

Item 156/16 - report (a) Colchester Local Plan

STRATEGY MEETING

16th August 2016

Local Plan Review

It was appropriate to review the information and process the Council had followed to date, this has been ongoing for a considerable time and the Council views are based on evidence gathered over the last and current Parish Council office period.

Evidence used:

- Councillors knowledge of the village over their many years of village life
- Feedback relating to the Hallfields development
- Rural Community Council of Essex (RCCE) community profile for Dedham
- Feedback from CBC Local plan event August 4th 2016

Hallfields feedback - supported affordable housing, wanted smaller units and downsizing opportunities, but no large homes.

RCCE Report - this provides detailed information on Dedham and its residents, a main part of the report covers Housing & the Built environment. On the breakdown of dwelling types Dedham has:

- 55% detached dwellings (Essex 30%, England 22%)
- 24% semi-detached (Essex 31%, England 31%)
- 9% terraced (Essex 21%, England 25%)

Conclusion - Dedham has a large stock of large homes but very limited smaller starter homes.

Analysis of the data shows that by far the largest age group moving out of Dedham are our children - ages 15 to 24.

Conclusion - our children cannot afford to buy from the available housing stock in Dedham

Feedback from Local Plan - this was very well attended and 52 people completed the Parish Council questionnaires

- To the question "would you support building in the AONB"
 - 36 said not at all
 - 8 said only if it met their views on what was needed
 - 7 said only if the majority met their views on the need
- To the question "what type of housing do you think Dedham needs"
 - 9 said 1-2 bed
 - 10 said 2-3
 - 1 said 4
 - 6 said none
 - 20 said starter homes
 - 13 said downsizing

- To the question "of the 3 proposed sites prioritise your preferred location for development" (Calculated on 3 points for first, 2 for second & 1 for third)
 - 19 points for 091
 - 29 for 243
 - 84 for 213
 - 17 returns expressed a view that neither site should be built on, of these returns some did indicate their preference.

Conclusion - residents are of the view that small starter homes are needed and that building on the AONB is not wanted, site 213 would be the most acceptable.

Dedham Parish Council criteria for development:

The criteria were developed based on the evidence before the council and were agreed over a year ago. These were discussed at public Parish Council meetings, announced on the village notice boards, on the website, and reported in the parish magazine.

Environmental issues form part of the criteria, but importantly the numbers of homes, the need for starter and downsizing homes, and no support for building in the AONB (with the exception of downsizing) are fundamental to the basis of the criteria.

Dedham is not meeting its social role for sustainable development in that we are failing to provide housing stock for our current and future generations of young people aspiring to buy their first home.

Under the "call for sites" process it must be recognised that development sites can only be considered if they have been put forward by the owners as a site that they are willing to have developed.

Through the Hallfields development, Saunders Field, Dedham has now delivered the specific number of affordable rental housing identified through our Housing Needs survey. To enable this, larger homes were also built in the village centre. This provides 9 affordable and 7 privately owned, totalling 16 new build homes.

Conclusions

At the strategy meeting the Council reviewed the above and affirmed the commitment to the criteria. On that basis it was agreed that site 213 would be acceptable if the majority of the homes were 2 bed and the remainder being 1 and 3 bed. The Council believes that the site can comfortably take more than the CBC allocation 5 homes and would like to see a further plan to deliver the village needs for starter homes on this site, to a creative design, that will provide parking and garden space. The design of these homes should be such that they do not lend themselves to future extension in size. Only with a firm commitment to deliver an agreed plan will the Parish Council give its support to this site.

This still leaves a gap in the village need for downsizing homes, within easy walking distance of village centre. The Parish Council will give support to the remainder of the CBC number of 17 homes if an appropriate plot can be found within the village centre and greater effort should be directed at finding a promoted and volunteered site.

The Parish Council has found it difficult to understand why CBC has proposed 3 sites which will provide a large area of land for development. It seems that this only encourages large build properties, evidently something that Dedham does not need. That area of available building land will provide later opportunities for further building on those sites and the Parish Council firmly opposes this.

Site 243 has been subject to a previous planning appeal, application number COL/95/1021 (1996), the application was dismissed at appeal on the basis that "the application would irrevocably harm the open character and appearance of the site and this part of Dedham

Vale AONB and CCA" - the Parish Council fails to see why this conclusion from the representative of the Secretary of State should be changed.

It is recognised by CBC and Anglia Water that Dedham Heath has problems with its drainage and sewers. Plans to resolve these issues must be formulated, the Parish Council feels very strongly that the building of starter homes should not be expected to fund these existing infrastructure problems.

In summary it is recommended that the Parish Council supports site 213 as detailed above and that it does not support building on sites 091 and 243.

Settlement Boundary review

CBC has published reviews of our boundaries that effectively prevent development on the basis of sustainability to both the Lamb Corner and Bargate Lane hamlets of Dedham yet will permit it on Dedham Heath. The meeting considered the implications of this together with future development needs in years to come for the village. These areas were dismissed on the basis of "sustainability" and the reasoning is difficult to fully understand.

- Neither site has footpaths to the village centre.
- Bus stops are available for both Lamb Corner and Dedham Heath.
- The school currently has a significant number of pupils from out of area that arrive by car - our hamlets must be better placed to access the school.
- The report suggests the Heath as being better placed because it has limited services and facilities, it has the same as Lamb Corner and Bargate Lane. There are no facilities and all look to the village centre.
- Access to secondary schools is equal for all sites.

The recommendation for the Parish Council is that we see no benefit in changing the current situation and decline to support the proposal.