

Minutes of the Meeting of the Local Development Plan Task Force held on 18 March 2019 at 7.00 pm

- Present:** Councillors Andrew Jefferies, Joycelyn Redsell (Chair), Gerard Rice, Peter Smith and Alex Anderson
- Apologies:** Councillors Martin Kerin (Vice-Chair)
- In attendance:** Andrew Millard, Assistant Director - Planning, Transport and Public Protection
Menaka Sahai, Design and Place Consultant
Julia Foster, David Lock Associates Representative
Matthew Lappin, David Lock Associates Representative
Katy Lock, Town and Country Planning Associates
Wendy Le, Democratic Services Officer
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Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

9. Minutes

Regarding the Overview of the Local Plan item in the minutes, Councillor Jefferies said he had been informed by residents that another Your Place, Your Voice consultation had taken place within his ward of Ockendon. However, he had seen no advertisements of this and was not aware. Andrew Millard, Assistant Director of Planning, Transportation and Public Protection, answered that he would look into how this had been advertised. Councillor Smith added that the Council had a Communications Team which could liaise with Ward Councillors and publicise the events to make residents aware. Ward Councillors should be notified of consultation events and be able to pass this type of information onto their residents.

The minutes of the Local Development Plan Task Force held on 21 January 2019 were approved as a correct record.

10. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

11. Declaration of Interests

The Chair declared a non-pecuniary interest in that she was the Chair of the Bus User Group.

12. Garden Communities - Presentation by David Lock Associates

Before the presentations begun, Andrew Millard opened the item by introducing the three speakers:

- Katy Lock – Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA)
- Julia Foster – David Lock Associates (DLA)
- Matthew Lappin – DLA

The three speakers would be presenting interrelated subjects to Thurrock's Local Plan. Andrew Millard stated that the borough was entering a period of unprecedented growth and that the Borough needed to see an improved quality of developments to ensure standards were of a transformational level and ensure new developments were more community driven and infrastructure led.

The first presentation – The Art of Building a Garden City: New Communities for the C21st was presented by Katy Lock. The presentation outlined:

- Garden City Principles – a guideline for local authorities (LAs) to adopt to ensure high standards of developments e.g. land value for communities; strong vision and community engagement.
- Government's Garden Communities Programme – TCPA had been working with the government and local communities on this programme making it possible for government to set high standards of developments.
- Modernising new towns for garden communities.
- TCPA New Communities Group – currently included 23 LAs who developed according to Garden City Principles. Key delivery from this Group included political engagement and corporate leadership; community engagement.

The second presentation – Delivering Garden Communities was presented by Julia Foster. The presentation outlined:

- A change in government thinking on development which had previously been undertaken by the private sector but was now moving to LAs.
- One of the projects undertaken by DLA had been in Cranbrook, Devon which had been development on a large scale. The development had been private but with involvement from the LA as a stakeholder.
- Urban and Civic's Master Developer Model – had high standards of quality in development through control of the development.

Noting the density of the homes plan in slide 26, the Chair said there was no greenery to enjoy. Councillor Smith agreed the layout of the homes shown was too dense and that the example of Alconbury Weald was similar to Chafford Hundred which was what Thurrock wanted to avoid a repeat of. Julia Foster answered that the houses shown in Alconbury Weald were of a high quality and was a bigger site than Chafford Hundred. She went on to mention that Milton Keynes was a good example of a big and successful development.

Regarding the presentations, Andrew Millard said these were to show examples of the different types and scales of development and not to promote any specific development typology within the presentations. Development plans would be drawn from the Issues and Options 2 (IO2) Consultation that was currently ongoing as each locality of Thurrock needed a locally derived approach. It was important for communities to link together and Garden City Principles could be integrated into Thurrock's local communities thus linking them. Agreeing with Andrew Millard, the Chair added that Thurrock needed to consider other factors such as schools near new developments for young families and homes for elderly people.

