

Development Plan Panel

Wednesday, 29th July, 2020

PRESENT: Councillor N Walshaw in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, C Campbell,
C Gruen, J McKenna, S Arif, D Collins,
R Finnigan, L Mulherin and K Ritchie

The Chair welcomed everyone to the first “remote meeting” of the Development Plan Panel.

The Chair explained that internet connectivity may be an issue for some participants and suggested it may be appropriate to appoint a Deputy Chair who could assume the Chair should the Chair lose connectivity.

The Chair proposed that Councillor Kevin Ritchie be nominated as the Deputy Chair, the proposal was seconded, upon being put to the vote the motion was passed.

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. However, supplementary information had been circulated prior to the meeting in relation to agenda item 7 – Local Plan Update.

4 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

5 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors An Carter and R Finnigan.

6 Minutes

RESOLVED- That the minutes of the Development Plan Panel meeting held on 21 January 2020 be approved as an accurate record.

Matters Arising

A Member queried the position on the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) – public consultation. The Head of Strategic Planning informed the Panel, one round of formal consultation with members of the public and a steering group involving local representatives had been undertaken. It was confirmed there had been a delay for

the next round of consultation due to the Pandemic. A progress update would be provided at the next Panel meeting.

7 Local Plan Update

The Panel considered a report of the Chief Planning Officer that provided an update on four key issues: the Legal Challenge to the Site Allocations Plan; the Site Allocations Plan Review; the Local Plan Review and the Local Plan Update. The report provided context on the latest information on the legal challenge and used the review of extant Local Plan policies to begin the process of updating the Local Plan and set out an initial broad scope of that update, alongside a timetable for preparation and consultation.

A summary table of the Leeds Local Plan review 2020, had been appended to the submitted report.

The Head of Strategic Planning informed the Panel on the position of the Legal Challenge to the Site Allocations Plan. The case focused on the release of Green Belt land within the Aireborough Housing Market Characteristic Area for housing within the Site Allocations Plan, and the Judgement had been handed down in June 2020. The Judge had supported three of the seven grounds submitted (which involved errors with the independent Inspectors' Report, not the Council's submission), and on that basis the claim was allowed and the Judge had sought suggested relief on the three grounds. The Panel heard that the relief submissions had been received by the Judge, and that to date the Judgment had yet to be handed down.

Additionally, the implications the legal challenge had on the Site Allocations Plan created impacts upon the scope and future timescale of the Site Allocation Plan Review. There was still a need to review additional housing allocations and safeguarded land designations to deliver the adopted housing requirement post 2023, as set out in SAP policy HGR1.

In response to Members comments on the update, the following had been discussed:

- *Greenbelt sites implicated with the challenge.* All submitted planning applications would be progressed and appropriate weight would be attached to policies until such a time as Relief was granted.
- *Downward housing trajectory (CSSR).* The reference in the report was specific to the downward trajectory of the housing target and reduction from 70k homes to 52k set in 2019. It was confirmed that the Judgement did not raise any immediate implications over the distribution of housing.
- *Shortfall in housing and allocation.* A Member raised concern regarding the allocation of housing through HMCAs, particularly the implications on the inner city areas and climate change, in terms of meeting housing requirements.
- *Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) Review.* The Panel heard that the SHLAA provided an opportunity to receive up to date information on sites being brought forward, and any information (including contaminated land) provided on behalf of housebuilders, would be checked by the Council.

The Group Manager (Policy and Plans) provided an update on the Local Plan Update. Town and Country Planning Act Regulations and paragraph 33 of the NPPF require a review of Local Plan Policies every 5 years; following that review, it was considered that a number of policies across the Local Plan would benefit from being updated. (Appendix 1 outlined the review by policy) The following information had been highlighted:

Climate Emergency

Previous discussions on the Local Plan Update (LPU) have focused on the climate emergency, and there was a commitment to focus on related matters including:

- Strategic plan to plant more trees;
- Sustainable and active travel access to new housing;
- Review of Leeds Bradford Airport policy SP12.

An update to Strategic policies in the Core Strategy and Natural Resources and Waste Plan could consist of:

- Spatial Strategy;
- Carbon reduction and sustainable design and construction;
- Renewable energy generation;
- Green and blue infrastructure;
- Sustainable Travel, car free living and walkable neighbourhoods

Other Policy Areas

To reflect current and future impacts of Covid-19 and potential for a broadened scope in line with the Local Plan Review to meet the priorities in the Best Council Plan, including:

- Infrastructure and investment – HS2, Mass Transit;
- Employment land requirements – Impact of Covid-19 on office demand;
- Health High Streets – how to create resilient local/town/city centres;
- Place-making – how to create resilient communities.

