

Formal Response to the Pre-Submission Draft Little Woodhouse Neighbourhood Plan

Date: 05 August 2024

Report of: Head of Policy and Plans

Report to: Chief Planning Officer

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

Brief Summary

This report highlights the Council's formal response to the pre-submission draft Little Woodhouse Neighbourhood Plan, currently being prepared by Little Woodhouse Neighbourhood Planning Forum. The Council has prepared a formal response to the contents of the draft plan under the following headings:

Timing / risks – highlighting the ongoing programme of planning reform and potential impacts on the draft neighbourhood plan.

Basic Conditions – the neighbourhood plan will be assessed against the Basic Conditions when it progresses to independent examination.

General comments on the Plan – including the introductory sections, and the structure of the plan and supporting documents.

Specific policy comments – comments on each draft policy in the draft neighbourhood plan.

The formal comments will be sent to the Little Woodhouse Neighbourhood Planning Forum, who are encouraged to discuss the contents with officers in due course. The Forum is under no obligation to take the Council's comments on board.

Recommendations

The Chief Planning Officer is recommended to:

- a) Approve the Council's formal response to the Pre-Submission Draft Little Woodhouse Neighbourhood Plan.

What is this report about?

Purpose of this report

- 1 This report highlights key elements in the Council's formal comments on the Pre-Submission Draft Little Woodhouse Neighbourhood Plan and recommends that the Chief Planning Officer approves the comments so that they can be sent to the Neighbourhood Forum.

Background information

- 2 A neighbourhood plan can decide where new development takes place, what it looks like and also include other issues that are locally important. These plans can be simple single-policy plans or they can be multi-policy and more complex if that is what the community wishes. However, they must meet the following 'basic conditions':
 - Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan
 - The making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development
 - The making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area
 - The making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, retained European Union (EU) obligations
 - Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the neighbourhood plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the neighbourhood plan.
- 3 The plan will be subject to an independent examination and tested against the Basic Conditions. Non-planning matters will not be examined although their contribution to the achievement of sustainable development may be referred to.
- 4 The Little Woodhouse Neighbourhood Area was designated on 17th February 2016 and re-designated on 31st August 2021.

What impact will this proposal have?

- 5 The Council has prepared a formal response to the contents of the draft plan under the following headings:

Timing / risks – the recently announced programme of planning reform should be taken into consideration and revisions to the draft plan made as appropriate.

Basic Conditions – the neighbourhood plan will be assessed against the Basic Conditions when it progresses to independent examination. The Council considers that the draft neighbourhood plan meets the Basic Conditions.

General comments on the Plan – including the introductory sections. A number of suggestions are made to improve the clarity, style and utility of the policies and the best way to structure the complete set of documents.

Specific policy comments – comments on each draft policy in the Plan. The Council makes a number of detailed comments on the draft policies, providing suggestions on changes to wording and how to revise the plan before it is submitted for independent examination.

How does this proposal impact the three pillars of the Best City Ambition?

Health and Wellbeing

Inclusive Growth

Zero Carbon

6 Neighbourhood planning helps to deliver on the ambitions of the Best City Ambition by enabling local communities to have a voice in shaping the future growth of their areas. It provides the opportunity to identify and plan for the future sustainability of an area by preparing locally-distinctive planning policies which will be used by the Council to help determine planning applications in a given area and by setting out projects and aspirations. It meets the Best City Ambition in a number of ways, for example:

