

EAST (OUTER) AREA COMMITTEE

FRIDAY, 30TH MARCH, 2012

PRESENT: Councillor K Parker in the Chair

Councillors M Dobson, P Grahame,
P Gruen, W Hyde, J Lewis, M Lyons,
A McKenna, T Murray and K Wakefield

85 Chair's opening remarks

The Chair welcomed everyone to this extraordinary meeting of the East Outer Area Committee

86 Declarations of Interest

No declarations were made

87 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Armitage and Councillor Mitchell

88 LDF Core Strategy - Publication Document

Further to minute 78 of the East Outer Area Committee held on 20th March 2012, where Members were concerned that Senior Officers from City Development were not in attendance to address some of the issues raised by the Area Committee, Members further considered a report by the Director of City Development on the public consultation period for the Core Strategy and seeking comments from the Area Committee on the document

Attending for this item were:

Mr P Crabtree – Chief Planning Officer
Mr N Richardson – Director of Children's Services
Mr D Feeney – Head of Planning and Economic Policy
Ms V Buckland – Head of Service – Strategy and Commissioning –
Children's Services

Having previously considered the report, Members commented on the following matters:

(During consideration of this matter, Councillor P Grahame joined the meeting)

minutes approved at the
meeting held on 15th May 2012

School provision -

- that in the past, Education Leeds had closed schools but now there were insufficient places in some areas, particularly in the East Outer area for children to attend their local school; that many children were travelling some distance each day to school, with the associated costs of this and that the Core Strategy document was indicating new areas of housing with little information on how education needs would be met
- that the aim to create more employment in the city and in the Outer East area at Thorpe Park, was welcomed, but without local education provision families might not choose to move to the area
- that education provision was an important element when considering the sustainability of developments, with concerns being raised that this had not been addressed
- the impact on schools in Garforth if the identified provision in the Core Strategy for 2500 – 3000 new homes were built
- the difficulties in Colton of securing a place in a local school
- whether the figures being used this time were accurate in view of decisions which had been taken in the past based upon a different set of figures
- an understanding of why some schools might wish to expand, the new guidance around this and the need to ensure planning policies were robust and that school playing fields were protected

Green space and allotments –

- the need for Area Committees to be involved in identifying green space and allotments and the importance of providing public open space and playing fields for communities
- an acknowledgement of the work the Chair had undertaken in this area and the importance of this work and the involvement of the Area Committee continuing once Councillor Parker stepped down in May

Employment land/highways and transport -

- Cross Green and the difficulties of attracting industry into that area due to inadequate transport links
- the difficulties with public transport in the outer villages and that the relatively short distance between Garforth and Swillington took 2 hours by bus
- The existing road infrastructure in many areas of the Outer East which already experienced delays and queuing and the impact on this of further development without corresponding improvements
- The need to be promoting a localist agenda, particularly around jobs and skills

Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) -

- That information was awaited from the Secretary of State Communities and Local Government on how much of the CIL would be allocated to the City and to Wards and the need for clarity on this at the earliest opportunity

Planning contributions -

- concerns that the formula used for calculating education contributions was complex and whether it could be simplified and adjusted to represent the full costs of providing new schools/school extensions

- the need for developer contributions to be provided at the appropriate level; concerns that the interim affordable housing policy which had reduced the level of affordable housing to be provided to 15% had not been effective and should be re-examined and that on applications where there were viability issues and the amount of affordable housing being proposed was below the level set out in the policy, the view that Officers should not be recommending to Panel that such applications be agreed

Community character and identity -

- concerns that the Core Strategy Key Diagram appended to the submitted report appeared to show Garforth joining with Kippax and the need to maintain the character and identity of areas
- that information was needed on where the new houses indicated for Garforth would be sited
- the possibility of having a Neighbourhood Plan for Garforth
- that the principles set out in the Core Strategy should apply to the sites in the North East Quadrant

The National Planning Policy Framework -

- whether the new planning guidance had any impact on what was being proposed in the Core Strategy
- the need for Members to be provided with guidance on the new planning policy framework

The importance of involving Members in ongoing dialogue on emerging issues and themes and having integrated discussions with Area Committees was stressed

The Chief Planning Officer, Mr Crabtree, provided a brief summary of the Core Strategy consultation and what Officers were seeking from Elected Members at this stage. He explained that what was called the Local Plan by the Government, was a staged process, with the document currently being consulted on forming the first part of this process which would then be followed by the site allocations plan and the infrastructure plan and as part of that process, Neighbourhood Plans and the Community Infrastructure Levy. At this first stage, Members were being asked in broad terms whether the principles to govern the next stage were the right ones

Officers then responded to the points raised by Members and provided the following information:

- that there were capacity issues in terms of school places and whilst there were spare places, these were not always where demand existed
- that in terms of building new schools, the rules had changed and that with academies and free schools coming on board, the general rule was that LEAs should have less of a say in these matters - in favour of local demand
- that better connections were being made between Departments to tackle the matter holistically; that colleagues in Children's Services and City Development were working closely, especially in the East

Quadrant and looking to identify land and seek developer contributions towards education provision, with provision for two primary schools being considered necessary to cope with the increased amount of residential development indicated in the Core Strategy for the Outer East area

- in respect of demographic information and population figures, as well as the latest census figures which would be made available in the next few months, there was also the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) which was population-based and provided much important information to work on
- that looking ahead, the demand for primary school places would increase, with a slight decrease in demand for secondary places but that this would then increase, leading to further work and dialogue with many organisations on how this would be addressed
- that playing fields remained protected in the new planning guidance and that Sport England also had a role in protecting playing pitches
- planning contributions for education provision, that in line with a previous comment, not all schools were set up by the Local Authority; that those schools which were, depended upon developer contributions which relied on affordability to provide these and whilst this was an imperfect system, it was the current situation
- that the Core Strategy contained a quantum of development and was about setting an overall scale and distribution but that the more specific and detailed work about siting etc would come through the work on the site allocations plan, with Ward Members and communities being involved in this work

(At this point Councillor Grahame, Councillor Lewis and Councillor Wakefield left the meeting)

- that one of the principles in the Core Strategy was retaining the character and identity of communities and not merging them
- the importance of the site allocations work in strengthening the Council's position against inappropriate development and the timescales involved, with Members being informed there was a 12 month period in which decision-takers could continue to give full weight to relevant policies adopted since 2004, by which time there was a reasonable prospect of the Core Strategy being in place. Whilst the site allocations plan would not be in place, the strong principles in the Core Strategy would be set out
- viability issues; the recent strong stance taken by Plans Panel East on an application for residential development which concerned viability and the Government's desire to see increased house building even if there were viability issues in terms of providing the usual planning contributions

(At this point Councillor Gruen left the meeting and in line with paragraph 6.12 of the Area Committee Procedure Rules, the meeting was no longer quorate)

Concerns were raised that developers were already identifying sites and approaching land owners, with one site in Kippax being mentioned. The Chief Planning Officer stated that in this case, the Parish Council could be approached to start work on a Neighbourhood Plan which would set out the requirements for the community

Members acknowledged the usefulness of this additional meeting

RECOMMENDATION –

- i) To note the report and the comments now made
- ii) To note Members' concerns about the projected housing numbers in the Outer East area, the need for infrastructure to support such expansion including employment, highways improvements, improved public transport, provision of green space, allotments, playing fields and public open space
 - i) To note the comments about the current situation regarding school places and the need for a stronger emphasis in the Core Strategy on education provision, especially in the Outer East area
 - ii) To note the need for involvement with Members, the Area Committee and communities when working on the next, detailed stages of the Local Plan