

Development Plan Panel

Tuesday, 13th November, 2018

PRESENT: Councillor P Gruen in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, A Carter,
T Leadley, J McKenna, E Nash, M Shazad,
F Venner and N Walshaw

32 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against refusal of inspection of documents.

33 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

The agenda contained no exempt information.

34 Late Items

There were no formal late items of business added to the agenda, however the Panel received the following supplementary document to be considered: Summary of final report of the independent review of build out rates (Rt. Hon Sir Oliver Letwin MP), October 2018 (minute 39 refers)

35 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

36 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Campbell, C Gruen and R J Lewis. The Panel welcomed Councillor Elizabeth Nash as substitute.

37 Minutes

RESOLVED- That the minutes of the Development Plan Panel meeting held on Tuesday 16th October 2018 be approved.

38 Matters Arising

Minute 29 Housing needs - Members noted that the Examination in Public on the Core Strategy Selective Review was anticipated in the first and last week in February 2019.

Additionally, Members discussed the poor quality of security measures provided by housebuilders in Leeds. The Panel noted this was a Building Regulations matter; further expressing the importance to influence house builders to liaise with the standard we expect and that prospective purchasers are able to consider the quality of purchases at the conveyancing stage.

Members noted the Chief Planning Officer's intention to look into providing informative notes on planning decision notices.

Minute 30 Site Allocations Plan - The Panel were informed that draft main modifications had been submitted and comments were expected from the Inspector – these will be published in due course.

RESOLVED – To note the matters discussed.

39 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Update 2018

The report of the Chief Planning Officer updated the Panel on the progress and conclusions of the 2018 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) prior to its publication.

The Group Manager, Policy and Plans, presented the report and explained that the 2018 update of the SHLAA has used the Council's established methodology, including consultation with housebuilders, which is in accordance with national planning policy and up to date interpretation of planning guidance and has calculated the Council's current 5 Year Land Supply as 4.76 years.

Additionally, Members noted the Secretary of State's positive comments regarding the outcome of past appeals in the summer, Tingley Station and Thorp Arch, regarding Leeds' 5 Year Land Supply, reported as around 4.38 years at that time and the strengthened position this has now provided the Authority in calculating the current 5 year land supply alongside the increase in planning permissions granted for housing. During the debate, Members commented that some appellants at appeal often submitted substantial information very late in the process which did not provide the Council with sufficient opportunity to process this. Panel was advised that concerns over this practice had been included in the Local Planning Authority's response to consultation (Independent review of planning appeal inquiries: call for evidence) on the Planning Appeals process. The Chair requested that these comments be referred to the Development Management Team for action.

A comment was noted regarding the role of housebuilders in the SHLAA refresh and the need to retain evidence of their participation and clarity on agreements reached during discussions.

Members noted a correction to paragraph 3.4 which set out the windfall supply to read "2,500 per 5 years".

The Chair welcomed the report and update, and expressed the Authority was close to being able to give significant weight to the Core Strategy (Selective Review) and Site Allocations Plan, pending receipt of the Inspectors comments.

The Panel were in receipt of a supplementary document - The Independent Review of Build Out Rates Report, written by Rt. Hon Sir Oliver Letwin MP.

The Head of Strategic Planning, presented a summary of the Letwin Report and highlighted its focus on large dwelling developments and recognition of the need for housing mix. Leeds has a collaborative approach, actively pursuing the suggested themes and the strategic housing market assessment (SHMA) evidence supported the proposition for achieving a better housing mix. A full report was anticipated to be available for Panel Members in February 2019.

Members discussed the following:

- Whether the evidence used to conclude the Letwin Review findings are sufficient and reflective of housing need in Leeds, other core cities and nationwide.
- Whilst welcoming the suggestion that Local Authorities should have a more “muscular role in homebuilding”, Members queried whether the creation of European-Style development companies would be applicable in the UK.
- Noting the review made comment on large sites being defined as 1500 dwellings or more, Members expressed the view that was not reasonable nor appropriate for Leeds, and supported a lower threshold of 500 dwellings.
- The impact of large housebuilders ownership or options in sites & land on housing build-out rates, and the effect this has on the ability of small and medium sized housing developers being able to participate in the housing market.
- Members were keen to ensure the Authority responded to the document, but were advised there was no formal opportunity to respond. The Chief Planning Officer reported Leeds was hosting the next core cities event and would raise Members concerns.

(Councillor Venner arrived at 14:15 during discussion of this item)

RESOLVED –

- a) To note, the contents of the report and comments made during the discussions
- b) To endorse the publication of the SHLAA update 2018 and Council’s 5 year land supply position for the period 1st April 2018 to 31st March 2023 at 4.76 years
- c) To note the contents of the Independent Review of Build Out Rates Report by Rt. Hon Sir Oliver Letwin MP
- d) To request the Chief Planning Officer provide an informal response to the Letwin Report at the forthcoming core cities meeting and a copy be made available to Panel Members
- e) To note the Panel are in support of adopting a figure of 500 dwellings as the threshold to deploy the recommendations in the report in Leeds (instead of 1500 as suggested in the Oliver Letwin Report)

40 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED- to note the date and time of the next meeting as Tuesday 18th December 2018.