

Development Plan Panel

Tuesday, 1st November, 2022

PRESENT: Councillor C Gruen in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, C Campbell,
E Flint, K Brooks, E Taylor and P Carlill

Councillor

17 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals.

18 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exempt items.

19 Late Items

There were no late items.

20 Declaration of Interests

Members did not declare any interests at the meeting.

21 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Lamb, Cllr Hayden and Cllr McKenna with Cllr Flint substituting for Cllr Hayden.

22 Minutes

RESOLVED- That the minutes of the Development Plan Panel meeting held on 6th September 2022, be approved as an accurate record.

23 Matter Arising

Minute 15 - Local Plan Update 1 – The Head of Strategic Planning provided Members with an overview of the progress of the Local Plan Update 1 (LPU1). LPU1, focuses on the Leeds planning systems response to climate change, and had been released for consultation on 24th of October 2022, with all Members of Council being provided with details of the consultation which closes on the 19th of December 2022.

24 Proposed scope of Local Plan Update 2

The report of the Chief Planning Officer presented Members with the proposed scope and topic papers of the Local Plan Update 2 for comment, prior to these being developed into consultation material which will be brought back to a future meeting of the Development Plan Panel.

The Group Manager for Policy and Plans provided an overview on the process undertaken in 2020, which looked at what parts of the Local Plan might need to be reviewed. Consequently, Local Plan Update 1 (LPU1), focusing on the climate emergency, is underway. The next stage, Local Plan Update 2 (LPU2) can consider wider topics, and was presented to Members at this early stage as an opportunity to update and streamline policies and agree the key issues to focus on in advance of new or revised policies. The aims of the overall LPU are to ensure consistency with national policy and create a concise, effective approach. The risks noted for this

were viability, scale of the scope and rapidly changing national policy which may limit the powers of the council. The overall plan period for Local Plan Update covers 2022 to 2040 and work will involve: creating a headline list of policies, developing an evidence base, public consultation and submission to the Secretary of State prior to adopting the plan.

Officers within the planning department presented the proposed areas for consideration under LPU2, outlined as:

- **Spatial strategy** for Leeds to grow, meeting social, economic, and environmental objectives. A wide range of factors and the implications these have on viability and policy will need to be considered, including, accessibility, regeneration, land supply and greenbelt with the need to explore a wide range of options and their merits.
- **Housing requirements** were currently set through Core Strategy policy and Site Allocation Plan, as agreed in 2019. LPU2 policy will aim to target structural changes within the housing market of recent years within the constraints of current land supply which heavily focuses on inner Leeds and the city centre, with half of new housing being flats or apartments; land allocation in response to this may require release of Green Belt. The Core Strategy housing target will be replaced by Government methodology for Local Housing Need, with an additional 35% increase because Leeds is a large urban authority. A new updated Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) will be commissioned in order to understand local needs.
- **Affordable housing** provision currently did not meet demand so all delivery mechanisms will need to be maximised, such as policy H5 and section 106 agreements. Viability and other challenges can affect provision, but the planning system has some control regarding location, size and type to try improving delivery, but the city centre has a focus on high rise build to rent which is often not affordable. A first time buyer's policy was proposed which requires 25% of all affordable homes to be secured as First Homes with a minimum discount of 30% below market rate. Local thresholds, criteria and household income will be considered as part of LPU2 to define local need.
- A revised approach to **economic development** was outlined and land allocated for employment use requirements extended to 2028. Factors such as Brexit, the pandemic and cost of living crisis have changed the economic landscape and sustainable, localised growth will be an aim of the revised policies to safeguard existing industrial sites across Leeds while also reviewing future sites and requirements for local employment.
- The **role of local town centres, including the city centre** and the need to safeguard the activity and business within them was outlined as a key policy consideration. The following was noted to achieve this; the Government's permitted development within its Use Class E, consideration to update the boundary of the city centre, mixed use site allocations and hot food takeaway restrictions.
- The **Natural Resources and Waste Local Plan** that was adopted in 2013 was considered to largely still be appropriate although some revision to protect and ensure an adequate supply of aggregates and a plan for sustainable movement of minerals, a move to marine aggregate was proposed. A new policy for the control of fracking was also considered

appropriate for the LPU2 and a revision of the methods for identifying waste forecasts.

