

Minutes of an Extraordinary Meeting of **Full Council** held in the **Deben Conference Room, East Suffolk House, Riduna Park, Melton** on **Thursday 3 January 2019** at **7.00pm**

**Members present:** S Bird, C Block, S Bloomfield, C Blundell, M Bond, S Burroughes, P Coleman, A Cooper, M Deacon, P Dunnett, J Fisher, A Fryatt, S Gallant, S Geater, M Gower, T Green, G Harding, S Harvey, T-J Haworth-Culf, C Hedgley (Vice Chairman), G Holdcroft, C Hudson, M Jones, J Kelso, R Kerry, S Lawson, G Lynch, S Mower, P Mulcahy, M Newton, D Savage, A Smith, N Yeo (Chairman)

**Officers present:**

K Abbott (Democratic Services Business Manager), S Baker (Chief Executive Officer), C Bing (Deputy Monitoring Officer), M Edgerley (Principal Planner), N Khan (Strategic Director), A McMillan (Principal Planner), D Reed (Planning Policy and Delivery Manager), P Ridley (Head of Planning and Coastal Management)

---

**1. Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bidwell, Councillor Herring, Councillor McCallum, Councillor Poulter and Councillor Whiting.

**2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

**3. Suffolk Coastal Final Draft Local Plan**

The Cabinet Member with responsibility for Planning introduced the report, **CL 01/19**. In introducing the report, the Cabinet Member said the Local Plan set out the level of growth which needed to be planned for in Suffolk Coastal and identified where that growth should be located and how it should be delivered. The Plan also set out the planning policies which the Council would use to determine planning applications in its area. He added that the Final Draft Local Plan was a comprehensive document which included a vision, spatial strategy, district wide planning policies and area based strategies including site allocations. On adoption, he said, it would replace the existing Local Plan for Suffolk Coastal which consisted of a number of individual documents that had been prepared and adopted by the Council in recent times.

The Cabinet Member referred to the strict national protocol, set by central Government, for the formation of Local Plans and which needed to be adhered to ensure fairness and the avoidance of any perception of favouritism or allegations of corruption. The Cabinet Member added that failure to comply with the national protocol could result in serious repercussions, for example, the National Planning Policy Framework stated that local authorities without a Local Plan would be required to grant planning applications, unless there were significant and demonstrable reasons not to grant such permission. The Cabinet Member also referred to the Government's requirement for Local Plans to be reviewed completely every five years and, as a result, the Draft Local Plan now reflected how many dwellings per annum and areas of employment land would

be required up to 2036. The Cabinet Member explained that standard methods and calculations, based on median statistics, had been employed to identify these figures. The protocol had required a call for sites and this had been undertaken in 2016; the sites submitted had been subject to rigorous testing against requirements, as well as being subject to extensive consultation processes. The Cabinet Member added that the Draft Local Plan had taken time to compile because of the need to adhere to the government's protocol care had been taken in its evolution into a comprehensive document.

The Cabinet Member said the next stage, subject to the Final Draft Local Plan being approved for publication to receive representations related to legal and procedural requirements and soundness in terms of ensuring the Draft Local Plan met Government requirements; he emphasised that any representations on the Draft Local Plan's soundness would need to be received by the Council between 14 January and 25 February 2019. After that date, the Draft Local Plan would be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for examination.

In concluding his introduction, the Cabinet Member invited the two Principal Planners to provide a presentation. The presentation included:

