

CABINET held at COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES, LONDON ROAD, SAFFRON WALDEN, CB11 4ER, on THURSDAY, 18 JULY 2024 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor P Lees (Chair)
Councillors A Coote, J Evans, N Hargreaves and N Reeve

Officers in attendance: P Holt (Chief Executive), B Ferguson (Democratic Services), D Hermitage (Strategic Director of Planning) and N Katevu (Monitoring Officer and Head of Legal Services)

Also present: Councillors N Gregory (Chair of Scrutiny Committee), J Moran (Conservative Group Leader), R Pavitt (Uttlesford Independent Group Leader) and G Sell (Liberal Democrat Group Leader).

Public Speakers: Councillors P Barber and G Mott; Mr M Coleman

CAB17 PUBLIC SPEAKING

Cabinet was addressed by Councillor Barber (Takeley Parish Council), Councillor Mott (Elsenham Parish Council) and Mr Coleman. Copies of their statements presented at Cabinet have been appended to the minutes.

CAB18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Sutton.

CAB19 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 June 2024 were approved as a correct record.

CAB20 QUESTIONS OR STATEMENTS FROM NON-EXECUTIVE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL (STANDING ITEM)

There were no questions or statements from non-executive members.

CAB21 CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES (STANDING ITEM)

Councillor Gregory, Chair of the Scrutiny Committee, said the Scrutiny Committee were meeting on Monday, 22 July and had not met since the previous Cabinet meeting.

CAB22 REPORT OF DELEGATED DECISIONS TAKEN BY CABINET MEMBERS (STANDING ITEM)

The delegated decision [Local Nature Recovery Strategy – Public Consultation](#) was noted. Councillor Reeve urged people to respond to the consultation.

CAB23 DESIGN CODE

Councillor Evans presented the report regarding the Uttlesford Design Code, which, if adopted, would be a practical and useable document for all parties involved in the design and planning of development in Uttlesford. It set out a series of rules and guidelines that, when followed, would ensure that all new development was designed and built to the highest quality, as well as respecting the unique Uttlesford context. He said it was an excellent document and he was pleased to have taken part in the public consultation. As a supplementary planning document (SPD), it would be a material consideration in regards to the determination of planning applications.

The Strategic Director of Planning said an amendment had been put forward by Takeley Parish Council.

Councillor Evans said the amendment would be included in the Design Code. He proposed approval of the recommendations set out in the report.

In response to a question, the Strategic Director of Planning said the Design Code would steer good design from developers and would be recognised as a material planning consideration by the Inspectorate.

Members commended the Design Code as an excellent document, which would help planners draw on the unique character of Uttlesford, and were pleased that the Council was one of the first to produce a district wide design code.

Councillor Evans said the Design Code would have a tangible difference and benefit peoples' lives. He proposed approval of the recommendation, including the amendment as advised by Takeley Parish Council.

Councillor Reeve seconded the proposal.

The Design Code was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED to adopt the Design Code for use by the LPA as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), subject to the amendment to the Uttlesford Places appendix (page 33) on the request of Takeley Parish Council.

CAB24 PRODUCTIVITY PLAN

The Leader presented the report regarding the Productivity Plan, which had been produced to meet a new annual requirement introduced by the

Government on 16th April, with a required submission deadline of 19th July. The Government's guidelines contained 25 detailed 'questions to consider' under four specified headings, but also set an upper length constraint of a maximum of four pages for the Plan. She proposed approval of the Productivity Plan attached at Appendix B.

In response to a question regarding paper billing, the Leader said the Council could not refuse to send paper bills so people would not be excluded who did not have digital access.

The Chief Executive said the approach would be "digital default plus" and the Council would encourage those that could receive paperless bills to do so.

In response to a question regarding agency staff use, the Chief Executive said employment trends would have been impacted by the pandemic. He said he would look for the relevant Near Statistical Neighbours data and include any trends relating to the use of agency staff in the next report. He said Councils in this area of the country struggled to recruit certain professions, such as planners and accountants.

In response to a question regarding Power BI, an analytics digital platform, which was being used by the Planning, Environmental Health and Waste services, the Strategic Director of Planning said the Council was one of the first to use the system and was working with the supplier as an exemplar Authority.

The Leader proposed approval of the Productivity Plan; this was duly seconded by Councillor Coote.