Changes to the Planning System

Major changes have been signalled by Government including Permitted Development Rights and Use Class Order (impacts on High Streets) changes.

Proposed Next Steps

Topic based papers are to be brought to Panel meetings with policy options;

- Agreement on the draft scope;
- Prepare Sustainability Appraisal Scoring Report;
- Progress made to enable Regulation 18 consultation which concerns matters of the scope via Executive Board;
- Indicative timetable of spring 2021 for Regulation 18 consultation.

Whilst acknowledging the limitations in terms of national guidance, the Chair was keen to identify initiatives on how the Council is to be net zero carbon by 2030. The Executive Member (Climate Change, Transport and Sustainable Development) added that travel plans had been looked at in terms of 'active travel' neighbourhoods and how this would be rolled out within communities. The opportunity to explore

community regeneration was expressed, particularly joined up approaches with local/town/city centres and hubs. The Chief Planning Officer further highlighted the need to ensure that longer term strategies meet the requirements around performance standard of new properties, housing requirements and the need to enable easier retrofit of housing stock.

In response to Members comments and questions, the following had been discussed:

- *Greenspace requirements.* The Panel shared a general consensus that adequate amounts of greenspace needs to be provided by developers. The Panel also highlighted the importance of developers being encouraged to have discussions with community groups, to enhance ownership of tree planting. It was confirmed that the Council had recently updated the policy within the CSSR on greenspace delivery, and this would need to be monitored overtime. Additionally, investment introduced 'pocket parks' across the city.
- *Permitted Development Rights.* In responding to concerns on conversion allowances, it was confirmed that a topic paper would be scheduled to come back to a future Panel meeting.
- *Place-making.* Suggestions were made to look at encouraging hedgerows instead of fencing.
- *Definition of environmental and social sustainability.* Officers highlighted that the Council would continue to ensure policies are sustainable at a local level against the Core Strategy and Best Council Plan objectives.
- *Managing the growth of Leeds/Bradford Airport.* The national focus required to tackle climate change in the aviation industry. It was confirmed that aviation would form part of the policy review and noted that the Council must use existing policy to determine the current airport application.
- *Impacts of the West Yorkshire Devolution Deal.* The Chief Planning Officer set out the role of the Combined Authority in preparing a Spatial Development Strategy (SDS), whilst confirming that the scope of the Local Plan Review had the potential to shape the SDS.
- *Cross boundary implications.* Officers confirmed the Duty to Cooperate approach had been robust and officers were confident this would be the case in the future.
- *Review of Policies H5 and SP6 & SP7.* The Panel noted the policies listed had been subject to recent review through the CSSR and the effectiveness of those policies would be picked up through an Authority Monitoring Report.
- *Climate Emergency Working Groups.* In acknowledging the importance and depth of work around climate emergency policies, a suggestion was made for Member involvement from the Development Plan Panel. The Chair confirmed Panel Members would be invited to relevant working groups.

In summarising, officers set out the next steps for the Local Plan Review, confirming that a scope consultation document would be brought to the Development Plan Panel meeting early 2021; climate emergency policies would take priority. The Group Manager (Policy and Plans) confirmed that the Local Plan Review would be subject to the Chief Planning Officers delegation powers, and the final document would be published on the Council website. The suggestion to maximise the use of existing policies was noted, and would be the subject of additional training and guidance notes for officers.

To conclude, the Chair requested that Members of the Development Plan Panel be invited to the relevant Climate Emergency Working Groups and that, a draft work programme be provided on the topics relating to:

- Aviation and Transport
- Carbon Housing
- Green Infrastructure
- Local Energy Production

RESOLVED –

- a) To note the position on the Site Allocation Plan legal challenge and review and that an update would be provided at a future Panel date;
- b) To note the contents of the report, and updates provided on the initial scope of the Local Plan Update;
- c) To note the contents of the Summary table of Leeds Local Plan Review 2020 – as set out in **Appendix 1**;
- d) That the comments made at the meeting be noted, and agreed that broad suggestions listed above will be used to form an indicative timetable and be brought to the next Panel meeting for consideration.

8 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – To note the date and time of the next meeting as 8 September 2020 at 1.30 p.m.

The meeting ended at 12:55