- An overview of the stages of the Local Plan Review process since 2016 including, the call for sites in October 2016, the commissioning of evidence base documents, the establishment of the Local Plan Working Group in 2017, the Issues and Options Consultation in 2017 and the First Draft Local Plan Consultation in 2018.
- The First Draft Local Plan in July 2018: Informed by the responses to the Issues and Options consultation. Included strategic policies, topic-based criteria policies and site allocations. Focussed on economic growth supported by infrastructure delivery. A housing target to meet Council objectives and aspirations as previously outlined in the East Suffolk Business Plan and to address issues in respect of the five year land supply. A comprehensive document which included clarity that alternative sites and policies could be considered as the Plan evolved.
- Local Plan Strategy: Delivery of Garden Neighbourhoods; accessibility of A12 and A14 road and rail corridors; strategic employment allocations, including support to the Port of Felixstowe; strengthening the role and economies of market towns; growth to support rural communities; infrastructure needed to support growth; and the protection and enhancement of the historic, natural and built environment.
- The Final Draft Local Plan in January 2019: Evolved through public consultation and engagement, a robust and credible evidence base, and in recognition of changing national policies. Many sections amended to reflect the consultation responses received. Provided an ambitious vision and approach to economic and residential growth alongside the early delivery of necessary infrastructure. Continued to support the East Suffolk Business Plan through strategic priorities. Provided a framework for developing Neighbourhood Plans and supported the introduction and/or review of these across the District.
- The Final Draft Local Plan: The annual requirement for the number of new dwellings (at least 10,476 or 582 per annum) had been increased since the First Draft Local Plan based on the Government's standard methodology; additional sites had been included to promote the plan-led approach; variety of residential sites; over-allocation of sites to provide contingency; no requirement to assist neighbouring authorities to meet their own housing needs; employment land to deliver at least 6,500 jobs along with appropriate retail floor space; infrastructure

requirements identified including cross-boundary with neighbouring authorities; Statement of Common Ground being prepared with neighbouring authorities.

- Infrastructure: Recognition of known infrastructure issues such as A12/A14 capacity, rail capacity, sustainable transport infrastructure, the capacity of school and health facilities etc.; On-going engagement with infrastructure providers to ensure timely delivery of the infrastructure needed to support growth
- Innocence Farm: Employment allocation for Port of Felixstowe related uses. Significant number of comments objecting to the proposed allocation, including a local petition with over 900 signatures. Concerns in respect of the need for employment land, deliverability of the site and impact on nearby villages. The Final Draft Plan had taken into account the consultation responses but had retained the allocation for economic activities which reflected the need identified in the Port of Felixstowe Growth and Development Needs Study. Supporting text provided in respect of identified need for the site. The policy had evolved to provide more clarity in respect of the built employment area, significant landscaping and additional community benefits. Supporting text also provided in respect of access arrangements and the avoidance of impact on the local road network reflecting transport evidence.
- Garden Neighbourhoods in Felixstowe and Saxmundham: These promoted healthy lifestyles for communities and comprehensive developments to deliver the infrastructure required, such as schools, shops, meeting places, green spaces and formal/informal recreational opportunities. The Garden Neighbourhood would be a dementia friendly environment, sensitive to natural, historic and built environments, with employment opportunities and a range of new housing to meet the needs of the community.
- Garden Neighbourhood – Saxmundham: Responses to the public consultation had identified sensitive areas of landscape and heritage at the South Entrance. The evidence base had acknowledged the sensitivities and the Final Draft Plan provides for formal and informal open spaces. The Final Draft Plan provides opportunities for primary school provision, green infrastructure, recreational facilities and other community provision. 800 dwellings on the land between A12 and the railway line. Employment land proposed to the west of the A12. A range of transport related mitigation measures were proposed, including sustainable transport and junction improvements.
- Site specific allocations: Chapter 12 of the Local Plan included a variety of economic and residential allocations with many sites remaining from the First Draft Local Plan although some had been amended in size to improve their viability. Additional sites had been included: Police Headquarters, Martlesham; Woodbridge Town Football Club; Council Offices, Melton Hill; Felixstowe Leisure Centre; School Road, Knodishall; land adjacent to Swiss Farm Cottage, Otley; and Sibton Road, Peasenhall.
- Evidence base: A robust and comprehensive evidence base had been prepared to support and inform the Local Plan, such as employment needs, housing needs, transport, flood risk, landscape and heritage. Sustainability Appraisals had been undertaken to assess policies and sites in relation to potential impacts, including, air quality, agricultural land quality and biodiversity. Habitats Regulations Assessments had been undertaken to ensure no significant effects on European sites, subject to mitigation such as the provision of green infrastructure. Mitigation measures to address potentially adverse impacts were identified within

the policies and infrastructure framework. The evidence base would guide on-going collaboration with stakeholders around the delivery of the Plan.

