

East Herts District Council – Uttlesford District Council Meeting Notes

Date/time: Wednesday 22nd April 2015, 14:00

Venue: East Herts Council Offices, Charringtons House, Bishop's Stortford

Attendees:

East Herts District Council

Cllr Mike Carver (MC) Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Transport
Cllr Linda Haysey (LH), Executive Member for Health, Housing and Community Support

Chris Butcher (CB) Senior Planning Officer, Planning Policy

Uttlesford District Council

Cllr Susan Barker (SB) Executive Member for Environment

Roger Harborough (RH) Director of Public Services

Andrew Taylor (AT) Assistant Director Planning and Building Control

Meeting Notes:

East Herts Timetable and Housing Issues

1. East Herts are currently seeking to undertake a Pre-Submission consultation on the draft District Plan by the end of the year although the exact timetable is dependent on the completion of various technical studies. The Preferred Options version of the Plan identified three Broad Locations which would contribute significantly to meeting the objectively assessed housing need figure. Given that it is unlikely that the Broad Locations would be able to deliver housing in the early part of the Plan period, meeting the needs in the first five years will be a significant challenge.

Uttlesford Timetable

2. Following the withdrawal of the Local Plan, Uttlesford District Council is now undertaking a Call for Sites process which will run until 1st June. It is currently the intention to undertake an Issues and Options consultation on a revised Plan in Autumn 2015, which will be followed by a Preferred Options consultation in Spring 2016.
3. As part of the work on appraising options, the Council is currently assessing all constraints to identify any preferred locations. The funding of improvements to Junction 8 of the M11 remains an unresolved issue at present.

Employment

4. The employment strategy for East Herts is to maintain existing sites where possible while providing some new employment space in appropriate areas. The Preferred Options District Plan sought new employment space as part of new developments to the north and south of the town. Unfortunately development to the north will not deliver new employment space beyond that

associated with a new district centre. CB suggested that one potential alternative would be to provide some employment space to the north of Birchanger Wood, within the route of the A120. The land lies within the Uttlesford Green Belt. AT advised that Uttlesford currently is unlikely to undertake a Green Belt Review as the housing and employment needs of the District can be met in non Green Belt areas.

Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

5. East Herts does not have a significant need for additional Gypsy and Traveller pitches or Travelling Showperson plots. However, finding sufficient sites to meet the need within the first five years (7 Gypsy and Traveller pitches and 1 Travelling Showperson plot) is a particular challenge.
6. AT advised that Uttlesford should be able to meet its need to provide 9 pitches in the first five years. However, due to a lack of suitable sites Uttlesford will not be able to assist in accommodating any of the need arising in East Herts.

Transport Issues

7. The impact of additional development on the M11 remains a key issue. Essex County Council is leading on work to produce transport modelling which should be available in the near future.
8. One option to alleviate congestion in Bishop's Stortford would be a southern bypass running from the roundabout that links St James' Way to the A1184, to Junction 8 of the M11. However, East Herts has concluded that such a scheme is very likely to be unviable and would have significant environment impacts which would be difficult to mitigate. AT and SB agreed and noted that there may also be technical issues in terms of linking a new bypass with Junction 8.

Open Space Provision

9. CB stated that Bishop's Stortford Community Football Club had been looking for a new site for some time as their existing site suffers from flooding issues. In addition, the Herts and Essex High School maybe looking for a site to provide additional playing fields. One potential solution would be to provide for the needs of both the Community Football Club and the High School on land south of Beldams Lane, within the Uttlesford Green Belt. A scheme of this nature would be compatible with Green Belt uses and therefore would not require a review of the Green Belt or an allocation in the Uttlesford Local Plan.
10. AT suggested that Uttlesford Council would need to see a comprehensive appraisal of the options before coming to a view on the scheme. It would also be expected that any scheme of this nature would be available for wider community use.

Evidence Base

11. Both East Herts and Uttlesford are waiting on the completion of joint evidence studies, notably the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and

transport modelling. East Herts has also commissioned consultants to undertake a Green Belt Review and a Delivery Study. East Herts has provisionally organised a meeting of its District Plan Executive Panel in July where a number of evidence studies will be presented to Members.

12. AT indicated that Uttlesford are currently undertaking a constraints sieving exercise which forms part of the site assessment process. When complete this work will inform the forthcoming Issues and Options consultation document.

AOB

12. It was noted that Manchester Airport Group (MAG) is seeking to remove the existing cap of 35 million passengers per annum (mppa) at Stansted Airport and that a planning application to this effect is expected soon. Latest figures show that the current use is approximately 21 mppa.