

meeting notes



Attendees:

| | | |
|--------------------|---|---------|
| Chris Butcher (CB) | - | EHDC |
| Jenny Pierce (JP) | - | EHDC |
| Rob Smith (RS) | - | ATLAS |
| James Farrar (JF) | - | ATLAS |
| Paul Mellor (PMe) | - | Savills |
| Philip Murphy (PM) | - | Quod |

Project: Gilston Area

Meeting Title:

Planning Meeting

Location:

East Herts Council

Date & Time:

Friday 2nd October @
10.00am

ACTION

a) Introduction

1. PM explained that the purpose of the meeting was to obtain an update from Officers on the general progress of the emerging District Plan, and to talk specifically about emerging aspects related to the Gilston Area.

b) District Plan Timetable

2. CB and JP explained the anticipated timetable for the emerging next steps of the District Plan which will involve a pre-submission version being consulted on in Spring 2016. The exact timescale is to be confirmed, however, JP hoped this to be before Easter 2016, with the consultation likely to last for a six week period. Following this consultation it was expected that the document would be submitted towards the end of 2016, followed by an examination Spring 2017 and adoption later that year.
3. However, JP explained that recent applications/appeals at Buntingford may throw the pre-submission timescale out slightly. JP explained that they currently have three large proposals on the edge of Buntingford at appeal and they were expecting decisions imminently. However, they recently received a letter from the Planning Inspectorate explaining that there would be a delay of around six months which presents Officers with a degree of uncertainty as to how to plan around Buntingford. JP explained that the current draft District Plan assumes circa 500 units in and around Buntingford, however, if the current applications/appeals were to be approved it would add an extra 1,500/2,000 homes to Buntingford. This would affect the planning not only of Buntingford but

also potentially mean reduced numbers in other parts of the district to reflect the increase at Buntingford.

4. JP explained that they were considering matters further internally and would be deciding how to proceed in the light of this information. RS indicated that he would discuss matters with his CLG contacts.
5. Notwithstanding this, JP explained that they had re-established the Member Working Group meetings which were set up previously in the run-up to the publication of the Preferred Options. The purpose of the Working Group is to enable Officers to present draft policies and chapters of the revised District Plan as they are produced. Officers expect to make use of the Working Group over the latter part of 2015 and early months of 2016.
6. JP and CB were not fully aware of the Local Plan timescales for Harlow and Epping Forest but understood both to be around six months behind EHDC.
7. CB explained that Broxbourne District Council had recently written to the Councils within the housing market area, with the exception of Uttlesford, to enquire as to whether they would be prepared to take some of the housing growth which Broxbourne claim they are unable to accommodate. CB confirmed that after consideration a letter was sent back to Broxbourne on behalf of all the authorities within the housing market area explaining that they could not accommodate any of Broxbourne's shortfall.

RS

c) District Plan Evidence Base

8. JP explained that the revised SHMA was to be reported to Members in late October. The document was to be released imminently and it would explain a target of 745 dwellings per annum, which was not too dissimilar to previous assumptions set out in the Preferred Options.
9. In respect of the Delivery Study, JP and CB confirmed that the document would also be reported to Members in October. CB explained that the document was likely to be released next week and in respect of the Gilston Area it would conclude that it could be considered to be developable subject to resolution of two points:
 - a. Confirmation that satisfactory solutions for waste water can be found; and
 - b. Further certainty on the deliverability of the eastern crossing of the River Stort.
10. CB indicated that a few other observations were made by PBA including matters relating to education and density, however, the consultants did not consider these to be significant.

11. The meeting discussed the two primary points raised in the PBA Report. PM expressed disappointment especially given the technical information submitted to date. In respect of waste water PM confirmed that ongoing discussions are occurring with Thames Water and the Environment Agency and PM was hopeful that a Position Statement would be agreed in the near future which could be provided to EHDC Officers and PBA to address comments made on this matter. PM
12. In respect of the eastern crossing PM confirmed that discussions are underway with the landowners. However, PM explained that for a project of this scale it was not unusual for some land parcels to be outside the promoter's control and particularly as the crossing was not required for the early phases of the development it would be unreasonable and unnecessary to expect full land ownership to be secured at this early stage. Notwithstanding this, PM confirmed that a process was underway in an attempt to facilitate an agreement with the relevant landowners, however, failing this, given the strategic nature of the crossing and the fact that it benefits the wider transport network in the Harlow area, it was likely that the a CPO would be progressed if considered necessary. PM agreed to explain this further in a short note which could be sent to EHDC Officers. PM
13. In light of the above the meeting agreed that the two matters were not likely to be considered as show-stoppers for the Gilston Area at Examination and at this stage, from an officer perspective, it would not affect inclusion of the area in the District Plan. However, information/evidence would be required to assist Officers in moving the matter forward.
14. With regards to waste water/sewage matters, JP suggested that John Rumble at HCC was contacted who may be able to assist. PM
15. RS agreed to discuss ATLAS input with CB and JP separately as they may be able to bring some of their experience to the table in assisting to move matters forward for the Gilston Area.
16. In respect of education, PM confirmed that the team were confident of our position given the extent of engagement with HCC to date and the significant provision of education facilities on site. CB requested a Position Statement on the matter particularly to address HCC standard of 1FE per 500 homes. PM
17. In respect of density, PM confirmed that these matters had been explained previously in materials submitted to date such as the Design Statement however, this specific issue could be pulled into a Position Statement and circulated accordingly. PM
18. PM suggested that it may be useful if Grimshaw present to Officers the ethos of the masterplan to assist with the specific issue of density. CB and JP agreed this would be useful and PM agreed to discuss and arrange an appropriate date. PM