- Update from the Cabinet Meeting held on 2 January 2019: Cabinet recommended the Final Draft Local Plan to Council, subject to the following changes –
  1. Policy SCLP12.3 – North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood – (q) to read “Up to 2000 dwellings (including 560 with outline planning permission, providing....”
  2. Policy SCLP12.35 – Land at Innocence Farm to include reference to the Port of Felixstowe Growth and Development Needs Study to read “....to support the continued viability of the Port of Felixstowe as outlined in the Port of Felixstowe Growth and Development Needs Study and other related activities....”
  3. Appendix E – Key Elements of Marketing and Best Practice Guidance – Second sentence of the third paragraph to read “This should be agreed with the Council prior to the start of the marketing.”
  4. New Appendix L to be inserted – The Appendix to provide a list of evidence base documents and refer to where they were available
- Next steps: Subject to approval, the Local Plan would be published for six weeks (14 January to 25 February 2019) to seek representations relating to legal and procedural requirements, and soundness\*. Subject to approval, a briefing to Town and Parish Councils would be provided on 11 January 2019 and drop-in sessions throughout the six week period would be provided. The Plan would be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate in March 2019 for examination.
- Tests of \*Soundness: These were as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework – Positively Prepared; Justified; Effective; and Consistent with the National Planning Policy Framework.

The Chairman thanked the Officers for their comprehensive presentation.

Councillor Bond tabled an amendment to recommendation 1 of the report. The Chairman invited Councillor Bond to explain the amendment to Council. Councillor Bond said that, in his opinion, the Draft Local Plan’s use of the word “contemporary” as a requirement for new buildings on the Melton Hill site might cause issues with the local community, potential developers and housing associations.

Councillor Bond referred to the first application for planning permission for the Melton Hill site which had required a “contemporary” design; he commented that there was not, to his knowledge, an approved policy that justified this requirement. Councillor Bond said the prior requirement for a “contemporary” design had provoked opposition from Woodbridge Town Council, Melton Parish Council and a significant number of local residents. Councillor Bond added that Historic England had written to the Council to state that the first planning application’s contemporary design *‘would constitute a dramatic departure from the character of the conservation area in form and detailing’* .....and that *‘.....The form, layout and design of the proposed new buildings .....would also be dramatically at odds with the strong historic character of the street, making the development an alien and intrusive presence.....’*.

Councillor Bond said his proposed amendment to the first recommendation sought the removal of what he considered to be a restrictive and unneeded condition which would be unnecessarily inhibitive. Councillor Bond said the removal of the word “contemporary” would not prevent a contemporary design, but would also allow other approaches to be considered. Councillor Bond proposed that recommendation 1 be so amended:

“That the Final Draft Local Plan, subject to the deletion or omission of the word contemporary from paragraphs 12.339 (page 287) and Policy SCLP12.32 (page 289), be approved for publication under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012 (as amended) to receive representations in relation to soundness.”

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Fryatt and unanimously supported. The Chairman advised that all the recommendations would be put to Council at the conclusion of questions and debate.

The Chairman invited questions.

Councillor Block referred to Appendix A, page 21, paragraph 2.19 which related to the Protection of the Environment and the collective work on the Recreational and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) to mitigate any pressure caused by new development on the integrity of designated sites such as Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation and Ramsar sites and which were due to be supported by a Supplementary Planning Document to provide further details on cost implications and subsequent implementation, and queried the associated timelines, the potential for delay and whether RAMS timescales should be provided. The Principal Planner replied that RAMS work for the current adopted Local Plan remained on-going and added that, as relevant planning applications were determined, any mitigation measures would be provided. However, the Officer added that the Supplementary Planning Document did not need to be in place to make the planning application compliant. Councillor Block stated that additional clarity and transparency were required. As a supplementary question, Councillor Block asked if there was a link with management plans for Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The Principal Planner replied that these were included within the RAMS work and that mitigation measures within AONB would be considered.

