

**Report of the Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support and Director of City Development****Report to Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure and Investment)****Date: 27 September 2017****Subject: Scrutiny Inquiry into Sustainable Development in Leeds**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**1. Summary of Main Issues**

- 1.1 Leeds City Council has an ambition to be the best council in the UK, compassionate fair, open and welcoming with an economy that is both prosperous and sustainable, so all our communities are successful. The Vision for Leeds 2011 – 2030 supports this ambition, stating that by 2030 all communities will be successful where local services, including shops and healthcare, are easy to access and meet people's needs. It also states that local cultural and sporting activities are available to all and there are high quality buildings, places and green spaces, which are clean, looked after, and respect the city's heritage, including buildings, parks and the history of our communities. The Best Council Plan 2017 – 2018 states that the Council wants everyone to live in good quality, affordable homes within clean and well cared for places.
- 1.2 At its meeting on the 21 of June 2017, Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure and Investment) considered their work programme for the 2017/18 municipal year. At this meeting the Board discussion the approach in Leeds to 'sustainable development' through the provision of structure that supports the physical and social needs of the people, now and in the future, who will ultimately, live, work and spend time in their community. The Scrutiny Board stressed the importance of designing and planning places that are supported sufficiently by transport, health and education infrastructure and services. The Board resolved that this would be the main scrutiny inquiry for 2017/18. Terms of reference for the inquiry were agreed on the 19 July 2017.

## **2. Recommendation**

The Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure and Investment) is recommended to:

- i. note the information contained within this report, make Recommendations as deemed appropriate.

### **3 Purpose of this report**

- 3.1 This report provides information to support the second session of the Scrutiny Inquiry into Sustainable Development in Leeds.

### **4. Main Issues**

- 4.1 At its meeting on the 21 of June 2017, Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure and Investment) considered their work programme for the 2017/18 municipal year. At this meeting the Board discussion the approach in Leeds to 'sustainable development' through the provision of structure that supports the physical and social needs of the people, now and in the future, who will ultimately, live, work and spend time in their community. The Scrutiny Board stressed the importance of designing and planning places that are supported sufficiently by transport, health and education infrastructure and services. The Board resolved that this would be the main scrutiny inquiry for 2017/18. Terms of reference were agreed on the 19 July 2017, when the first session of the inquiry was undertaken.
- 4.2 The purpose of the inquiry is to make an assessment of and, where appropriate, make recommendations about the delivery of sustainable development in Leeds, and the extent to which the local authority can influence sustainable development.
- 4.3 Sustainable Development is a wide ranging concept at a global and through to the local level and has emerged as a key strand of public policy, with the ambition of securing patterns of development, economic prosperity, social progress and the management of environmental resources, at the same time. Whilst a number of core elements can be identified, sustainable development has multiple definitions and interpretations and has introduced a plethora of new technical language.
- 4.4 Sustainable Development is therefore a cross cutting imperative, which aims to take a longer term and holistic view and is the responsibility of Governments, the business community and wider society, to operate within acceptable limits, to meet its objectives. Within this overall context, and within the UK, the Planning system has a key role to play in delivering the principles of sustainable development but it is by no means the only mechanism through which these aims might be achieved. Planning is also limited in its scope, is impacted by externalities (such as wider Government policies, global economic conditions and changing evidence) and does not have the financial resources available to put in place all of the necessary interventions and programmes to facilitate a more sustainable future. However, within the limitations of Government requirements and legislation, Planning does provide an opportunity to shape the character of places and to help influence and coordinate investment decisions.
- 4.5 In the UK local planning authorities have the responsibility for the preparation of the Local Plan (Development Plans with a 15 year time frame and the determination of planning applications via the Development Management process. In Leeds the Local Plan is comprised of a series of documents including the Core Strategy (adopted 2014), the Natural Resources and Waste local plan (adopted 2013), the Aire Valley Leeds Area Action (adoption anticipated November 2017) and the Site Allocations Plan (adoption anticipated 2018). Once 'made', Neighbourhood Plans will also form part of the development plan.

