanlon**
Community Engagement and Project Monitoring Officer

There are no diversity or equality implications related to the establishment of this working group. Appointments will be made through political group leaders and any lay co-opted member will be appointed through a fair and equitable process.

7.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

- None.

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- None.

9. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1: Terms of Reference for Work Group

Report Author:

Kallum Davies

Democratic Services Officer

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Local Development Plan Task Force Terms of Reference

Aim:

To form a working group, hereafter referred to as “Task Force” to discuss and make recommendations in relation to the development and implementation of the Local Development Plan (LDP).

Membership:

6 elected Members (to be nominated in accordance with political proportionality).

Chair:

The Chair and Vice-Chair shall be elected by the membership of the Task Force at its first meeting of each municipal year. The appointment will last for the municipal year’s duration.

Duration:

The Task Force shall continue until such time as all business of the Group is complete, which will be when the plan is submitted to Government for inspection. The ultimate decision to discontinue the Task Force shall lie with the Planning, Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee as parent committee; however the Chair of the Task Force may make such a request to disband at any time.

Meeting Schedule:

The Task Force shall meet every two months. Schedule to be agreed.

Activities:

The Task Force will undertake all but not exclusively the following activities:

1. To keep under review progress in preparing the Local Plan
2. Receive updates on Government policy changes and priorities insofar as they might impact on the preparation of the Local Plan
3. Receive reports and presentations on the development of the Local Plan evidence base and provide comments
4. Receive reports and presentations on the preparation of the South Essex Joint Strategic Plan and its implications for the Local Plan

5. Provide comment on the scope and nature of the thematic policy approaches to be considered in developing the Local Plan
6. Provide comment on the development of an evidence based Preferred Spatial Option
7. Review progress and the development of appropriate strategies and policy approaches to support the development of strategic sites within the framework provided by the Local Plan
8. To keep under review the Council's approach to community engagement in the plan-making process

Decision Making

The Task Force shall have no executive powers and will refer all recommendations directly to the appropriate executive or quasi-judicial committee by way of report.