REPORT of  
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES  
to  
PLANNING AND LICENSING COMMITTEE  
3 MARCH 2016  

PLANNING POLICY UPDATE  

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT  

1.1 The following report is an update summary of events related to the Local Plan evidence base, the Local Development Plan (LDP) and the work being undertaken for the delivery of the Garden Suburbs. This report includes the following:  

(i) Local Development Plan;  
(ii) LDP evidence base update;  
(iii) Site Allocations Development Plan Document (SA DPD) Update;  
(iv) Update on the creation of the Maldon District Design Review Panel;  
(v) Update on Strategic Growth in North and Central Essex;  
(vi) Notes from 29 January Planning Policy Panel meeting.  

2. AREA FOR DECISION / ACTION  

This report is for Members’ information only.  

2.1 Local Development Plan Update  

2.1.1 A planning policy update was last presented to this Committee on 1 October 2015 (Minute No. 459 refers). Members were informed that, following the decision to call in the Plan, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) have appointed a project lead and an experienced Inspector to undertake an independent review the LDP.  

2.1.2 The Secretary of State called in the plan on 8 June 2015 to test if a proportionate and balanced view was made within the Interim Findings on the LDP’s housing policies. He is now in receipt of the Inspector’s independent review of the LDP and will make a decision on the matter in ‘due course’. No further information has been received from the DCLG.
2.2 LDP evidence base update

2.2.1 Rural Facilities Survey 2016

2.2.1.1 The last Rural Facilities Survey was completed in February 2011, this document surveyed the availability of facilities and the general level of accessibility to services in all settlements of all sizes including towns and villages. Work being undertaken to assess rural facilities as part of the Site Allocations DPD evidence gathering, as it was a good opportunity to also update the Rural Facilities Survey.

2.2.1.2 The table in Appendix 2 of the Rural Facilities Survey 2016 provides a useful summary of the provision of services for each Town / Parish Council area as returned by the survey and verified by Officers. Findings from the survey can be used to examine the spatial distribution of services and facilities, it will inform policies in the Local Development Plan, Site Allocations DPD, and can be used as a material consideration when determining planning applications. The Rural Facilities Survey 2016 has been circulated to all Members, is available on the Council’s website, and a copy has been placed in the Members’ Room.

2.2.2 Annual Monitoring Report 2014 / 15

2.2.2.1 Section 113 of the Localism Act requires local authorities to produce reports which monitor the progress of their Local Plan documents and evaluate the effect of their polices. Before the Localism Act, the Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) had to be published as a single document that was submitted to the Secretary of State at the same time every year. Local authorities now have more flexibility to publish monitoring information at appropriate times associated with other work. The Planning Policy Team has therefore been publishing this information in tranches.

2.2.2.2 The first tranche was the Five-year Housing Land Supply statement which was published in June 2015 and monitors housing delivery. The second tranche monitors the progression of the Local Plan and tracks a set of indicators which evaluates the effect of current policies across five themes, Housing, Prosperity, Natural and Built Heritage, Accessibility and People and Communities. This information is collated into the AMR 2014 / 15.

2.2.2.3 Key statistics which have been updated in this year’s publication include the Development Control statistics. The AMR 2014 / 15 has been circulated to all Members, is available on the Council’s website, and a copy has been placed in the Members Room.

2.3 Site Allocations DPDs Update

2.3.1 The Site Allocations DPDs were previously reported to the Committee in October 2015 (minute 459 refers). A call-for-sites consultation and Town and Parish consultation was undertaken between 14 September to 31 October 2015. The Site Allocations DPD is seeking to allocate 420 dwellings to meet the housing needs of rural areas, 2.6ha of employment land and to allocate 32 traveller pitches by 2029.

2.3.2 Five stages of sites assessment work is being undertaken to evaluate every site received in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) and the
Call-for-Sites to find the most sustainable locations for development. The assessments for Stage 1 Longlisting and Stage 2 Shortlisting (or settlement sifting) were completed in December 2015. A Members’ briefing was held on 10 December 2015.

2.3.3 Stage 3 Short List of Sites (Quantitative Assessment) was completed in January 2016 and Stage 4 Short List of Sites (Qualitative Assessment) is in progress. As part of stage 4, the Council has sent external consultation requests to key stakeholders, including key infrastructure providers to identify any critical constraints which would prevent a site from coming forward.

2.3.4 Stage 5, recommendations for allocations for the preferred options consultation will follow once stage 4 has concluded. In the meantime, the Council have appointed Essex County Council Place Services to undertake sustainability appraisal work for the Site Allocations DPD.

