

Development Plan Panel

Tuesday, 5th September, 2017

PRESENT: Councillor P Gruen in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, C Campbell,
R Grahame, C Gruen, G Latty, T Leadley,
R Lewis, F Venner and N Walshaw

11 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against the refusal of inspection of documents.

12 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

The agenda contained no exempt information.

13 Late Items

No formal late items of business were added to the agenda.

14 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest.

15 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Coulson, J McKenna and J Procter. Councillors R Grahame and G Latty attended the meeting as substitutes.

16 Minutes

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the Development Plan Panel meeting held on 18th July 2017 be approved.

17 Matters Arising

Minute 7 Negotiated Stopping Sites for Gypsies & Travellers –

- In respect of whether the views of independent Counsel had been sought on the issue, one Member briefly reported on the Scrutiny Board (Environment & Neighbourhoods) Inquiry of January 2011 and made a copy of the relevant legal advice from the Inquiry available to the Panel's Legal Adviser.
- Members also requested a follow up on two issues raised at the meeting
 - the number of occurrences of stopping on unauthorised sites during the previous year
 - an indication of when the 24 hour service to respond to negotiated stopping would be implemented

It was agreed that a written response would be provided to Panel Members prior to the next meeting.

18 Core Strategy Selective Review

The Panel considered the report of the Director of City Development on the progress made preparing the Core Strategy Selective Review.

The Planning Strategy Team Leader introduced the report which included the headlines from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), feedback from

the public consultation on the scope of the Review and initial ideas on the review of policies. In introducing the report, he provided an update on key matters arising from the CSSR for discussion:

SHMA conclusions: The consultants (Arc4 and Edge Analytics) assessed need for housing in Leeds (Objectively Assessed Need) using both the Local Plans Expert Group (LPEG) methodology and the existing National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG) methodology.

- The LPEG approach - proposed by Government but not yet adopted - calculated 3,456 units per annum or 55,296 over the 16 year Core Strategy period.
- The NPPG calculations gave 2 results:
3,478 pa/55,648 units - REM2017
3,783 pa/60,528 units - High Growth

Additional matters to consider included whether to factor in the under-delivery of recent years (the “backlog”) and calculations for the number of dwellings lost. It was stressed that there may be a difference between OAN and any resulting plan requirements.

Affordable Housing: Using the NPPG methodology the SHMA identifies a need of 1230 affordable dwellings per annum for Leeds, with roughly two thirds required to be provided at social rent levels and one third as intermediate tenures. Consideration to be given to the figures for the four affordable housing zones;

Outer North Zone 1: 120 pa

Outer South Zone 2: 794 pa

Inner Zone 3: 168 pa

City Centre Zone 4: 148 pa

The report detailed the exercise undertaken to identify the % of affordable dwellings needed per zone within the SAP: Zone 1: 53%; Zone 2: 168%; Zone 3: 61% and Zone 4: 52%. It was felt that an increase in current targets for Affordable Housing could be justified on the basis of need, but viability testing will also be necessary.

Housing Needs: Responses from the consultants on the housing needs of each HMCA were awaited however the results of the SHMA suggested a greater need for smaller size affordable properties – of the 1230 total it suggested that 853 need to be 1 & 2 bed size, 238 3+ bed size and 139 designed for elderly occupation. Additionally, there is a need for a minimum of 17.5% of new dwellings to be built to M4 (2) building regulation accessible standards and 5% M4 (3) building regulation wheelchair standards.

Consultation Responses: 69 had been received, with two received late – from Wetherby Town Council and the Environment Agency (raising issues regarding SP6, flooding and greenspace). The overall headlines from the responses were précised as being that Community Groups welcomed the lower housing requirement whereas Developers expressed concern about the timing of the Strategic Review prior to the adoption of the Site Allocations Plan; issues regarding viability and seeking exemptions from affordable housing/standards requirements

The Panel acknowledged the report provided reassurance that the CSSR was on-track and making progress and welcomed the proposal to hold an informal workshop prior to the November Panel meeting in order to discuss the issues in detail.