- 4.6 In providing a strategic planning framework for allocation Plans, the Leeds Core Strategy sets out a series of interrelated objectives, strategic and thematic policies, based around the principles of sustainable development. It should be emphasised also that with the context of national planning guidance, the Core Strategy is a spatial plan, which is seeking to make provision for the overall scale and distribution of regeneration and growth across the District, whilst seeking to manage environmental resources and meet social objectives (such as aspects of public health and deprivation). Key components of the Core Strategy include:
- Supporting the provision of community infrastructure that is tailored to meet the needs of the community including high quality health, education and training, cultural and recreation, and community facilities and spaces.
  - The provision of new educational facilities to meet increased demand either through extensions to existing establishments or through the building of new schools in areas of housing growth or adjacent to them.
  - That new development should be located in accessible locations that are adequately served by existing or programmed highways, by public transport and with safe and secure access for pedestrians, cyclists and people with impaired mobility.
- 4.7 The following areas were discussed at the meeting on the 19 July.
- The origins and definition of the term, “Sustainable Development”.
  - The definition of “Sustainable Development”, as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- 4.8 As emphasised at this meeting, in 1987 the Brundtland Commission introduced the first and an internationally accepted definition of sustainable development. This has been represented as a ‘3 legged stool’, whereby each leg (economic, environmental and social) are dependent on each other and need to be balanced, in order to achieve objectives over the longer term.
- 4.9 At the meeting, it was highlighted also that for the purposes of Planning, these broader principles have been translated in to an interpretation of sustainable development as part of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2012). This specifies that:
- “The purpose of planning is to help achieve sustainable development. Sustainable means ensuring that better lives for ourselves don’t mean worse lives for future generations. Development means growth. We must accommodate the new ways by which we will earn our living in a competitive world. We must house a rising population, which is living longer and wants to make new choices, We must respond to the changes that new technologies offer us. Our lives, and the places in which we live them can be better, but they will certainly be worse if things stagnate.”* (Greg Clarke, Ministerial foreword).
- 4.10 Within this context, and as a basis for Planning policy and decision making, the NPPF also introduces a ‘presumption in favour of sustainable development’, a set of ‘core planning principles’ and states that paragraphs 18-219 need to be ‘taken as a whole’ in achieving sustainable development.

- 4.11 The purpose of the second session is to consider how the principles of Sustainable Development have been applied in Leeds through the development plan and development management decisions in order to achieve the broader investment and infrastructure objectives set out in the Best Council Plan 2015-2020 and the Vision for Leeds.
- 4.12 In addition the purpose is to advise the Scrutiny Board how Sustainable Development principles have been translated into practice and in translating these principles the key Policy, the issues that have emerged, which have skewed the delivery of Sustainable Development in its wider sense, and how have they been addressed.

The Board will specifically explore the extent of limitations on sustainable development due to:

- the definition of sustainability contained in the NPPF
- the methodology for assessing future housing numbers,
- the requirement to demonstrate a 5 Year Land Supply, the issue of viability, and the fact that the Council has little power to compel developers to build out existing planning permissions, particularly on brownfield land.
- The level of developer contributions through s106 and CIL monies in terms of providing appropriate infrastructure or measures to mitigate development. (this is scheduled to be considered in greater detail at the October 2017 meeting)

## **5 Corporate Considerations**

### **5.1 Consultation and Engagement**

The board may undertake consultation should it be deemed appropriate in order to conduct the inquiry or gather necessary evidence.

### **5.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration.**

- 5.2.1 Equality Improvement Priorities have been developed to ensure our legal duties are met under the Equality Act. The priorities will help the council to achieve its ambition to be the best City in the UK and ensure that as a city work takes place to reduce disadvantage, discrimination and inequalities of opportunity.
- 5.2.2 Equality and diversity will be a consideration throughout the Scrutiny Inquiry and due regard will be given to equality through the use of evidence, written and verbal, outcomes from consultation and engagement activities.
- 5.2.3 The Scrutiny Board may engage and involve interested groups and individuals (both internal and external to the council) to inform recommendations.
- 5.2.4 Where an impact has been identified this will be reflected in the final inquiry report, post inquiry. Where a Scrutiny Board recommendation is agreed the individual, organisation or group responsible for implementation or delivery should give due

regard to equality and diversity, conducting impact assessments where it is deemed appropriate.

### **5.3 Council Policies and City Priorities**

This inquiry will support objectives as defined in The Vision for Leeds 2011 – 2030 and the Best Council Plan 2015-20

### **5.4 Resources and Value for Money**

There is no resource or value for money implications relating to this report. At the conclusion of the inquiry any identified impact will be reported in the final inquiry report.

### **5.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

None

### **5.6 Risk Management**

There are no risk implications relating to this report. At the conclusion of the inquiry any identified risk will be reported in the final inquiry report.

## **6 Recommendations**

The Scrutiny Board (Infrastructure and Investment) is recommended to:

- a) note the information contained within this report, make recommendations as deemed appropriate.

## **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

None

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.