

Tendring District Council

Local Plan

E-MAIL NEWSLETTER

Newsletter 3 – November 2014

More work needed to address local concerns about major developments

On 21st October, the Local Plan Committee considered Planning Officers' initial ideas for major new developments at Clacton, Harwich, Horsley Cross and Weeley and the possibility of development crossing the Colchester/Tendring boundary to deliver new housing and jobs in line with government requirements. The meeting of the Committee was well attended and some of the people addressed Councillors directly to highlight their concerns and make suggestions about the initial proposals.

The proposal for 1,100 homes and 8 hectares of employment land at Weeley (the 'Weeley Garden Village' proposal) has been suggested because the village offers a sustainable location for development with large areas of unconstrained land and good access to road and rail. However, it also however attracted the most comments with some suggestions that the development would triple the size of the village and destroy its rural character; that it would result in major traffic congestion; and that there was no guarantee that new schools and medical facilities required as part of the development would be funded by the relevant authorities. Weeley Parish Council indicated that a petition signed by more than 600 residents will soon be submitted to the Council to indicate the strong local objection to this proposal. A planning consultant representing one of the landowners however spoke in favour of the proposal, suggesting that developments of this size are necessary to meet future housing needs and deliver new and improved infrastructure that will benefit existing residents as well as future ones.

The proposal for 1,780 homes and 20 hectares of employment land in north Clacton, around Centenary Way and Thorpe Road (the 'Oakwood Park Garden Suburb' proposal), despite being a sustainable location for development with good road connections, also attracted some concerns. Little Clacton Parish Council was worried that the development would encroach too much on Little Clacton and would lead to more traffic going through the village, would result in the loss of land that would best be used for business and industrial development and that the alternative option of development west of the A133, as proposed in a draft plan prepared by the Council in 2010, would be a better idea and should be reconsidered. There were also suggestions for the development to be reduced in size or for the new primary school to be provided on land off Centenary Way instead of land off Thorpe Road.

There were also concerns raised about the proposal for 1,145 new homes in west Clacton, off Jaywick Lane, St. John's Road and Rush Green Road (the 'Rouses Farm Garden Suburb' proposal). Although the site is in a sustainable location close to Clacton Coastal Academy, concerns were raised about the increase in housing numbers from the 300 originally suggested in the Council's 2012 version of the Local Plan, levels of traffic already using the nearby tip and the lack of a cast-iron guarantee that the improvements to the sewerage network and the new school and medical centre facilities needed in the area will definitely happen.

A Councillor from Colchester Borough Council also spoke at the meeting to welcome the ongoing cooperation between Colchester Borough Council and Tendring District Council but also to make sure that any major development crossing the Colchester/Tendring border respects the existing communities in east Colchester by providing open space buffers and wildlife areas.

Some Councillors and residents also made some general points that they remained unconvinced about the need to build 12,000 homes over the next 17 years and were concerned about the government's heavy-handed approach to making Councils plan for new homes, often against residents' wishes, both here and in other parts of the country.

In response to the concerns, suggestions and ideas raised at the meeting, the Planning Officers were asked to go away and undertake some further work and consultation with infrastructure providers, developers and community representatives before the Committee is asked to make a final decision on whether these developments will be included in the new version of the Local Plan to go out to public consultation in the new year.

To read the Planning Officer's report which explains the initial ideas for major development, please [click here](#). (To open these links, some users may have to press 'ctrl' and click). To access the full agenda, reports and minutes of the meeting, please [click here](#).

Possible sites for 12,000 homes revealed for the first time

The Council envisages that most of the 12,000 new homes needed over the next 17 years will be built on large development sites in strategic locations (as explained above) but developments in other areas will also be needed. These will include sites that already have planning permission for new homes, sites where homes are already under construction, small brownfield sites within built-up areas and some larger greenfield sites on the edge of our towns and villages.

At the Local Plan Committee on 21st October, the Council's Planning Officers made their initial recommendations for which sites to include in the new Local Plan to deliver 12,000 homes, including sites for 3,634 homes for Clacton, 1,358 for Harwich, 1,100 for Weeley, 952 for Frinton, Walton and Kirby Cross, 655 for Manningtree, Lawford and Mistley, 231 for Brightlingsea, 543 spread throughout the district's rural villages and an allowance for 725 homes expected to be built on very small sites throughout the district. For the possible development crossing the Colchester/Tendring border, early indications suggest that around 3,000 might be possible on Tendring's side of the border, but no specific sites have been recommended at this stage as discussions between the two Councils are still ongoing.

Many of the proposed housing sites were already included in the Council's 2012 version of the Local Plan but there are also some new sites. Alongside the larger 'garden suburbs' suggested for Clacton and Weeley, there are also proposals for 175 homes on the car-boot-sale site off London Road/Centenary Way, Clacton; 315 homes on greenfield land west of Low Road, Dovercourt; 220 homes on greenfield land east of Halstead Road, Kirby Cross; and 360 homes off Bromley Road, Lawford. Planning Officers have suggested that these are the best and most sustainable locations for the additional housing that is needed, when compared with other alternatives'.