2.4 Update on the creation of the Maldon District Design Review Panel

2.4.1 A Design Review Panel is currently being set up to provide a design review service to assess proposals for development across the District, including pre-application proposals and submitted applications of all sizes, with a particular focus on the Garden Suburbs and Strategic Sites. The Design Review Panel is a service which applicants can chose to use to assess and where required improve the quality of a development proposal prior to the submission of an application, or during the application process. Fees would be chargeable to applicants to cover the cost of the design review service.

2.4.2 Design South East was appointed to set up the panel and are currently finalising a list of candidates for inclusion on the panel. These recommended candidates have backgrounds in planning, urban design, architecture, landscape and public realm design, and include some professionals working and living in Maldon District. The terms of reference for panel members are currently being drafted in partnership with the Council.

2.4.3 A launch event for the panel will be held later in March 2016. There will also be opportunities for the Panel to give some training to officers and members in due course.

2.5 Update on Strategic Growth in North and Central Essex.

2.5.1 Chelmsford, Colchester, Braintree and Tendering, in partnership with Essex County Council are co-operating to produce a strategic chapter of their Local Plans together. This builds on work already undertaken to jointly-commission an Objectively Assessed Housing Needs Study. Maldon District Council are participating in these meetings as part of the duty to cooperate, however given the progress made on the LDP and its current status, it is not appropriate for Maldon District Council to participate in including a strategic section to LDP at this time.

2.5.2 The strategic chapter will form a ‘part 1’ to each Local Plan and covers key strategic issues:
- Set out strategic housing figures, with broad levels of growth in key locations;
• Indications of key infrastructure required;
• Agreement that each authority will plan for its own level of growth;
• Present a spatial portrait of the area;
• Include sections on build quality, green infrastructure, principles of design, landscape protection, and green belt.

2.5.3 The authorities involved agreed that each authority’s ‘part 1’ section will be examined separately.

2.6 Notes from 29 January Planning Policy Panel

2.6.1 A Planning Policy Panel (PPP) meeting was held on 29 January 2016. Officers provided updates to panel members on a number of policy issues including:
• Site Allocations DPDs;
• Design Review Panel;
• Strategic growth in north and central Essex; and
• North Heybridge Flood Alleviation Scheme.

2.6.2 Officers presented to the Panel emerging findings from assessment work in relation to the District-wide Travellers allocations within the Site Allocations DPD. The panel agreed that a Members briefing should be arranged to provide all Members with the opportunity to receive a presentation on the District-wide Travellers allocations. The briefing session will be held at 7.30pm on Tuesday 1 March 2016.

2.6.3 Following the briefing session, any matter of decision will be presented to Planning and Licensing Committee at the appropriate time.

3. IMPACT ON CORPORATE GOALS

3.1 The preparation and implementation of the LDP, including supporting evidence and other supplementary planning documents, support corporate goals which underpin the Council’s vision for the District and in particular protecting and shaping the District and balancing the future needs of the community and meeting the housing needs of the District.

4. IMPLICATIONS

(i) Impact on Customers – This report provides customers with the most up-to-date progress on a wide range of planning policy matters. The Local Development Plan will replace the Maldon District Replacement Local Plan ‘saved policies’ as the Development Plan for the District. This will provide a clear and up-to-date spatial vision and policy framework for the District.

(ii) Impact on Equalities – The progression of the Local Development Plan helps to provide sustainable and well planned communities which promote social cohesion and help to provide for the future needs of the local community.
(iii) **Impact on Risk** – An up to date Local Development Plan and associated evidence base is required in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework in order to enable the Council to strategically plan for future needs, growth and sustainable development, and provide an adequate five year supply of deliverable land for housing.

(iv) **Impact on Resources (financial and human)** – Without an up to date local plan the Council is at increased risk of planning appeals, which could potentially have significant resource implications. Any significant change in policy direction would be likely to require additional work or alterations to the evidence base which may have significant financial and human resource implications for the Council.

(v) **Impact on the Environment** – An adopted The Local Development Plan will enable the Council to promote sustainable development and safeguard the local environment in accordance with the local priorities for the District. The Local Development Plan has been subject to Sustainability Appraisal and Appropriate Assessment in accordance with the European Union (EU) directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment.

5. **CONCLUSIONS**

5.1 This report provides an update to Members on a number of planning policy matters. Copies of the new evidence base documents are available to view in the Member’s room.

6. **RECOMMENDATION**

That the Committee notes the Planning Policy update outlined in this report and that at the appropriate time matters for decision will be brought to this Committee.

**Background Papers:**
Planning Policy Advice Note v5, MDC (2016)
Annual Monitoring Report, MDC (2016)

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