

Luton & South Beds Joint Committee

Notes of the Meeting of the Member Steering Group held at South Bedfordshire District Council Offices on 6 June 2008

Present:

Members:

Cllr Roy Davis (Chair) (LBC)
Cllr John Scott (BedsCC)
Cllr Tom Nicols (SBDC)

Officers:

Colin Chick (LBC)
Chris Pagdin (LBC)
Mehmood Khan (LBC)
Keith Dove (LBC)
Richard Watts (BedsCC)
Anne Brereton (SBDC)
Rebecca Yee (SBDC)
Andrew Johnson (SBDC)
David Hussell (Interim Manager JTU)
Bijon Bhowmick (Project Co-ordinator)

Apologies Rec'd:

Cllr Peter Rawcliffe (SBDC)
David Atkinson (LBC)

		<u>ACTION</u>
1.	<u>Matters Arising from meeting held on 25 April 2008</u> None	
2.	<u>The Emerging Draft Core Strategy – Preferred Options document</u> A draft report on the above subject was circulated at the meeting. DH introduced the report and sought Members views on its contents. In his introduction DH drew Members attention to the following points: <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ the direction that the Core Strategy was heading towards;▪ Recommendation 5 of the draft report which suggested the need for a special meeting of the Joint Committee in the autumn and the importance of seeking a legal opinion from Counsel at an early stage of the Core Strategy preparation process;▪ Detailed list of technical work (reference made to Paragraph 2.3 of the report) undertaken so far (including work in progress) despite the difficulties encountered through a change in key personnel.	

		<u>ACTION</u>
	<p>Members generally endorsed the main thrust of the report including the broad direction of the emerging Core Strategy since it was based on current available evidence. In terms of detail, it was agreed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ work on the various LDDs should move forward in parallel with the above timetable; ▪ some parts of the text and the Recommendations need to be tightened up prior to its presentation to the JC. 	DA/DH
3.	<p><u>Housing Figures</u></p> <p>Discussion then moved on to a discussion of a short paper entitled “Housing Figures” circulated by AJ at the meeting. The key points highlighted by this paper suggested that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 19,000 dwellings were needed for urban extensions to 2031 of which ▪ Approximately 11,000 dwellings could be delivered to the north of the conurbation (at 40dph) and the balance of about 8,000 could be met through various permutations, all of which were vigorously debated by Members, including options for the development either East of Luton and / or East of Leighton Buzzard. <p><u>Density Assumptions</u></p> <p>DH advised the meeting in this context about the general implications of building at alternative densities (at 40 & 45 dph). He indicated that an average density of 40dph had been conventionally used throughout the UK and that it also reflected the broader market situation. Members decided to reflect on this issue in the light of further work currently being undertaken on related matters (like urban capacity).</p> <p><u>Urban Capacity Assumptions</u></p> <p>Members were also advised about the urban capacity assumptions which underpinned the estimates of dwellings needed in the urban extensions. They were anxious to ascertain that the estimates for urban capacity were robust and included sites which passed the test for ‘deliverability’. It was agreed that officers would revisit the issue of ‘urban capacity’ as a matter of urgency.</p>	DH

		<u>ACTION</u>
	<p><u>Employment Land</u></p> <p>Members were keen to ensure that the amount of land allocated for employment in the conurbation as a whole (and the urban extensions in particular) were adequate to satisfy the needs of sustainable development. AJ reported that the Employment Land Study recommended that 115ha was needed up to 2021 but this requirement was not meant to address existing problems. He also emphasised that the assessment of estimated dwellings potential for various sites had paid due regard to the principle of maximising job opportunities and a further enhancement of the allocation for employment at these sites might be problematic. The Chairman was anxious to ensure that the employment numbers were robust and could be met.</p> <p><u>Distribution of the balance of growth to the East of Luton & Leighton Buzzard</u></p> <p>Following a lengthy discussion of the above issue, it was agreed to review the matter again in the context of further work being undertaken relating to the detailed issues discussed above.</p> <p><u>Park & Ride Facilities</u></p> <p>There was a brief discussion on the possible potential locations for the provision of P&R facilities. It was agreed that the draft Core Strategy would identify broad areas to cater for these facilities.</p>	DH