

Luton & South Beds Joint Committee
Notes of the Meeting of the Sub-Committee held at
Priory House on 21 July 2011, 2pm, room 15b,

Present:-

Members:-

LBC

Cllr Roy Davis,
 Cllr Sian Timoney,
 Cllr Tom Shaw,
 Cllr Dave Taylor;
 Cllr Hazel Simmons

CBC

Cllr Young,	Cllr Jamieson
Cllr Matthews,	Cllr Delgarno
Cllr Versalio,	Cllr Gammons
Cllr Bowater,	Cllr Hegley
Cllr Spurr,	Cllr Warren

NHDC –

Cllr Brindley,

Officers:-

CBC – Alan Fleming, Richard Fox
 LBC – Chris Pagdin
 JTU – Lachlan Robertson, Kevin Owen, Simon Andrews
 NHDC – David Scholes

1.	Agendas for the meeting, minutes of the previous MSG and Joint Committee meetings and agendas for the Joint Committee on 29 July were circulated. The minutes were circulated for information and were taken as read.	
2.	Appointment of sub-committee representatives The Chair explained that the 2 nd representative for LBC would be	

	<p>Cllr Dave Taylor as a member from the Joint Committee with the equivalent transport portfolio. Cllr Nigel Young (Vice Chair) introduced Cllr Ken Mathews as the equivalent representative for CBC with a similar portfolio. Other members from both council's were also in attendance having linked portfolios.</p>	
3.	<p>Joint Committee agenda for 29 July</p> <p>Lachlan Robertson (LR), JTU manager then introduced the items on the agenda and explained that because of the exceptionally short timescales involved that it had not been possible to release the steering group papers available earlier, as would normally be the case. However, the JTU manager would be happy to take any comments and questions on the papers.</p> <p>The chair invited any declarations of interest – there were none.</p> <p>LR ran through the Joint Committee agenda, summarising the items. LR pointed out that agenda item 6 relating to the proposed Local Development Schemes was for the Joint Committee to recommend only, since responsibility for approving the 2 LDSs lay with the 2 separate Councils. Cllr T Shaw sought clarification that any such approval would be subject to the progress of the Core strategy itself at the next Joint committee meeting of 29th July 2011. The Chair confirmed that this would be the case.</p> <p>The JTU manager introduced Item 7 the paper on Updating the Core Strategy evidence base, and infrastructure – but explained that an updated paper was tabled and circulated to the meeting which set out a more realistic timetable for delivery of this work.</p> <p>Item 12 represented the “meat” of the Joint Committee agenda as it represented the complete picture in terms of the technical matters raised by the Inspector. The report did not deal with the issue of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two Councils.</p> <p>Cllr Brindley objected to the terminology contained in the report regarding Century Park extension. North Herts DC had not been engaged in “non-cooperation” as evidenced by their presence at this meeting, as well as other officer meetings. NHDC had not determined whether to include the extension to Century Park within their own Core Strategy, since it had not published it yet, although their current position was that they were unlikely to. However, this was on the basis that they had not been presented with evidence to justify the “exceptional circumstances” needed to release land from the Green Belt.</p> <p>Roy Davis (RD) responded by saying that that was the terminology used by the Inspector and that we were simply</p>	

	<p>reflecting that. RD acknowledged a need to discuss with NHDC in more detail the proposals for Century Park extension.</p> <p>RD asked if there were other issues with the schedules of changes. He was unaware of any major objections.</p> <p>Sian Timoney (ST) said that she didn't know if she had any issues with the schedules because she had only just been presented with them.</p> <p>RD said that further issues could be raised with him or JTU officers at any stage prior to the Joint Committee on 29th.</p> <p>Nigel Young asked if Members had major concerns with any of the changes put forward. None were expressed but it was recognised that further time might be needed to examine the schedule in more detail.</p> <p>Tom Shaw (TS) was concerned about the inclusion of a north Luton railway station, potentially at the cost of Leagrave Station.</p> <p>RD responded by saying that the changes were simply responding to the comments made by the Inspector.</p> <p>No other concerns were expressed about the changes at this stage.</p>	
4.	<p><u>Memorandum of Understanding</u></p> <p>RD explained that he felt there were no fundamental disagreements between the two Councils on the content of the Core Strategy, except for one. That was the issue as to why the Core Strategy was not placing development in closest proximity to where the need was, by this he meant the West of Luton area. It should be a common objective to provide housing closest to the area of need. RD acknowledged that there were constraints and planning rules which meant proposals needed to be justified and deliverable. In some areas west of Luton there are good reasons why development should not take place but this might not always be the case. Luton BC's position was that there is more capacity west of Luton than was being provided for in the Core Strategy. The 250 dwellings referred to in the MOU was a good start.</p> <p>NY – this is common ground</p> <p>RD – we don't know the contents of the Localism Bill yet and we need to move forward in advance of that in the spirit of cooperation. It was LBC's perception that CBC were defending against an assault on their territory and were putting up the barricades. LBC needed to convince CBC that they were not</p>	

	<p>seeking a “tsunami” of development. CBC needed to understand that it was important to meet the need close to where it arose.</p> <p>NY reminded the meeting of the MOU which CBC had agreed to and the letter from the Council’s Leader, which dealt with the arrangements for joint working and committed to an early review of the Core Strategy to address these issues. LBC were looking for reassurances, CBC provided them. Core Strategy Policy CS1 provides for development, NY was mystified why LBC had not accepted this.</p> <p>RD – LBC have concerns about work “in the future” – what guarantees were there to prevent the situation changing? The proposal for a Neighbourhood plan at Caddington was seen by some as an attempt to frustrate such development. LBC felt it was better to review the plan now rather than commit to a future review as it would only take around 13 months to complete, compared with around 12 months as currently expected.</p> <p>LR commented that this timetable was unrealistically challenging. Too many things could go wrong to delay such a timetable.</p> <p>NY commented that the Joint Committee had been here before and that west Luton development was not supported by the evidence.</p> <p>RD said that the JC had only considered the area in one lump and not considered smaller parcels of it.</p> <p>At this point it was agreed that the meeting should be adjourned for a private discussion between LBC and CBC Members.</p> <p>The conclusion of the meeting was that further discussions were needed between the two Councils prior to the 29th Joint Committee.</p>	
5.	<p><u>Any Other Business</u></p> <p>There were no further items of business.</p>	
6.	<p><u>Date of next meeting</u></p> <p>T.B.C</p>	