

From: "Local Plan" <localplan@braintree.gov.uk>
Date: Fri, Dec 23, 2016 at 10:51 AM +0000
Subject: Local Plan update
To: "Local Plan" <localplan@braintree.gov.uk>

Garden Communities

We wanted to take this opportunity to provide you with an update on the North Essex Garden Community project. As we progress the project in 2017 and beyond we will provide regular updates to you.

All four Councils involved in the project – Braintree District Council, Colchester Borough Council, Tendring District Council and Essex County Council have now approved the creation of an overarching body which will be known as North Essex Garden Communities Limited (NEGC), and will coordinate the development of the new settlements, **subject to the local planning process.**

We have also in recent weeks had the support of **Lord Kerlake**, the former head of the Civil Service and previously Chief Executive of the Homes and Community Agency.

Undertaking a review of our work to date, Lord Kerlake and his team spent time with each authority to fully understand the ambitions and challenges we face.

Describing the “**scale of ambition as impressive**” and as having “**huge potential on a national scale**”, **he also praised the progress** that has been made to date. Lord Kerlake’s full report will be published in the New Year.

Key to the feedback he has given us is that we need to ensure that enough time is given to assess and look at all of the options, particularly around the evidence base which will form part of each council’s Local Plan. We want to further explore and explain clearly why each site is the right one, and why other sites would not be suitable.

It is important that we get this right at this very early stage, and so we have decided that meetings and consultations **planned to start in February/March will be moved to May/June to allow more time to strengthen our evidence base.**

We will of course make you aware of all forthcoming key dates, and these will be available via each council’s website.

Regards

The Planning Policy Team

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