

Minutes of the Meeting of the Local Development Plan Task Force held on 1 July 2019 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Alex Anderson, Andrew Jefferies, Martin Kerin (Vice-Chair) and Joycelyn Redsell (Chair)

Apologies: Councillors Gerard Rice and Luke Spillman

In attendance:
Andrew Millard, Interim Director of Place
Sean Nethercott, Strategic Lead of Strategic Services
Luke Tyson, Directorate Business Manager
Matthew Lappin, David Lock Associates Representative
Wendy Le, Democratic Services Officer

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.

1. Nomination of Chair

The Democratic Services Officer, Wendy Le, asked for nominations for the Chair.

Councillor Jefferies nominated Councillor Redsell for Chair and was seconded by Councillor Anderson. With no further nominations, the Committee went to the vote in which all were in favour of Councillor Redsell as Chair.

Councillor Redsell was announced Chair of the Local Development Plan Task Force.

2. Nomination of Vice-Chair

Wendy Le asked for nominations for the Vice-Chair.

Councillor Jefferies nominated Councillor Kerin for Vice-Chair and was seconded by Councillor Redsell. With no further nominations, the Committee went to the vote in which all were in favour of Councillor Kerin as Vice-Chair.

Councillor Kerin was announced Vice-Chair of the Local Development Plan Task Force.

3. Minutes

The minutes of the Local Development Plan Task Force meeting held on 18 March 2019 were approved as a correct record.

4. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

5. Declaration of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

6. Terms of Reference

There were no changes to the Terms of Reference and was agreed by the Task Force.

7. Site Visits

Sean Nethercott, Strategic Lead of Strategic Services, referred the Task Force to the last meeting of the Local Development Plan Task Force held on 18 March 2019 in which a site visit to Alconbury had been briefly discussed. He proposed 3 development sites that the Task Force could visit which were:

1. Alconbury Weald – it was the most visited site for development by other local authorities and had planning permission for 6,500 units that included new homes, primary and secondary schools and retail units over 350,000 square feet. The site had received planning permission 4 years ago and had developed 800 units so far.
2. Trumpington Meadows, Cambridgeshire – a slightly smaller site with 1,200 units with the same mix of units mentioned but the difference was that this site had 40% of affordable housing.
3. Kings Cross, St Pancras – had over 2,000 new homes including a regeneration of the area. The idea was to look at the principles behind housing needs and local community needs.

Sean Nethercott welcomed the Task Force to suggest any other potential sites they wished to visit.

The Chair mentioned that she had been to Huntingdon before and noted that the developments were of a high density which was not what Thurrock was looking for or needed. In response, the Interim Director of Place, Andrew Millard, said that not all recent builds in Thurrock had not been the highest standards of quality and may be due to a lack of vision from developers. The goal of the site visits were to provide Members with a range of different types of developments to give Members an idea of what high/low density and high quality builds could look like. He went on to say the site visit of Alconbury Weald and Trumpington Meadows could be done in one day because of its proximity to each other. With a range of sites to visit, it would help to inform and create a vision for Members of what Thurrock aspire to and deliver.

The Chair felt that a better range of development sites could be seen and went on to say that Persimmons had not been great with recent house builds because most of the third bedroom in 3 bedroom properties were too small and the roads into developments were tight. Andrew Millard answered that developments in Thurrock were changing which could be seen in recent builds such as The Echoes in Grays and Derry Avenue. He said the Council should continue these types of high quality builds with future developments.

On the 3 proposed site visits, the Vice-Chair said that he would be interested in visiting all 3 sites. With the Alconbury Weald and Trumpington Meadows site, he hoped that the visits would help to fill in the missing elements required for Thurrock's Local Plan and to build affordable high quality homes into the plan. The Vice-Chair went on to say that Thurrock could not continue to build homes into Thurrock's riverside and homes needed to be spread out around Thurrock and it was worth visiting the sites to see the development plans. Regarding Kings Cross, St Pancras, the Chair thought it would be good to see this site as well as Thurrock would have some urban intensification design due to its proximity to London.

Andrew Millard said that the service would liaise with developers on dates for the site visits and suggested that the site visits could be extended out to other Members to make the most of the learning experience. The Chair agreed to extend the site visits out.

8. DLA - Extension of Health and Wellbeing Presentation

Following on from the last meeting of the Local Development Plan Task Force held on 18 March 2019, Matthew Lappin from David Lock Associates brought back to the Task Force, an extended version of his 'Planning for Health and Wellbeing: Active Design Healthy New Towns Initiative' presentation.

The presentation outlined:

- That health and wellbeing was an integral part of design in place making to ensure people felt safe in where they lived;
- The design of place making to encourage people to make healthier choices in the way they live; and
- The NHS's Healthy New Towns Initiative.

The Chair thought the presentation could have included some pictures of Thurrock. She went on to say that there was a need to think of the area and include greenery in open spaces and not just focus on building houses. There needed to be a complex of different homes with open spaces built into the area. Matthew Lappin agreed and said that factors had to be joined up to ensure a good environment that would improve people's wellbeing. He pointed out that there were a number of lovely places in Thurrock that included the marshes and the amount of greenery throughout the borough.

Mentioning a recent trip to Colchester, the Chair said the sporting centre there was a good example of how people could be involved and the design of the

building allowed views from different angles. She went on to mention that elderly people needed to feel involved as well. Agreeing, Matthew Lappin said it was important for the elderly population to be involved and for young families to be able to go out and play safely so it was important that place making included accessibility options.

The Vice-Chair said that the types of houses to be built had to be considered and looking at the different community designs, there needed to be consideration on where open spaces would be strategically placed. Adding to this, Councillor Jefferies said the developments within his ward of Ockendon, did not seem to have as much open spaces as developments in other wards in Thurrock. He questioned how much encouragement was given to potential developers to work with organisations such as David Lock Associates. Andrew Millard answered that the Council had a low level of housing supply and a Local Plan had to be drawn up as soon as possible. There was a demand for developers with high quality designs and builds and the importance of open spaces and healthy places design principles had to be incorporated into this.

The Chair thanked Matthew Lappin for coming and hoped he would be back again.

9. Work Programme

The Vice-Chair requested that an update on the timescales of the Local Plan and its development be brought to the Task Force. Andrew Millard said there were issues such as the lower thames crossing hindering the Local Plan but an update would be provided.

The meeting finished at 7.40 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**