19. In respect of Green Belt, the meeting acknowledged the previous report issued to Members during September's Plans Panel. PM enquired as to whether there had been any further discussion amongst Officers to decide how the plan would deal with Green Belt boundaries given that it was acknowledged that roll back was required in certain locations. PM also noted that Epping Forest had recently confirmed that they would be undertaking a review of roll back boundaries as part of their Local Plan process. JP confirmed that matters were still under discussion internally and no decision had yet been made. CB and JP explained that until further detail had progressed on potential masterplanning for the site it may be difficult to identify specific roll back boundaries. PM explained that the work undertaken to date (which has been submitted to EHDC) had considered existing defensible boundaries currently on site that could be used to readily define appropriate roll back boundaries now. Having undertaken this work the team are confident that very limited options exist to identify the specific and appropriate roll back boundary. PM confirmed that the intent was not to allow development to occur right up to the Green Belt boundary and as a result communication had been sent by Places for People to the Council around twelve months ago confirming how the land between the villages and the Green Belt boundary would be treated ie parkland put into trust. PM agreed to send CB and JP a copy of the letter. As a result, PM suggested that the Green Belt boundary should not be dictated by the outcome of the masterplanning work but instead what appropriate physical and long-term defensible boundaries exist. PM
20. JP and CB explained that further discussion was required internally before any decisions could be taken on this point – JP suggested that rather than define the position of roll back boundaries, the Gilston Area policy may refer to the work undertaken and to the potential likely boundary which would be refined and determined at a later point in time possible through a planning application or further policy document.
21. JP indicated that it would be useful to get a better feel for the masterplanning work undertaken and the overall benefits of the scheme. PM welcomed the opportunity to enable the masterplan to be described in more detail and in particular provide Officers with a full and thorough understanding of the detailed rationale and approach taken to its configuration, which PM explained had been derived specifically in response to existing assets on site ie woodland, parkland, water features, ecology, pylons etc. It was agreed that PM would arrange a session with Officers. PM
22. It was also agreed that a masterplanning session with Members would be useful, however, this may not be appropriate until early 2016 and CB and PM would discuss the matter further. PM
23. In terms of next steps, JP and CB agreed to discuss the Green Belt matter in more detail, and ATLAS agreed to assist with further advice and guidance from their experience, which may include use of safeguarding land. JP/CB/RS

d) Duty to Cooperate

24. JP and CB confirmed the further work that was ongoing with the adjacent authorities, in particular the spatial growth options work. This would help to provide an understanding of the various authority's positions towards potential growth locations, but would not identify a single Preferred Option. JP was clear that the document would not derail the existing plan process as far as EHDC was concerned. The outcome of the process would hopefully result in a memorandum of understanding which could be used as part of the examination process moving forward.

e) Transport Modelling

25. PM provided an update from the promoter perspective in relation to the emerging VISUM and paramics modelling. PM explained that work was ongoing and engagement continued with ECC and HCC.
26. CB explained that they had very recently received a letter from HCC which explained that the Highway Authority were concerned about accepting growth beyond the first five year period due to the potentially 'severe' impact on the A414 and surrounding network, particularly at key junctions on the A414 in Hertford. As a result the letter explains that HCC cannot currently support growth beyond the first five years, and are commissioning a transport model known as Comet in order to investigate the extent of any impact and how it may be mitigated. CB explained that the letter would be circulated next week.
27. PM explained that the team would be keen to investigate the detail of the letter and understand the precise nature of HCC's concerns. PM explained that in the context of the Gilston Area and growth around Harlow the extent of movement west towards Hertford along the A414 was expected to be fairly limited. PM explained that Vectos were considering the matter as part of the specific paramics modelling to provide reassurance to EHDC and HCC. PM agreed to provide a note from Vectos explaining how this would be undertaken. PM
28. JP explained that the authority was still considering the implications for the District Plan. However, at this stage they were still intending to plan for the full period to 20312 however, the plan may need to include an early review after five years to deal with this particular issue. However, this matter was still being considered and a final decision was yet to be made.
29. PM explained that the Gilston Area promoters would be keen to assist with this process as much as possible as it may be possible to identify the specific areas of concern for HCC along the A414 and as a result limit the extent of the early review to those specific areas. Officers acknowledged that this may be a potential outcome but that further work and detail was required before any conclusions could be reached. PM

30. RS enquired as to whether the transport work to date had considered modal shift in the context of the Gilston Area. PM explained that details had been considered by Vectos as part of the overall transport strategy and a note could be provided to ATLAS. PM
- f) Gilston Area**
31. The meeting discussed the future approach to the Gilston Area in the next iteration of the District Plan. CB and JP explained that matters were still being considered by the Officers following the receipt of the full evidence base. As a result, decisions as to whether the Gilston Area needed to be subject to a separate DPD and whether it was identified as a site allocation or a broad location were still subject to ongoing discussion with Officers. Officers confirmed that they would engage and discuss the matter in more detail with the site promoters and would involve ATLAS in this process. CB/JP
- g) Other Information Requirements**
32. PM enquired as to whether there was any other information beyond the information that had already been discussed at this meeting that needed to be provided to Officers to help with decision-making. CB and JP agreed to consider in more detail but at this stage they could not think of anything further that was required. CB/JP
- h) AOB**
33. JP suggested that in respect of conservation and heritage matters, Mike Brown at HCC should be kept in the loop. PM agreed to ensure that LP Archaeology engaged with Mike moving forward. PM
34. With regards to the Neighbourhood Plan, CB agreed to liaise with the relevant Officer dealing with the matter, however, he was aware that ongoing discussions were being held with the promoters of the Hunsdon & Eastwick and Gilston Neighbourhood Plan to ensure that their thoughts were aligned with the emerging District Plan. CB