- The approach to **transport and accessibility** was noted to be under review which will feed into the spatial strategy approach and also the 20 minute neighbourhood plans being taken through LPU1. Accessibility and connectivity of a site will assist with identifying the appropriateness for development. The current T24 policy for carparking will be revised to take a restrict rather than provide parking approach and Active Travel policy will be explored to feed into the Best City Ambition and reduce commute times across the city.
- The non-strategic **development management** policies will also be under review as part of LPU2 as the 5 local plan documents are currently considered to be difficult to navigate and officers will reflect on the role of each one while taking account of changing national policy. Work on the other topic areas of LPU2 will feed into the creation and revision of policy.

The next step for LPU2 will be to bring it back as an item to Development Plan Panel on the 31st of January 2023, after consideration of Members comments, and then to Executive Board on the 8th of February 2023 with public consultation to begin around February or March 2023.

Members discussed the following key matters:

- The need for accessible information for the public in regard to the spatial strategy (and evidence like the SHMA) with a clear timeframe for consultation. Officers confirmed a brief overview document will be created for the public prior to the consultation period and noted that the plan period for LPU2 will be the same as LPU1.
- Support for the revised approach to affordable housing was given although it was questioned whether the percentage discount from market rate will be able to go further as the need is there and build to rent currently dominates for new developments. As the 80% of market rate pricing was confirmed to be nationally set policy it will limit powers of reducing prices further, but social rented targets can be prioritised as an objective.
- Previously local authorities would assess their own housing needs, the current government approach to housing needs methodology reduces the intricacy of the local approach and aims to ensure that nationally we build approximately 300,000 new homes each year; once a SHMA has been conducted national policy may be in a position to respond to the data which will outline evidence based community need.
- Disparity in density and housing type between the inner city and outer areas was noted and an ambition of the LPU2 should be to reduce this which will bring families closer to the city and create more affordable housing in outer areas. The SHMA will provide information that will assist with balancing housing provision and the plan will also need to consider density and infrastructure to be appropriate for each site although it was noted by officers there are issues with land acquisition and value which can disconnect land supply and affordable housing provision. Members outlined that neighbourhoods should be created on a needs basis, in line with the 20 minute neighbourhood ideal, rather than dictated through national policy.
- The order of hierarchy for land allocation was queried as there are varied ambitions and targets across the city which may compete for space, such as

green infrastructure, employment and flood zones. Officers outlined that the essence of the Leeds planning system was to best allocate and use land and sustainability appraisals help identify optimal social and economic outcomes within given parameters. As part of the ongoing consultation process the Panel can set clear objectives to effectively manage land allocation and could prioritise uses to shape Leeds positively and reassure citizens the correct land is safeguarded.