The proposals for housing development on land off St. Andrew's Close, Alresford, which attracted around 100 local objections during the last public consultation exercise, was recommended for removal from the Local Plan after the Essex Wildlife confirmed its status as a Local Wildlife Site and a habitat for 'gloworm beetles'. The planning consultant representing the owners of the site however addressed the Committee to argue that gloworm beetles are not protected and are not rare and development should be allowed. The Councillor for Alresford also spoke to welcome the removal of the site from the Local Plan because it is well used by dog walkers and residents are concerned about highway safety. Another planning consultant asked the Committee to consider including land off School Road, Elmstead Market in the Local Plan for housing and community facilities either instead of, or as well as, the proposals for 40 homes that are already in the draft plan.

During the Committee meeting, some concerns were raised that the development proposed for the car-boot-sale site in Centenary Way would lead to Clacton and Little Clacton being joined together and losing their individual identities. An alternative suggestion of either redeveloping the nurseries off Earl Halls Drive, Clacton or building on greenfield land off The Street in the centre of Little Clacton village was made for Planning Officers to consider.

The Committee noted all of the points and suggestions raised and asked the Planning Officers to consider these points before drawing up their final recommendations for what to include in the new Local Plan. To read the Planning Officer's report which lists all of the sites currently being considered for housing development, please [click here](#).

Developers and landowners put forward some alternative ideas

At the beginning of the Local Plan Committee meeting on 21st October, the Council's Planning Policy Manager informed that Committee that two major development proposals had been put forward by landowners and developers as possible alternatives to those currently being considered at Clacton, Weeley and the Colchester Fringe.

The first proposal is "Hartley Gardens", a development on greenfield land in north-west Clacton of 2,500 homes with community facilities, open space and a link road between Jaywick Lane and Bovil's roundabout/Progress Way. The other is "Tendring Central", a development on greenfield land around Frating, Hare Green and Raven's Green for 1,500 homes with community facilities, 40 hectares of employment land, a multi-directional road link between the A133 and the A120 and new bus services to nearby railway stations. The Planning Policy Manager said that he had also received suggestions for development at Swaine's Farm, Little Clacton (164 homes with community facilities) and land off Thorpe Road, Kirby Cross (50 homes).

None of these proposals are currently recommended for inclusion in the new Local Plan because there are concerns about high infrastructure costs, road access, and limited services and facilities in some rural areas. However, it is expected that the landowners and developers will produce evidence when the plan goes out for consultation for the Council or a Planning Inspector to consider.

Four more pitches needed for travellers

On 21st October, the Local Plan Committee was presented with the latest 'Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)' prepared by consultants for all local planning authorities in Essex. For Tendring, it forecasts a need for ten additional pitches for gypsies and travellers between 2013 and 2033 – one of the lowest requirements in Essex. However, the Planning Officer's report (which can be viewed by [clicking here](#)) explained that since 2013, five additional pitches have been granted planning permission leaving only five more to plan for through the new Local Plan. Since the October meeting however, this requirement has reduced even further, to four, following the grant of planning permission, on appeal, for one pitch at Kirby-le-Soken.

New Statement of Community Involvement Formally Adopted

After the first meeting of the Local Plan Committee in May, a new 'Statement of Community Involvement' (SCI) was published for consultation to allow Town and Parish Councils, residents and others to put forward their views on how communities should be notified, consulted and involved in planning matters in the future. At the July meeting, the Planning Policy Manager updated the Committee on the comments received and on 21st October, the Committee approved the final revised version of the document. To read the Planning Officer's report and the new SCI, please [click here](#).

Planning for Prosperity

Jobs and economic growth are among the Council's highest priorities. On 21st October, the Local Plan Committee considered, and gave its provisional agreement to a series of planning policies that will help support the creation of new jobs in Tendring.

Policies include improving the transport network; requiring new properties to have a super fast broadband connection; requiring developers to employ local people and advertise new jobs locally; directing major retail, office and leisure developments to sites in our town centres; protecting our hotels, guesthouses and holiday parks and allowing them to improve and expand; supporting the development of freight depots in locations with good access to the transport network; supporting developments related to the manufacture, transportation and maintenance of off-shore wind farms; allowing development that would support the rural economy; and supporting the development of high quality care homes in and around our towns and larger villages.

At the meeting, it was explained that many of these policies had already been included in the Council's last version of the Draft Local Plan and, generally speaking, there had not been many objections.

To read the Planning Officer's report which explains these policies in more detail, please [click here](#).

Protecting land for business and industrial development

As well as considering the policies aimed at delivering new jobs in the district, the Local Plan Committee also considered the Planning Officers' recommendations for which areas of land should be protected for employment use. As well as protecting existing business and industrial premises from being redeveloped for housing, sites have been identified to attract new employers to the area. These include 20 hectares of land in north Clacton, 14 hectares of land at the 'Harwich Valley' site off the A120 in Dovercourt, 8 hectares of land at Weeley and 26 hectares of land at Horsley Cross. To read the Planning Officer's report which explains where the employment sites are and why they have been recommended for inclusion in the new version of the Local Plan, please [click here](#).

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Local Plan Committee will be at 6.00pm on Thursday 27th November 2014 in the Princes Theatre, the Town Hall, Station Road, Clacton-on-Sea.

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URN address for the 21st October 2014 Local Plan Committee agenda and minutes:

<http://democracy.tendringdc.gov.uk/akstendring/users/public/admin/kab14.pl?operation=SUBMIT&meet=3&cmte=LPC&grpId=public&arc=71>