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Development Plan Panel

Tuesday, 3rd November, 2020

PRESENT: Councillor N Walshaw in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, C Campbell,
A Carter, C Gruen, J McKenna, L Mulherin
and K Ritchie

26 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals against refusal.

27 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exempt items.

28 Late Items

There were no formal late items.

29 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interest.

30 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Arif and D Collins.

31 Minutes

RESOLVED- That the minutes of the Development Plan Panel meetings held on:

- a) 8th September 2020, be approved as a correct record.
- b) 13th October 2020, be approved as a correct record.

SERVICE UPDATE

The Head of Strategic Planning informed the Panel that as part of considerations for the wider council savings and service reviews, a number of key members of staff across strategic services had left the Council. Work would be undertaken in terms of a proposed restructure and filling essential posts. The Panel in turn thanked those members of staff for all their hard work and value to the planning process, and wished them the best.

32 Local Plan Update (LPU)

The report of the Chief Planning Officer invited Members to consider a list of proposed topic areas and possible policy approaches within the scope of the update, which has an overall focus on the Climate Emergency and Biodiversity. The topics are brought forward in two stages with today's session considering reduced emissions, heat networks, renewable energy generation and storage, place-making and green infrastructure and biodiversity. On the 19 January 2021 patterns of growth, infrastructure and flood risk will be considered (the commissioning of a new Strategic Flood Risk Assessment is underway and will form options for food risk moving forward).

A first consultation draft of the LPU will be presented for consideration at the Panel meeting in January 2021, which will align with the “Regulation 18” consultation stage of plan-making. Members were invited to comment on the scope of the document as part of the first round of statutory consultation and the report sets out the initial version, narrative, topic areas and wider policy links.

Appendices to the submitted report set out a summary of existing policies aimed at addressing climate change as contained in the Local Plan.

The Group Manager (Policy and Plans) introduced the report, setting out the topic areas and the clear focus of the Council on the Climate Emergency and the need for policies to be reviewed in order to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030. He also set out an initial draft direction of travel for a series of topic areas, which will assist in stimulating responses during the formal consultation, summarised as follows:

Reducing Carbon from Buildings

Initial Draft Preferred Option: Require all development to be built to a zero carbon standard.

Alternative Options:

- An incremental tiered approach,
- Prescribed improvements over and above building regulations,
- Requiring carbon off-setting of developments through renewables,
- Requiring a set proportion of energy to be derived from low carbon/renewable sources.

Sustainable Construction

Initial Draft Preferred Option: Require a high standard of sustainable construction for residential development as defined by a specific, nationally recognised accreditation process.

Alternative Options:

- A ‘do nothing’ approach,
- Require a high standard but no rating system.
- Other approaches: Embedded Carbon model

Renewable Energy Generation

Initial Draft Preferred Option: To set targets which in turn enable the allocation of suitable areas for generation.

Alternative Options:

- Identify sites without setting targets,
- To set criteria based policy for new sites and their consideration.

Heat Networks

Initial Draft Preferred Option: To retain existing policy and supplement with a District Heating SPD

Alternative Options:

- Retain the existing policy position,

- Amend existing policies to give stronger focus to heat networks in new developments.

Energy Storage

Initial Draft Preferred Option: A new policy which encourages energy storage usage in identified areas. But with no established targets.

Alternative Options:

- A new policy with targets.

Place-making

Initial Draft Preferred Option: A new strategic policy which provides stronger hooks for design, place-making and 20-minute neighbourhoods.

Alternative Option:

- Re-write existing policies to include greater signposting for existing and proposed design guidance.

Green infrastructure

Initial Draft Preferred Option: Spatial Policy 13 and Policy G1 to be re-drafted to strengthen existing designations, clarify increased provision and clearly set out the role and function of GI in addressing the climate change agenda.

Alternative Option:

- A comprehensive re-evaluation and update of all GI policies.

Tree Planting and Replacement

Initial Draft Preferred Options:

- An approach which identifies new land for tree planting
- A revised tree retention policy which assesses carbon sequestration values rather than tree numbers

Alternative Options:

- Pursue non-planning solutions
- Increase tree replacement to an ambitious target
- Do nothing and retain 3:1 existing replacement target.

Biodiversity

Initial Draft Preferred Option: That policy G9 is refined and allows for enhanced improvements in the provision of net biodiversity.

Alternative Option:

- Do nothing, either retaining existing policy or using any framework set out in the Environment Bill

In terms of the next steps, it was confirmed that topics of infrastructure, flood risk and locations for growth would be presented at the Panel meeting in January 2021, as well as the Consultation draft. Subject to approval, the Consultation will commence in the spring.

The Panel discussed the following matters:

- Progress on the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). Barriers in terms of local restrictions and holding events across communities. It was confirmed that, in light of the pandemic, a bespoke response was needed now, seeking

views from community groups on a revised SCI prior to the Local Plan Update being put forward for consultation. Additionally, challenges had been identified with communities who do not usually engage with planning matters, and these would need to be addressed to ensure the SCI will be accessible and provides clarity to all members of the community.

- Clarity on potential complications regarding the Local Authorities target in meeting net zero carbon emissions by 2030, in comparison to West Yorkshire Combined Authorities (WYCA) target of 2038. Members noted that the target set by the LA was formed based on evidence. It was confirmed that liaison with WYCA on their 2038 target was needed and that they expect significant progress by 2030.
- Clarity on the mechanisms in calculating carbon capture and tree replacement. The exploration of further information would be collated in terms of technology considerations and partnership work with universities.
- Clarity on how compliance will be measured in terms of policies EN1 and EN2.
- The importance of looking at green infrastructure and biodiversity requirements across new developments, particularly in urban areas in setting clear targets.
- Liaising with developers in order to meet the objectives of the preferred options. The Chair highlighted the importance of a developer forum.
- The viability in achieving net zero emissions. Following Reading Council adopting a 0 zero carbon policy, Leeds will look at good practice elsewhere. Additionally, a number of options as part of the consultation would be put forward for developers to consider how achieving the net zero ambition would be applied across a range of developments.
- Heat network options with air and ground source heat pumps, and their role and limitations in terms of on-site developments.
- Considerations around the incorporation of hydrogen. It was confirmed that energy storage facilities would not be in residential areas and would be well connected to the grid. Whilst there was not a hydrogen grid, it has been emerging as to how that works as a network.
- To identify the effectiveness of farm land and protecting local food production. The Head of Strategic Planning confirmed that a review of categorisations maps was required, and the progression of the policy would be considered at the Biodiversity and Food sub group.
- Acknowledging the importance of place-making being for both people and wildlife and the need for further detail around 20 minute neighbourhoods.

Councillor Carter left the meeting during discussion of this item.

The Panel broadly supported the proposed approaches as set out in the submitted report.

In conclusion of the item, the Chief Planning Officer thanked Members for their contributions in future proofing the city. Members' comments would be built into additional work and expanded on at the Panel meeting to be held January 2021.

RESOLVED –

- a) To note the contents of the report
- b) To note that comments provided during discussions would help form part of the draft policy scope of the Local Plan

33 Date and Time of Next Meeting

To note the date and time of the next meeting as Tuesday 19th January 2021 at 1:30 pm.

(The meeting ended at 15:05)

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