In respect of the SHMA, the Panel recognised that it was a good achievement to get the conclusions completed of this highly complex and potentially contentious piece of evidence, with good engagement with the public and external organisations. The Panel went on to identify and discuss the following key matters:

Strategic Review Timetable

- The timing of the Strategic Review alongside the submission of the Site Allocations Plan. Officers responded that the SAP Examination would have regard to the adopted Core Strategy requirements; however the Inspector was aware of the ongoing CSSR. It was noted that the Inspector had issued further questions to LCC the previous week seeking views on the emerging CSSR figures but as these were incipient and untested, they could not legally be relied upon but would provide contextual information to the SAP Inspection.
- Members were reassured that the Local Development Framework did allow for the twin-tracking of plan progression.
- A key challenge was how best to present technical information on the planning process to the public.
- Residents sought clarity over whether a decreased housing target would result in less house development in their area.
- As the CSSR progresses, with the Inspector reviewing the SAP against existing Core Strategy targets, there was a possibility that the city would have a number of “surplus” sites – which would not be needed to meet the emerging Core Strategy revised housing requirement – and some consultees would wish to see the surplus sites removed. Members noted the response that, at the moment, the difference between the number of dwellings proposed in the SAP and the emerging Core Strategy revised housing requirement was unknown. In any case the length of the plan period being extended to 2033 means that it is likely that all sites will be needed over the longer period.

In response to the comments regarding clarity and information for residents, officers agreed to produce a Frequently Asked Questions document for Members and general publication, once the Authority had responded to the Inspector’s questions.

Delivery Targets

- It was acknowledged that the emergent lower target will help the Council to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply as it gains more weight through the preparation of the CSSR
- One Member expressed concern that the adoption of a delivery target at the higher end of the calculations could result in a backlog of development, and inability to demonstrate a 5 year land supply which would have the knock-on effect of developers seeking early release of other land for development.
- Comments on the findings and impact of recent appeal decisions regarding 5 year land supply were noted, particularly the impact on decision making at area Plans Panels. Although the response that the SAP held more weight now that it had been submitted for inspection was noted, Members were keen to

resolve this dichotomy in order to secure the delivery of quality developments in Leeds.

- Additionally, a request to invite the Head of Development Services to future DPP meetings in order to gain familiarity with the discussions and tensions between policy making and delivery was noted.

Planning Policy

Views on the National Planning Policy Framework were expressed along with comments that current Central Government planning policy favoured developers and made it difficult for local planning authorities to defend their local policies seeking quality developments in sustainable locations.

Housing Standards

- The proposal to introduce housing targets was broadly welcomed as an opportunity to improve the quality of new housing in Leeds whilst retaining focus on housing standards, quality of build and the shape of the city alongside housing need and allocations.
- Members were mindful of the viability arguments put forward by some developers, however remained fully supportive of the local policies established to secure the “Leeds Standard” in terms of space around dwellings; minimum size requirements; quality and amenity.
- Officers reported that Housing Standards now formed part of the CSSR and would carry more weight than the former Supplementary Planning Document
- The view that all new build homes should be accessible was expressed
- Access considerations should also be considered in terms of location – isolated developments with no supporting services (such as retail) would not be good for sheltered accommodation or homes for residents with specific/mobility requirements
- Members requested that the Chief Planning Officer be invited to attend the proposed workshop in order to present information on policy compliance.

Housing Mix

- A review of the Affordable Housing requirements for each of the zones was required as these had been set when the housing market was weaker. One Member reported Islington Council successfully operated a 50% Affordable Housing requirement.
- The needs of specific groups – such as older residents and young people – to be considered. A suggestion was made to invite Regeneration Officers to the proposed workshop to discuss sheltered housing provision in regeneration proposals.
- A review of the city-wide Community Infrastructure Levy requirements could identify whether the requirements remained appropriate for each area and assess the impact of CIL on redevelopment. Officers indicated that the CSSR viability testing would include a commentary on CIL.
- Consideration of the policy for Commuted Sum use and whether there was any flexibility and support for cross-ward financing. A comment that commuted sums generally did not deliver the units required was noted along with suggestions to undertake reviews of the calculation mechanism and best practice operated elsewhere.

In conclusion, the Panel supported the proposal to hold an informal workshop prior to the next November Panel meeting. It was agreed that an outline of the themes proposed for discussion would be sent to Panel Members once the date was set.

RESOLVED

- a) That the contents of the report be noted;
- b) To note the intention to hold an informal workshop for Panel Members and relevant officers on the key themes of the Core Strategy Selective Review;
- c) That the comments made during discussions be noted and be used to inform the key themes of the proposed workshop;
- d) To note the intention to invite the following officers to the proposed workshop: The Chief Planning Officer, the Head of Development Services, and relevant Regeneration Officers.
- e) To note that in response to the comments regarding clarity and information for residents, a Frequently Asked Questions document would be produced, once the Authority had responded to the SAP Inspector's questions.

19 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED - To note the date and time of the next meeting as Tuesday 21st November 2017 at 1.30 pm.