

## **Development Plan Panel**

**Tuesday, 12th July, 2022**

**PRESENT:** Councillor C Gruen in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, J McKenna,  
K Brooks, H Hayden, A Lamb, E Taylor,  
J Akhtar and P Carlill

### **CHAIRS OPENING REMARKS**

Councillor C Gruen welcomed everybody to the meeting and looked forward to the challenge as Chair of the Development Plan Panel. On behalf of the Panel, the Chair thanked former Chair Cllr Walshaw for his work and greeted the 4 work experience students who were in attendance

#### **1 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents**

There were no appeals.

#### **2 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public**

There were no exempt items.

#### **3 Late Items**

There were no formal late items.

#### **4 Declaration of Interests**

Members did not declare any interests at the meeting.

#### **5 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R Finnigan and Councillor C Campbell.

#### **6 Minutes**

**RESOLVED-** That the minutes of the Development Plan Panel meeting held on 1 March 2022, be approved as an accurate record.

#### **7 Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) - Consultation Update**

Further to the minutes of the meeting held on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2022, the report of the Chief Planning Officer provided an update on the consultation undertaken on the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). The Statement of Community Involvement is a statutory document (required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) and sets out how residents and other stakeholders can get involved in the preparation of planning policies, frameworks and the neighbourhood planning process and how comments can be made on planning applications.

Officers in attendance from the Neighbourhood Planning and Engagement team within the Spatial Planning Service introduced the report. Members were informed that the consultation period was from the 8<sup>th</sup> March until the 19<sup>th</sup> April 2022 which was published via a dedicated webpage with a link to the smart survey comments form, the survey was largely conducted online. Notification was sent via email to a range of stakeholders including statutory consultees, members, neighbourhood forums, parish councils and third sector organisations. The SCI mainly covered four key aspects of consultation, format and principles, plan-making, planning applications and neighbourhood planning, methods of engagement and targets.

Approximately one thousand consultees were notified and received eight email and thirty-nine smart survey responses.

From the responses received, it was noted that the SCI used too much technical planning jargon, was lengthy, should be integrated with other Council departments to ensure wider, consistent engagement. There have been difficulties with accessibility on public access and, a suggestion that face-to-face consultation will be effective for public engagement.

Officers explained that the responses provided vital information for altering the document before final release. Planning terminology will be revised to improve the flow of the document and sound explanation. Reducing the size of the document could not be achieved due to policy requirements but a summary of the contents will be provided alongside the document. Officers were of the view that the document could not be used across Council departments, as it is a statutory document prepared specifically for planning purposes. However, officers will work with other departments. For example, a link can be made with Children's Services to engage with young people in the future.

The draft SCI sets out three key targets, which although are broad, can be easily measured. The targets were as follows; receive comments from all neighbourhoods, positive feedback received focused on individuals who rarely engage with planning process and levels of engagement with young people. It was confirmed that a full review will take place after five years and the targets would be evaluated annually to measure success.

Panel members discussed the following key matters:

- The feasibility of face-to-face requests was queried due to the availability of resources and the need to balance expectations of the public when carrying out more face-to-face consultations. Developers will also be encouraged to engage with local residents. The variety of neighbourhoods across the city were noted and strategic methods were explained through activity such as a pilot project through funding from the government to tailor engagement to wards with less knowledge or activity within the planning process which should aim to simplify neighbourhood planning framework. It was noted that neighbourhood planning has previously failed in some wards and updates from the new pilot are welcomed to ensure voices of local residents are heard and valued.
- Members welcomed the involvement of young people and noted the importance of ensuring a version of the document included accessible wording to provide informative consultation. A point was raised that a similar approach to climate change can be implemented to school children regarding planning which could then influence parents and carers to maximise overall engagement.
- The draft SCI provided an opportunity to focus on those currently not engaged with planning processes and policy as currently involvement relies largely on self-initiation. There are certain barriers that limit engagement, such as, lack of understanding of planning language and cultural factors. A new focus is to frame place making instead of jargonistic planning processes for people to

better understand their area and improvements or developments which may affect them. It was noted that information regarding what is a material planning consideration will be helpful so they can better understand what can and cannot be influenced as this is often a source of frustration for contributors. Some feeling on 'not being listened to' from residents may be difficult to combat due to National Planning Policy Framework. The SCI aims to provide clarity regarding the scope of consultation and relevant contribution to planning applications.

- Comments were made in relation to the targets and the measurability of success. Officers explained Leeds is the only local authority in the country to include targets within their SCI as they are not a mandatory requirement and the targets can easily be scrutinised and revised annually to lead to further improvements. Also, as the report aims to improve overall community engagement with planning, it is considered that broad targets are a good place to start.

Members broadly supported the draft SCI subject to inclusion of the wording of the targets being more focussed, to reflect more measurable targets. As well as a summary document being prepared, tailored to young people, with the intent to further encourage participation.

The Chair thanked officers in attendance, on the preparation of the draft SCI and highlighted the importance of aiding progression of the document.

### **RESOLVED**

- a) Note the contents of the report and the comments raised by members during discussion of this item
- b) To recommend approval on the draft SCI to the Chief Planning Officer, subject to the inclusion of improvements as outlined above

Councillor Akhtar joined the meeting at 13:40, during consideration of this item.

### **8 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

**RESOLVED** – To note the date and time of the next meeting as Tuesday, 6<sup>th</sup> September 2022 at 1.30pm.

(The meeting concluded at 14.55)