Councillor Deacon asked how many responses to the Final Draft Local Plan’s consultation had supported the proposed project at Innocence Farm. The Principal Planner referred to Appendix C to the main report, the Consultation Statement, which provided a comprehensive analysis of the consultations, the responses and how these had been taken into account. He added that for the Innocence Farm site, a total of 332 responses had been received, seven had been in support, 314 had objected and 11 had been observations only; in addition, a petition of 900 signatures had been received. Councillor Deacon referred to the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood proposals, and again sought the breakdown of responses. The Principal Planner said a total of 211 responses had been received, 19 had been in support, 166 had objected and 26 had been observations only. Councillor Deacon questioned why consultations had been undertaken when, he suggested, the majority of the responses had been largely ignored. The Cabinet Member for Planning replied that the responses had been fully analysed against the criteria and requirements of government policy; he added that the planning service needed to adhere to planning rules and guidance and numbers of responses received did not dictate this. Councillor Deacon suggested that the consultation had been a “tick-box” exercise. The Cabinet Member for Planning said he took exception to that remark and repeated that proper consultations had been undertaken with the responses fully evaluated against policy criteria. Councillor Deacon asked if, under the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood proposals, the protection of the Grove Woodland for continued community use would be extended to Abbey Wood; the Principal Planner confirmed this was the intention.

Councillor Harding referred to the proposed site on land adjacent to Reeve Lodge, Trimley St Martin for the provision of a primary school and which, he said, conflicted with the previous Local Plan; Councillor Harding asked for this site to be reassessed. The Cabinet Member for Planning suggested that, if the Final Draft Local Plan was approved for publication, any concerns Members had about the soundness of a particular site be submitted as a representation related to legal and procedural requirements and/or soundness.

Councillor Savage said a number of Felixstowe residents had queried the volume of proposed houses to be developed in the town and asked for an explanation of how the total figure had been calculated. The Principal Planner said the strategy for Felixstowe was a key component of the Final Draft Local Plan and the analysis of the consultations held in 2017 had identified a number of Issues and Options for the Suffolk Coastal Local Plan Review which the Council's Local Plan Working Group had considered for inclusion in the First Draft Local Plan. He added that the level of housing proposed would enable sustainable infrastructure for Felixstowe to be delivered, including an enhanced leisure provision. Councillor Savage asked again how the total district figure over the period of the Plan had been compiled. The Principal Planner said the district housing figure of 582 houses per annum had been calculated through a standard method within national policy, which was based on latest household projections, as well as affordability of earnings to house prices (data published by the Office for National Statistics). Councillor Smith added that the Local Plan Working Group, as well as considering the Government's projections, had also carefully considered how Felixstowe could best progress. The Cabinet Member for Planning agreed that this had been an equally important consideration; he added that the considerable amount of investment in infrastructure and facilities which was proposed for Felixstowe required a quantum of houses.

With regard to the Innocence Farm site, Councillor Kerry asked how the acreage calculation had been compiled. The Principal Planner said the main driver for this calculation had been the Port of Felixstowe Growth and Development Needs Study which had identified the Port and associated businesses as important to both the local and national economy. The Study had also identified a high, medium and low forecast for land requirements and the proposed allocation reflected the medium forecast over the Local Plan period.

Councillor Block referred to Neighbourhood Plans and the need to remain mindful of where these had already been formally 'made' but a conflict with the Final Draft Local Plan now existed; Councillor Block asked if it was expected that Neighbourhood Plans be revised to reflect the Local Plan in the event of such a conflict. The Cabinet Member for Planning replied that Neighbourhood Plans were required, by government instruction, to be consistent with an approved Local Plan; he acknowledged that the compilation of Neighbourhood Plans was time consuming, but said that whilst it was very regrettable if they were now impacted upon by the Draft Local Plan this was unavoidable. In response to a further question by Councillor Block about the Martlesham Neighbourhood Plan, the Cabinet Member for Planning said how it was modified would be up to the Parish Council but confirmed it should reflect the increased housing numbers now within the Final Draft Local Plan.