- Members questioned how viability is determined and how smaller developers could have improved opportunities. The LPU2 can take a more prescriptive strategic viability approach to determine what should be on each site and how it can be achieved.
- If greenbelt land is to be released for alternative uses, there must be some order of priority given depending on functionality. When considering reallocating green belt officers should endeavour for evidence and sustainability proposals to set out options for delivery and this will be done on an evidence based approach.
- Accessibility for people with disabilities for all developments must be sought as is often not the case for inner city or far outer developments; core strategy polices consider this issue but through the consultation period of LPU2 it will provide clarity as to where there are shortfalls.
- How the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) transport plan will tie into the updated policy was queried with officers noting that the WYCA plans are not yet definitive but transport hubs were intended to be set up in key economic locations and West Yorkshire has good grouping discussions and there is a duty to co-operate to improve local travel systems. New polices should reduce the need to travel for employment and amenities and assist with creating 20 minute neighbourhoods and maximise public transport efficiency through developer contributions.
- Protecting the economy in Leeds can be done through localisation and safeguarding industrial sites. While the council's powers may be limited as to which businesses involve themselves in the Leeds economy and where the money goes, inclusive growth and thorough consultation will be promoted to appeal to a broad range of businesses.
- Despite changes to government legislation in regard to fracking Members were of the opinion that a focus on green, renewable energy sources should be the priority over fracking. It was noted that future Government licenses for onshore gas exploration will reveal the likelihood of fracking in Leeds.
- The safety of women can be improved through active travel plans and designing out the feeling of not being safe. The planning system can influence how connected a site will be and trust in public transport will need to be earned.
- The proposed updates to parking policy T24 were generally supported but Members noted that for some citizens of Leeds, predominately in the outer areas, access to a car is essential and they are often required for access to leisure activities. A balance for car use through accessible public transport was noted and scoping and consultation will provide clarity on different communities and peoples car needs to then offer appropriate solutions without polarising the debate.
- Updated development management policies will incorporate sustainability into new estates and assist with the placemaking proposals that are part of LPU1.

Councillor Campbell left the meeting during consideration of this item.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the proposed scope of LPU2, the topic papers (appendix 1) and Members comments be noted.
- b) Agreement that the topic papers (appendix 1) are to be developed into consultation material and brought back to DPP for endorsement.

25 Draft City Centre West: Innovation Arc Supplementary Planning Document

The report of the Chief Planning Officer informed the Development Plan Panel of the draft City Centre West: Innovation Arc Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which provides a vision and principles for future development in the area called the Innovation Arc.

The Principal Planner (Policy and Plans) introduced the SPD outlining the area covered by the SPD to the West of Leeds city centre, which has a diverse make up, containing anchor institutions like the universities and hospitals as well as residential areas, a business district and signification heritage buildings. The purpose of the SPD is to implement Local Plan policies within the context of the area, it will be a new material planning consideration and inform future delivery plans and funding bids. The principles of the SPD will have a positive impact on the councils three pillars of the Best City Ambition (Health and Wellbeing, Inclusive Growth, Zero Carbon), movement and connectivity, open public space, core and supporting uses, heritage, identity, people and culture.

The SPD divides the area into three key neighbourhoods which are;

- Woodhouse Gateway, containing 3 universities and small businesses with the intention to build a new city park in the area.
- Great George Street, containing Leeds General Infirmary with the intention to build 2 new hospital buildings, reusing heritage buildings and creating new green spaces.
- West End, largely made up of private sector institutions with the intention to establish the area as an innovation hub.

The SPD will be subject to two consultations, as legally required, which will occur from the 24th of October until the 12th of December 2022, the second preadoption consultation over spring 2023.

Members discussed the following key matters:

- The development principles, contained in the report, did not refer to affordable housing or student accommodation. Officers outlined that the SPD was building on existing policy, large housing developments are not anticipated, and these policy areas were noted to be under review through LPU2.
- The SPD, as proposed, amplifies and supplements existing policy when considering new development within the allocated area to preserve the heritage of the area while improving connectivity and sustainability. Neighbourhood planning policy, core strategy and the SPD will have to all be taken into account when considering planning applications within the area.
- Outline planning consent, along with consent for relevant demolition works were confirmed to be in place for the two new proposed hospitals in the Great George Street neighbourhood however concern was noted due to the funding not yet being secured.
- The three areas were considered to have a diverse range of needs and although the university and hospital estates are not open public land there

should be some permeability to improve public routes in and out of the city. With the mixture of uses in the SPD area, openness and connectivity will help bring it together.

- Earlier neighbourhood consultation and engagement for the SPD would have given residents a choice for ambitions and priorities that work best for them.

RESOLVED –

- a) That Members comments on the SPD as set out in Appendix 1 be noted.
- b) That the public consultation on the SPD, commencing on the 24th October until the 12th December 2022 be noted.

26 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – To note the date and time of the next meeting as Tuesday, 31st January 2023

(The meeting concluded at 15:38pm)