

20 January 2020	ITEM: 5
Local Development Plan Task Force	
Thurrock Local Plan - Design Charrette Process	
This report is Public	

Executive Summary

This Report provides an overview of the work being undertaken in Aveley by the Council in association with the Princes Foundation and Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) to 'pilot' the development of a design led process for engaging with local communities in planning for the future development their local areas. Further to an evaluation of the outcome of the Aveley pilot, it is also proposed to roll out the Design Charrette process across the remainder of the Borough as key informant to the development of a community-led Local Plan.

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 The Council's approach to growth is that it should be community-driven, infrastructure-led and make a key contribution to high quality place making. The need to plan for future housing and economic provision due to population growth and the impact of wider socio-economic and environmental factors means that Thurrock will change considerably over the next 20-30 years. Having an up-to-date Development Plan is a key component in ensuring that the borough grows in a sustainable way with the necessary supporting infrastructure in place.
- 1.2 Reflecting the importance given to ensuring that the Local Plan process is community driven, the Council has undertaken a series of Your Place, Your Voice (YPYV) Community Consultation events across Borough to inform the plan-making process. These have been designed to engage with local communities and to obtain their views on what needs to be done to improve their area and enable them to benefit from the future opportunities that could be generated by transformational change in Thurrock.
- 1.3 The most common messages received from the local communities which have emerged from the various consultation events are summarised in **Figure 1** below.

Figure 1 – Summary of Your Place, Your Voice Consultation Responses

- Poor and failing infrastructure – deliver new infrastructure to support new development and regeneration;
- The need for housing (especially affordable, social, and adaptable for older residents);
- Create a wider range of local employment opportunities;
- Ensure our centres meet local needs;
- Congestion and poor air quality;
- Anti-social behaviour, drugs and crime;
- Neglected open spaces and need for welcoming places for young people;
- The desire for more or better gym and sport facilities;
- The need to address traffic congestion and gridlock;
- The need to protect natural landscapes for enjoyment and for ecology;
- The desire for better community facilities including more GP services;
- Need to plan for healthier places that encourage people to be active;
- A greater and more visible police presence including an increased frequency of police patrols in the evenings;
- The re-routing of HGV's away from residential areas and village centres;
- An improved network of walking and cycle paths;
- Additional bus routes, more frequent services and increased rail capacity.

- 1.4 The 'Your Place, Your Voice' consultation events have been helpful in identifying a consistent range of community concerns and priorities. However, it is also important note that the relative importance of these issues to local communities, and the opportunities available to address identified problems and transform and improve individual neighbourhoods, varies with each location within the Borough. In order to address these issues, and to develop a deeper understanding of community needs, it is proposed that the next stages of the Local Plan process will be informed by the rollout of Design Charrettes across numerous settlements in the borough.

2. The Design Charrette Process

- 2.1 Following a successful bid to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government for support, the Council were chosen as one of two Local Authorities (Cornwall was the other) to pilot the potential use of Design Charrettes as a means helping local communities influence the future planning and development of their area and to ensure the delivery of better standards of design and quality of place. Funded by MHCLG , the Princes Foundation was commissioned to assist the Council in facilitating a stakeholder engagement process and masterplan visioning exercise for

Aveley to explore how any new growth could potentially act as the catalyst for the regeneration of the village centre and its surrounding communities.

- 2.2 Using the Princes Foundation's BIMBY planning toolkit (<http://bimby.org.uk>) to structure and guide the process as an "Enquiry by Design- lite' process. Further information on the Enquiry by Design Process is set out in **Appendix 1** to this Report.
- 2.3 The Enquiry by Design (EbD) process has four parts: technical briefings made simple for people to understand, a site visit to further understand and remember the technical constraints and opportunities, a general workshop in mixed groups where all groups look at the same problem out of which the commonalities are recorded as a 'consolidation plan' and then technical scrutiny where the professionals are allowed to test the plan and feedback any refinements.
- 2.4 Adopting this approach has many benefits for community and developers:
 - The design team learn very quickly about a place from the people who live there.
 - People like talking about their neighbourhoods. Developers therefore get a remarkable amount of information.
 - If people see their ideas and concerns emerging through the design work they will tend to feel that their ideas are being responded to which builds trust, and often helps to build the basis of support for a scheme.
 - People learn a lot about the planning and design process which they enjoy and it empowers them to demand better.
 - If people feel they have contributed to a plan they are more likely to feel ownership and support it.
 - If people feel the process is fair and based on sound planning and design principles then even if they don't get what they want they respect that it has attempted to reflect local views.
- 2.5 Since the commencement of the project in 2019, the consultants and Council Officers have been working collaboratively to engage with the local community, stakeholders, landowners and developers to prepare and agree a shared vision and master plan for Aveley. Although this work is still on-going, the story boards attached as **Appendix 2** to this Report help illustrate how the process has been undertaken together with it's emerging outcomes and conclusions. Further information on the Aveley Design Charrette can also be found in the accompanying Presentation which can be found in **Appendix 3** to this Report.
- 2.6 The outcome of the Charrettes process will include a vision and set of principles for each location that will guide the future development of the area and, in doing so, help inform the preparation of more formal place-making planning policy documents, including the Local Plan and any associated Inset Plans, Master Plans or Development Frameworks. This process will also help identify the necessary infrastructure improvements required to support the

delivery of the place-making strategy, and by involving key stakeholders and the community in the planning and design of their community, the charrettes approach can help to build confidence and collective enthusiasm for the vision and its delivery and implementation.

- 2.7 Following a gateway review of the Aveley Design Charrette Process to evaluate the process, outcomes and project deliverables, it is further proposed to develop and roll out a similar programme of engagement across the remainder of the Borough during 2020. Those areas and settlements which will form the focus for this work are set out in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 – Possible Design Charrettes locations

- Aveley
- Bulphan
- Chadwell St Mary
- Corringham and Fobbing
- East Tilbury and Linford
- Horndon on the Hill
- Orsett
- South Ockendon
- Stanford-le-Hope
- Tilbury

3. Appendices to the report

- Appendix 1: Enquiry by Design Process
- Appendix 2: Aveley Design Charrette Story Boards
- Appendix 3: Aveley Design Charrette Presentation – to be presented at Committee.

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