Councillor Smith referred to the Area Specific Strategy for Felixstowe, specifically the North Felixstowe Garden Neighbourhood and, with further reference to paragraph 12.48 (page 202), asked if the sentence "New vehicle junctions will need to be established to provide access from Candlet Road and ensure Gulpher Road..... is not used for vehicular access" allowed for consideration of a spine road. In response, the Head of Planning and Coastal Management

referred to the Scrutiny Committee's lengthy discussion of a spine road in this location at its meeting in November 2018. He added that, whilst a spine road could be considered, it was unlikely to be found to be acceptable in planning terms due to the open space provision around the established woodland. The Head of Planning and Coastal Management confirmed that a spine road had not been discounted and the policy did not preclude it. Councillor Dunnett, as Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, clarified that the Scrutiny Committee had decided the spine road was not a matter for it to consider.

The Chairman invited debate.

Councillor Blundell referred to the concerns of Martlesham Parish Council regarding the late inclusion of the police headquarters site within the Draft Local Plan. He added that the late amendment to the Final Draft Local Plan had not allowed Martlesham Parish Council to look at the matter nor its impact on the Neighbourhood Plan. Councillor Blundell said the Neighbourhood Plan sought a mix of housing but considered the Local Plan to be prescribing small dwellings and flats. Councillor Blundell wished to table an amendment to criterion (a) of Policy SCLP12.25 (page 258) and proposed that this should read:

“(a) Delivery of a high quality, high density residential scheme incorporating flats and mix of residences to meet local needs”

The proposed amendment was seconded by Councillor Harvey.

Councillor Bird, in supporting the proposed tabled amendment, said he considered it to be less prescriptive and therefore better able to facilitate increased development to meet the aims and ambitions of the Martlesham Neighbourhood Plan, including sports provision, community gardens, allotments etc.

Councillor Gallant said he did not support the proposed tabled amendment because it ignored the need to include flats and smaller dwellings to allow the correct delivery of housing numbers and associated infrastructure.

The Chairman sought a vote on the proposed tabled amendment by Councillor Blundell. The proposed amendment was carried by majority vote.

Councillor Harvey said she had sat on the Local Plan Working Group since its inception and referred to the significant amount of work which had been required, to tight timescales, to review the Local Plan for the whole District. In particular, Councillor Harvey thanked Officers for their contribution to the Working Group's task and for the resulting excellent Local Plan. Councillor Harvey stated no substantial housebuilding had taken place for many years and the Final Draft Local Plan had attempted to resolve that.

Councillor Harvey continued to state that, as the representative for the Kirton Ward, she wished to address Council on the proposals for the Innocence Farm site for employment use. Councillor Harvey stated that, whilst she appreciated the need to support the Port of Felixstowe, the impact of the proposed Innocence Farm site should not be underestimated. Councillor Harvey referred to essential access and egress issues, the impact of traffic on narrow lanes, as well as air and light pollution matters which, she said, could not be mitigated because of the prevailing wind and would adversely affect both the village and primary school. Councillor Harvey referred to

correspondence with the County Council which had stated that the primary school would be moved half a mile from its current site; this would, she said, impact on pupils being able to walk to and from school. Councillor Harvey continued to say that the volume of houses proposed would cause infrastructure difficulties; she referred to the impact of closures of the Orwell Bridge on the road network in the vicinity of Innocence Farm and considered these to have been inadequately considered by SCC Highways. Councillor Harvey said she was not convinced of the need for the level of housing and employment on the peninsula and adjacent to the AONB and stated that she did not look favourably on the “joining-up “of Felixstowe and Ipswich. In conclusion, Councillor Harvey said she would not, therefore, support the Local Plan in its current form.

