

Minutes of the Postponed Meeting of the Local Development Plan Task Force of the 24 January 2022 held on the 21 March 2022 at 7.00 pm

Present:	Councillors Joycelyn Redsell (Chair), Gary Collins and James Thandi
Apologies:	Councillors Martin Kerin (Vice-Chair) and Lee Watson
In attendance:	Leigh Nicholson, Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Kirsty Paul, Local Plans Manager Andrew Lowe, Turley Antony Pollard, Turley Ben Smith, Arup Representative Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised the meeting was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

18. Minutes

The minutes of the Local Development Plan Task Force meeting held on 29 November 2021 were approved as a correct record.

19. Items of Urgent Business

There were no urgent items of business.

20. Declaration of Interests

There were no interests declared.

21. Climate Change Presentation

This item had continued from the 29 November 2021 meeting and Ben Smith, Arup Representative, was in attendance to answer any further questions and sought the support and endorsement from the task force group to undertake a consultation to progress the strategy to its final place. This would form part of an internal consultation within Thurrock with different directorates on topics such as energy, transport and buildings and to also undertake an external consultation.

Councillor Redsell referred to the presentation, shortlisted actions, transport and questioned what was meant by "modal shift" and "freight modal shift" to which Ben Smith stated modal shift was moving people from one mode of transport to another. In this case moving people away from the private car into other forms of transport such as public transport, walking, cycling etc. He

explained further that freight modal shift was one of the areas they wanted to explore further with officers as part of the consultation on what was possible.

Councillor Redsell referred to electric vehicles in that more charging points were required before this could work successfully in Thurrock and commented on how dangerous electric bikes and scooters were. Ben Smith stated it was important to get electric vehicle charging stations right and close to where people needed them, and this was important not just in Thurrock but everywhere. Again, these were the items that would form part of the consultation and would identify what conversations officers have had already with UK Power Networks about the deployment of charging stations. He agreed that Councillor Redsell comments were valid on how dangerous electric scooters were and although they had to go on the road and abide by the road laws there was currently no regulations in place which was problematic. He commented that electric scooters maybe something that Thurrock did not promote but promoted the use of e-bikes instead. Again, these were the type of areas that form part of the internal and external consultations.

Councillor Redsell stated it was important that 106 monies were taken in to account as part of this consultation and Councillor Thandi agreed that technology was changing very fast, and the council were moving in the right direction of travel to ensure electric charging was safe and worked well for residents.

Councillor Collins referred to the current events in Ukraine and Russia and raised his concern on how the country still needed oil and gas to survive and stated there was not enough green technology and green power to keep countries going and there were currently not enough power stations to deliver this power. He also referred to food self-sufficiency and model building on arable land. To which Ben Smith stated although he respected Councillor Collins opinions it was time to increase the resilience and move towards renewable and green energy and by reducing the demand for oil and gas would make the country more resilient. That 20% of the country's land was used to grow crops and at this time was not worried too much about lack of food becoming an issue. Councillor Redsell agreed this was not such a concern at this time but commented that developers may need to include electric charges in new homes and asked for allotments also be included in the consultation. Leigh Nicholson stated it would be about getting the right balance, to look at the short-listed actions and to look at everything as a package.

Members discussed how wind power could be used more locally by schools, business or even residents.

Members also discussed how packaging, such as compressed cardboard could be disposed of and the options to reduce waste including food waste.

Members also discussed the use of batteries and how these were disposed of to which again these would form part of the actions of the consultation.

At 7.45pm, Ben Smith left the meeting.

22. South Essex Housing Needs Assessment Presentation

The item was presented by Andrew Lowe from Turley.

Councillor Redsell thanked officers for the report and made the following comments that developers in Thurrock were not building the right type of houses, the right infrastructure had not yet been carried out and needed to be to ensure Thurrock was not gridlocked for ever, addressed the traffic pollution levels especially down London Road, Thurrock needed quality homes not quantity and to include the building of bungalows, had never seen any self-builds in Thurrock, residents in the three tower blocks that were due to come down would need to be rehoused, good work on the new homes in Chadwell and that lakeside had been a bad design for commuting. Andrew Lowe stated that as the Local Plan developed it would be evidenced on how many houses were needed and identify the gaps in the housing stock profile and then down to transport and infrastructure.

Councillor Collins questioned the number of empty private houses to which Andrew Lowe stated he did not have this figure to hand but could be calculated from council tax data and could be included in the report.

Councillor Collins requested that ex service personnel be added to the list of needs of different groups of housing that had been identified by the council.

Councillor Thandi commented that housing should look nice and appealing for those that would live there and questioned why two-bedroom homes were not being built as not all residents could afford to buy four-bedroom homes. Councillor Redsell agreed that different options needed to be investigated to make good quality community places for residents to live. Andrew Lowe stated that work would be undertaken to look at the different sizes of properties as part of the local plan which would evidence the demand, the need and how these could be integrated. Leigh Nicholson agreed this needed to evidence based and studies undertaken on how each individual piece of evidence could be support by the local plan to meet the demand of high-quality homes as part of the community and place making.

At 8.22pm, Andrew Lowe and Anthony Pollard left the meeting.

23. Local Plan Update

This item was presented by Kirsty Paul.

Councillor Redsell thanked officers for the report but stated this had felt like “deja-vu” as the council had been in this place before and nothing had progressed and hoped now was the time for the local plan to have a way forward and to come into fruition. Councillor Redsell stated that Thurrock was so far behind in developing the borough for example how the riverside was

still not being used to its full potential, questioned whether the council were speaking with the Grays Yacht Club as more could be done in that area, also stated the ferry and cruise terminal in Tilbury were outdated. She also questioned why new developments were being built in polluted areas, areas such as London Road and areas that continued to get gridlocked. The local plan should focus on the right style of homes and the right quality, focus on employment and enhance areas that were better for the community and for the health of residents. That social elements should also be picked up within the local plan, such as local pubs or restaurants. Councillor Redsell concluded the local plan should not just focus on housing it should be more balanced, with higher expectations and have higher ambitions.

Councillor Thandi questioned when Grays Beach would be complete to which he was informed no specific details were to hand this evening but would speak with the relevant teams and report back to members.

Councillor Collins questioned whether there were any plans for bringing industries into the borough to which Leigh Nicholson stated there needed to be a balanced plan, not one that just focused on jobs or housing. This was the opportunity to look at how the council could be innovative in researching and developing all the ideas spoken about this evening. To also look at how the opportunities of upskilling could be available for school leavers to enable them to hopefully live in the borough, work in the borough and to build up community spirit.

Councillor Collins referred to the Local Plan Update and questioned what was meant by “sustainable development” to which he was informed this covered economic sustainability, environment sustainability and social side and would mean the balancing of those three strands that would form a key piece of evidence of the local plan.

Kirsty Paul thanked members for their contributions this evening and stated the planned summer events would be a good way to engage with residents, look at some of the more creative consultation methods to try and draw in those residents who would not normally engage on planning consultations.

24. Work Programme

Members signed off the work programme for 2020/21.

The meeting finished at 9.19 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

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Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**