The proposal was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED to approve the draft Productivity Plan for submission to Government by the 19th July deadline.

CAB25 UTTLESFORD LOCAL PLAN 2021 - 2041 (REGULATION 19) SUBMISSION VERSION

Councillor Evans presented the report regarding the Local Plan Regulation 19 submission version, which provided an overview of the document and next steps. Subject to the decision of Cabinet and then Council on 30 July, public consultation was programmed for 8 August to 3 October (8 weeks). Following the consultation, the Local Plan and results of the consultation would be submitted to Government and Planning Inspectorate. He said the district needed a new Local Plan to prevent speculative development, as the current Local Plan dated back to 2005, and he was confident that the Regulation 19 version was superior to any previous Local Plan produced in Uttlesford. Production of the Plan had been thorough and copious amounts of evidence and documentation had been considered by members; the item had been put forward on the recommendation of the Local Plan Panel. He said the Local Plan was not only concerned with site allocation but also contained a raft of excellent policies, such as green and affordable housing, that would greatly influence development in the

district. He said the district was vulnerable without a Local Plan and there was a sense of urgency as he anticipated that the Government would step in and impose a Local Plan on Uttlesford if one was not made according to the agreed timetable. He said the Council had listened to comments made at the Regulation 18 consultation and the number of housing allocations had been reduced due to existing development. He said the Local Plan would not please everyone, and there had been concerns raised in respect of the allocations in Takeley and Great Dunmow, but each allocation had to meet a certain criteria in regards to employment and transport studies. He reiterated that it was essential for the Council to adopt a Local Plan to prevent future speculative development.

The Leader said the Local Plan Regulation 19 document should be forwarded to full Council for debate. She said her administration had provided the political leadership to drive the Local Plan forward but there had been no interference in the work of officers. She reminded members that the Local Plan was a complex and work intensive process and that if amendments were to be proposed, that they be submitted in good time in order for officers to advise on feasibility.

Councillor Sell commended Councillor Evans and officers for meeting the timetable as it would not be good for the Council to delay. He said he still had reservations regarding the allocations in Takeley and asked whether smaller villages could have been consulted in regards to taking on more of the housing allocation.

In response, the Leader said officer responses to consultation comments could be found in the papers.

Councillor Evans said changes had been made since Regulation 18 in respect of Takeley and the Countryside Protection Zone.

The Strategic Director of Planning said he would be happy to discuss neighbourhood planning with any parish council in the event a small village wanted more housing.

Councillor Coote said the affordable housing policy was hugely important and it was vital to approve a Local Plan in order to develop housing with the necessary infrastructure. He said a quarter of all homes would be affordable under the Regulation 19 version of the Local Plan and the 40% affordable target had never been achieved. He said the policies contained within the Local Plan would give the Planning Committee control in determining planning applications.

Councillor Pavitt said a Local Plan meant controlled development and an end to speculative development. He said no draft Local Plan had been completely accepted by the Inspector on submission and if people had strong feelings on any area of the Plan, they needed to respond to the Regulation 19 consultation in order for the examiner to take their views into account.

Councillor Moran said he was disappointed with the 'small village' housing allocations in the Regulation 19 document; in Ashdon, more housing was needed in order to cater for younger families with children. He said he would

speak to the Strategic Director of Planning regarding Neighbourhood Plan making.

Councillor Reeve said it was essential that Local Plan Regulation 19 document proceeded to consultation.

Councillor Hargreaves said the changes since Regulation 18 were sensible and the document should be recommended to full Council for debate.

Councillor Evans proposed the recommendations set out in the report; Councillor Reeve duly seconded. The proposal was approved unanimously.

RESOLVED to:

- I. Recommend to Council that the Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 – 2041 (Regulation 19) document is published for eight weeks consultation 8 August to 3 October 2024.
- II. Recommend to Council that thereafter, the Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 – 2041 (Regulation 19) document is submitted to government / PINS for examination.
- III. Provide delegated authority for the Strategic Director of Planning, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, to make any minor corrections prior to consultation, including for typographical and formatting purposes AND to prepare an 'Additional Modifications' Schedule for submission if required.
- IV. Note the technical supporting evidence in preparation for publication alongside the Draft Uttlesford Local Plan 2021 – 2041 consultation.

The meeting was closed at 8.45pm.