Councillor Hudson thanked Officers for an interesting report, but described himself as a “doubting Thomas” on some of its aspects. Councillor Hudson referred to the proposals for Garden Neighbourhoods, specifically the development of the Saxmundham Garden Neighbourhood, and queried what he described as the “blind obsession” for this; he further stated that in such proposals the first “victim” was the provision of affordable housing because, he said, developers “struck them out” and omitted to provide them. Councillor Hudson queried where the residents of the additional homes created within Garden Neighbourhoods would be employed. Councillor Hudson stated that housing numbers needed to be both sustainable and viable and again questioned why a Garden Neighbourhood in Saxmundham remained so attractive. Councillor Hudson continued to state that the residents of Saxmundham were not happy with the Council’s proposals and, he said, felt that no viability testing had been undertaken regarding the need for costly roundabouts, or multi-disciplinary areas. Councillor Hudson queried if the proposals for a Garden Neighbourhood in Saxmundham would mean the door was closed on further housing development in the town; he further queried whether the new developments proposed would mean Saxmundham avoided being “forced” to accept “still more housing”.

Councillor Hudson referred to Councillor Dunnett whom, he said, had a lot of interests which he described as Chairman of Saxmundham Town Council, Chairman of the Council’s Scrutiny Committee, and a District and Town Councillor. Councillor Hudson suggested that it must be difficult for Councillor Dunnett to balance so many demands. Councillor Hudson asked if the numbers of houses proposed for Saxmundham could, in reality, be delivered and asked “*cui bono?*” (to whom is it a benefit). He continued to state that the Nolan principles of standards for public life, including openness, transparency and integrity, must be used and that the proposed number of houses was not a means to build out of recession. Councillor Hudson further stated that Councillor Dunnett had declared he was a Freemason and, he said, a member of Adair Lodge 936 in Saxmundham, as was, he said, Councillor Herring, the Leader of the Council. Councillor Dunnett responded by saying that his membership of the Freemasons was openly declared on his Register of Interests.

The Chairman required Councillor Hudson to cease speaking as she considered his comments to be of a personal nature. The Chairman also required Councillor Hudson to resume his seat.

The Chief Executive reminded Council that contributions to debate must be relevant to the matter being considered, not of a personal nature and limited to five minutes. The Chief Executive confirmed that Councillor Hudson had spoken for five minutes before the Chairman had required him to cease speaking and resume his seat.



Councillor Kelso referred to the addition of the current police headquarters site at Martlesham to the Final Draft Local Plan and also to the Martlesham Neighbourhood Plan which had been formally made in July 2018. Councillor Kelso also referred to previous assurances by the Head of Planning and Coastal Management to Martlesham Parish Council that no additional development was proposed. Councillor Kelso said that, contrary to that assurance, and within a few months of being made, the Martlesham Neighbourhood Plan was out of date because of the late addition of the police headquarters site; consequently, he considered it had been “ruined” at a very early stage. Councillor Kelso said he wished to remind Council that it was not its role to “raise funds” for Suffolk Constabulary. Councillor Kelso further referred to a covenant associated with the police headquarters site which, he suggested, might make development unviable and also said that the resulting lack of employment land in Martlesham might be problematic. Councillor Kelso queried why development on employment land was being considered and stated that the proposed homes would have little supporting infrastructure. Councillor Kelso said there had been no public consultation on the police headquarters site, because it was a late addition, and repeated that its inclusion was contrary to the Martlesham Neighbourhood Plan and Policy MAR5 (which had identified a need for bungalows, flats and sheltered accommodation in Martlesham Heath). Councillor Kelso said he had supported the First Draft Local Plan because he felt it had protected Martlesham. Councillor Kelso said a public consultation on the additional site was needed and, without one, he believed the Local Plan to be unsound and undeliverable. The Chairman advised Councillor Kelso not to exceed his allotted speaking time and, in conclusion, Councillor Kelso referred to a formal letter of complaint which Martlesham Parish Council had sent to the Council; he said no further clarification had yet been received in response. Councillor Kelso urged Council to reject the Local Plan.