Mentioning the possibility of a new development on Arena Essex, Councillor Rice said the idea of building 2,500 homes in a 122 acre space was great but the Council had to ensure the new town would be fully integrated into the community and not separated as was the case with Chafford Hundred. Provisions needed to be made for bungalows for the elderly for accessibility because not everyone needed 3/4 bedroom homes or flats. Adding to this, the Chair said the bungalows should be spaced out around the community to ensure the elderly were integrated into the local community. Councillor Smith also mentioned the possible developments of Purfleet and said that developments had to be of a high quality. He wished to see homes that were of a 21st century model and not the high density model as was shown in the presentation.

The third presentation – Planning for Health and Wellbeing: Active Design, Healthy New Towns Initiative was presented by Matthew Lappin. The presentation outlined:

- How developments could be planned to mitigate health issues e.g. medical centres, ensure people felt a part of the community, ensure people felt safe within the community.
- People's health had been degenerating over the past years and poor health costed the community.
- DLA had been working with Sport England since 2007 – looked at town layouts and included choices for people to have a healthier lifestyle e.g. safe walking routes, cycling routes.
- Placemaking was at the heart of NHS' plan – how a town was maintained and looked could contribute to mental health issues because people may feel unsafe or concerned in certain areas. Familiarity was important for people suffering from dementia as well.

The Chair understood the negative impacts within health and wellbeing and said that positive impacts should also be shown to indicate the benefits of planning developments around health. Julia Foster said that Sport England was putting together a few projects into towns to analyse if these would have a positive effect on people's health and lifestyles. Continuing on, the Chair said that residents within her ward had worked together to create a sporting community. For future developments, there needed to be greenery included to enable people to enjoy on walks. The Chair asked that the DLA come back to

the Task Force Group in the future with more information on the healthy towns initiative.

The Committee suggested a site visit to the Alconbury development to analyse the structure.

13. Developing the Transport Evidence Base

The report was introduced by Andrew Millard which set out the key issues of transport to be considered within the plan-making process.

The Chair said encouraging people to travel by buses instead of driving their cars was not an easy task. People with several bags would not wish to travel on a bus. As Thurrock had the river to one side of the borough, she noted that this was not mentioned and suggested using the river for ferry transport. Councillor Rice suggested the need for frequent transport services particularly in high density areas and referred to Arena Essex.

The Committee discussed the good facilities offered within Thurrock such as free parking in Lakeside. There were 7 railway stations within Thurrock which was healthy considering the size of the borough. River transport should also be considered as another method of transport.

The Committee also discussed the possibility of placing more lorry parks within Thurrock as there was an increasing number of lorries parking in laybys around Chafford Hundred, the old A13, Orsett Health, Dock Approach Road in Tilbury and the Manorway. Andrew Millard confirmed that the Local Plan had identified the need for 3 lorry parks and 1 was already fully operational which was London Gateway and had a 10 year permission to support with their growth. The location of the lorry parks had to be considered and finely balanced within the borough.

Councillor Smith informed the Committee that proceedings regarding the Lower Thames Crossing had stalled and Officers were currently analysing the delivery model.

Raising concerns on air quality, Councillor Anderson sought reassurance that air quality would be considered within the Local Plan. Referring back to Issues and Options Stage 1 Consultation, Andrew Millard said that air quality had been one of the issues raised from most residents' feedback. There were 11 air quality management areas including congestion and traffic management. The health of Thurrock's residents was fundamental and a key component within the Local Plan. There were a number of polluted areas within Thurrock and various interventions had been undertaken to improve air quality in those areas. The Chair added to this by saying that there were problems within the vicinity of schools and parents and children had been encouraged to walk to school where possible.

14. Work Programme

The Group discussed the style and type of houses that should be built within the borough. The example of Brandon Groves should be followed which was the last green site to be developed within Thurrock. The range of available sites needed to be increased as many were urban areas thus created smaller and denser types of development.

Andrew Millard suggested the following items to be added to the work programme for the next municipal year based on the comments of the Group:

- A site visit to Alconbury; and
- An extension of the DLA's Health and Wellbeing presentation.

The meeting finished at 8.27 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**