- **Health and Wellbeing:** neighbourhood plans can address health and wellbeing through exploring green space and green infrastructure issues and including urban design principles;
- **Zero Carbon:** neighbourhood plans can identify opportunities to improve physical and social infrastructure and include projects to implement those improvements. In addition they can shape green / blue infrastructure design and delivery;
- **Child-Friendly Leeds:** neighbourhood plans can identify sites for new play provision, improve connectivity to existing play provision and can help to ensure new development facilitates children's play and activity;
- **Age-Friendly Leeds:** neighbourhood plans can help older people to remain in their communities by encouraging new provision of housing suitable for elderly people or by identifying sites for new development;
- **Housing:** neighbourhood plans can identify and allocate sites for housing development to meet local needs and can shape the delivery of the Council's development allocations;
- **Community Power:** neighbourhood plans can help to build local capacity and community cohesion by bringing together residents, businesses and other stakeholders to prepare a vision for their area; and
- **Inclusive Growth:** neighbourhood plans can be used to bid for funding for local projects which are important to the local community, they can also influence the spending of the neighbourhood portion of the Community Infrastructure Levy.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

Wards affected: Little London and Woodhouse

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 7 The Forum has undertaken engagement with residents, businesses and other stakeholders for a number of years as part of the preparation of the draft plan. This has included workshops, drop in events, surveys and other engagement methods.
- 8 The Pre-Submission Consultation is a statutory consultation which must be undertaken by the Neighbourhood Planning Forum in accordance with Regulation 14 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended).
- 9 Little London and Woodhouse Ward Members have been consulted on the draft LCC comments and directly by the neighbourhood planning forum. The Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Sustainable Development has been briefed and consulted on the formal comments.

What are the resource implications?

- 10 The draft Little Woodhouse Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by Little Woodhouse Neighbourhood Planning Forum with the support and assistance of the City Council. There has been a good working relationship and positive collaboration during the preparation of the draft plan.
- 11 The Council has claimed the full grant funding available to local authorities from DCLG to help cover the cost of supporting neighbourhood planning groups. £10,000 was claimed on the designation of the neighbourhood forum and neighbourhood area and £2,000 will be claimed at the next opportunity once the date for the referendum is fixed.
- 12 The Council has claimed the full grant funding available to local authorities from DCLG to help cover the cost of supporting neighbourhood planning groups. £10,000 was claimed on the designation of the neighbourhood forum and neighbourhood area and £2,000 will be claimed at the next opportunity once the date for the referendum is fixed.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

- 13 The examination and referendum process introduces risks in the neighbourhood planning system where the outcome will be dependent on the examiner's recommendations and a public vote. The Council will seek to manage this risk by working closely with designated areas to ensure that their neighbourhood plans complete the independent examination and subsequent referendum successfully.
- 14 There are risks that:
 - the plan will not receive more than 50% 'yes' votes in the referendum
 - the plan will be the subject of a legal challenge or judicial review
- 15 The Council will continue to work closely with the Forum to manage and minimise these risks.

What are the legal implications?

- 16 Neighbourhood planning is taking place within a new and fast-changing national planning background which is focussed on economic growth, localism and sustainability. The Council adopted its Core Strategy in November 2014 and the Leeds Site Allocations Plan was adopted by the Council on 10 July 2019. The Core Strategy Selective Review was adopted on 11 September 2019. Once made, the Little Woodhouse Neighbourhood Plan will be part of the development plan for Leeds and will be used to help determine planning applications within the Little Woodhouse Neighbourhood Area.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

- 17 The Council will work with the neighbourhood forum to agree appropriate changes to the neighbourhood plan, arising from consultation responses more generally. This will take into account the Basic Conditions issues, mapping and layout matters and the ongoing programme of planning reform and its potential impacts on the plan.

How will success be measured?

- 18 Success will be measured by a successful examination, Referendum and effective and robust neighbourhood plan policies. The policies will be monitored if the plan is 'Made'.

What is the timetable and who will be responsible for implementation?

19 The Council's formal response to the Pre-Submission draft Little Woodhouse Neighbourhood Plan sets out the positive aspects of the draft plan and suggestions to improve areas that could benefit from further work / revision. It will be for the Forum to consider the comments made by the Council, other stakeholders and respondents, and make appropriate changes to the draft plan before it is submitted for independent examination.

Appendices

- Leeds City Council Response

Background papers

- None