Councillor Deacon said he appreciated the need for housing development in Felixstowe for homes which were truly affordable; however, he could not support the volume of development which was proposed. Councillor Deacon said he was disappointed that the “lion’s share” of development was in the Felixstowe and peninsula with an additional 2000 homes, to the originally planned 1790, proposed. Councillor Deacon described it as “perverse” that the Council’s refusal of Candlet Road had been defended when it was now asked to approve a Garden Neighbourhood in the same vicinity. Councillor Deacon continued to say that the volume of proposed new homes would result in a large inward migration and questioned where these residents would be employed. Councillor Deacon also questioned the capacity of school places; he noted that it was proposed to increase primary school provision but no such proposal had been made for secondary school provision, or for primary health facilities. Councillor Deacon referred to the loss of countryside, natural habitats and valuable agricultural land as well as the additional strain on local roads. Councillor Deacon suggested that housing growth needed to be more organic and primarily use brown field sites; he agreed that, in some locations, developments would be beneficial as they would enhance the sustainability of rural villages and mean local young people could remain in the immediate area, if they so wished.

Councillor Deacon referred to the proposed new leisure facility which he felt was incorrectly located, not easily accessed and would result in the loss of valuable agricultural land. Councillor Deacon said the impact of the Innocence Farm site should not be underestimated and that, whilst every effort to support the Port of Felixstowe should be made, this should not be at the expense of the local community. The Chairman reminded Councillor Deacon that he had almost exceeded his time to speak, Councillor Deacon concluded by saying Innocence Farm was an unsuitable site and he was not convinced of its need; he asked Council to seek another, more suitable site.

Councillor Gower stated that the existing Local Plan should have been comprehensively analysed to see if it was still effective before a new Local Plan had been drafted. Councillor Gower considered a “critical issue” to be the monthly Planning Committee which, he said, saw a continuing “war” between the District Council and its communities on the need for development. Councillor Gower referred to communities fighting the “machinery of state” and that, even if they won, the Planning Inspector “put them to the sword”. Councillor Gower referred to housing targets being dictated from central government and considered those targets to be too demanding. Councillor Gower said the targets required by government were not driven by local Councillors and he urged the Council to make representation to the government for devolution of the decision on local housing targets. Councillor Gower continued to say that the target figures were too high because the local population was in decline with, he said, the vast majority of new homes being purchased by people with no connection to Suffolk. He referred to a “massive influx” of people from outside Suffolk who either commuted or wanted second homes. Councillor Gower said this was as a direct result of the Council’s planning policy and repeated that new homes were “snapped up by the well-heeled”; he considered the view that the Local Plan would benefit the local economy to be flawed. Councillor Gower said the demographics of the area did not lie and that, in ten years, one third of the population would be aged over 65 years. Councillor Gower said that, because of the District’s increasingly ageing population, it was necessary to identify how to create sustainable economic growth in order to support its over-65 demographic. He continued to state that the District’s “unbalanced” population was detrimental to its economy and the current beneficiaries of the Local Plan were people who did not live in Suffolk and developers. Councillor Gower further stated that the Final Draft Local Plan informed Council that the District’s population would, in the near future, be the oldest in the country and this needed to be balanced through the retention of local young people in the area. Councillor Gower said a key risk of the Local Plan was that more houses than were actually needed would be built and the countryside would be adversely impacted upon. Councillor Gower sought a new target for housing numbers based on local data and figures.

Councillor Smith said he challenged the accuracy of the earlier comments of both Councillor Hudson and Councillor Gower. Councillor Smith said Councillor Hudson had descended into “flights of fancy” and suggested that he keep to the facts. Councillor Smith said Councillor Gower had discounted his own argument; he added that many residents lived in the homes vacated by their parents and that the older population was increasing because people were, generally, much healthier with constant improvements in medicine. Councillor Smith further stated that this was the fifth Local Plan for the District which he had been involved with; he said it provided a clear vision and that any community, to thrive and be sustainable, must be able to grow. Councillor Smith said Felixstowe had always been a growing town with a visionary approach, right from its inception, and its population and number of dwellings grew year on year.

