Addendum

An item on the Local Plan was discussed at an extraordinary meeting of the Economy and Regeneration Scrutiny Committee on Tuesday 13th July.

The following areas were discussed:

- Councillors noted that the local housing need number set out in the report was a working number and that work was underway to review both this number and the current housing supply figure. Councillors requested further information about the potential of the work to review the current SHLAA to fill the identified supply gap. The Committee were advised that further detail on this would be available next month.
- Councillors queried whether, as the Council had declared a climate emergency, consideration should be given to the carbon and environmental impact of construction. It was discussed that this could be an area of work for the Development Plan Working Party to consider and explore in more detail.
- Councillors raised the point that there was much office space across the borough that was currently under-utilised due to changing working patterns as a result of covid. Councillors queried what work was being undertaken to work with businesses to identify such space which might have potential for housing. The Committee were advised that through the urban optimisation work and review of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), opportunities were being reviewed.
- Councillors discussed how it was important to ensure the quality of any office to residential conversions and to avoid over-densification. Councillors raised particular concerns about the experiences of such conversions on the town centre and surrounding areas, and the impact this was having on urban green and open space.
- Councillors expressed support for the bottom-up/ community-led approach set out in the report and agreed it was vital to listen to the views of communities.

A motion to note the report was not carried (4 for, 5 against)

The Committee voted in favour of approving the report's recommendations (5 for, 4 abstentions)