Councillor Block said there was much to commend in the Final Draft Local Plan and welcomed the improvements on the previous Local Plan in relation to policies on the coast, flood risk and climate change. Councillor Block said the comments at Council indicated concerns about the overall view of the Local Plan and that a clearer and balanced view was needed. Councillor Block said she would like to see local people’s voices heard and reflected; she hoped that the Council could proceed through the test of soundness to seek compromise and resolution.

Councillor Holdcroft, with reference to Councillor Gower’s earlier remarks about an “influx of outsiders”, said he had lived and worked in Suffolk for 33 years, having first arrived for

employment reasons and that he had been made most welcome to the area. Councillor Holdcroft emphasised that building more houses would help with their price and that it was not fair for the area’s young people to have to move away to find homes and work. Councillor Holdcroft referred to the previously adopted Local Plan which had faced challenge and a Judicial Review; he added that lessons had been learnt and an additionally robust process had been employed to formulate the Final Draft Local Plan now before Council. Councillor Holdcroft referred to the invaluable work of the Local Plan Working Group which, he said, had worked diligently to reach collective decisions. Councillor Holdcroft emphasised the need to have an effective plan-led approach to the building of houses in order to mitigate the risk of speculative “windfall” applications and developments; he added that a robust Local Plan would provide a defence against unsustainable development. He commended the Final Draft Local Plan to Council.

The Cabinet Member for Planning endorsed Councillor Holdcroft’s comments and reiterated that refusal of the Draft Local Plan could result in applications for inappropriate, speculative and unviable developments.

Councillor Deacon proposed a recorded vote on the recommendations. In accordance with the Constitution’s Council Procedure Rules, the Chairman advised that not less than four other Members needed to support the motion. The motion for a recorded vote was supported by Councillor Block, Councillor Cooper, Councillor Fisher, Councillor Harding and Councillor Kelso.

There being no further matters raised for debate, the Chairman moved to a recorded vote of those present on all the recommendations, as amended, and as proposed by Councillor Fryatt and seconded by Councillor Holdcroft.

<b>For</b>	<b>Against</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
Councillor Bird		
		Councillor Block
	Councillor Bloomfield	
Councillor Blundell		
		Councillor Bond
Councillor Burroughes		
Councillor Coleman		
Councillor Cooper		
	Councillor Deacon	
Councillor Dunnett		
	Councillor Fisher	
Councillor Fryatt		

Councillor Gallant		
Councillor Geater		
	Councillor Gower	
Councillor Green		
Councillor Harding		
	Councillor Harvey	
Councillor Haworth-Culf		
Councillor Hedgley		
Councillor Holdcroft		
	Councillor Hudson	
Councillor Jones		
	Councillor Kelso	
	Councillor Kerry	
Councillor Lawson		
Councillor Lynch		
Councillor Mower		
Councillor Mulcahy		
Councillor Newton		
Councillor Savage		
Councillor Smith		
Councillor Yeo		
	<b>23</b>	<b>8</b>
		<b>2</b>

**RESOLVED**

1. That the Final Draft Local Plan, subject to the amendments proposed by Cabinet at its meeting on 2 January 2019 (*as minuted above*) and the agreed re-wording of criterion (a) of Policy SCLP 12.25 (page 258) and the deletion of the word “contemporary” from paragraphs 12.339 (page 287) and Policy SCLP12.32 (page 289), be approved for publication under Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) Regulations 2012 (as amended) to receive representations in relation to soundness.

2. That, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, the Head of Planning and Coastal Management be given delegated authority to make any typographical or presentational / format changes necessary linked to the publication of the Final Draft Local Plan.
3. That, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, the Head of Planning and Coastal Management be given delegated authority, following the 6 week period, to receive representations relating to soundness and to submit the Local Plan for Examination by the Planning Inspectorate.
4. That, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Planning, the Head of Planning and Coastal Management be given delegated authority during the Examination into the Local Plan to address minor modifications that may arise as part of that Examination.

The Meeting concluded at 9.28pm