

Development Plan Panel

Tuesday, 22nd June, 2010

PRESENT: Councillor N Taggart in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, C Fox, T Leadley,
J Lewis, L Mulherin and S Smith

1 Declaration of interests

There were no declarations of interest

2 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R Lewis

3 Minutes

RESOLVED- That the minutes of the Development Plan Panel meeting held on 11th May 2010 be approved

4 Leeds LDF Core Strategy - The changing context post election

The Panel considered a report of the Director of City Development setting out the changing context for the Leeds LDF Core Strategy following a change in Central Government

The Deputy Chief Planning Officer presented the report and stated that although announcements had been made that the Regional Spatial Strategies would be rapidly abolished, that Officers were of the view that the current progress on the Leeds Core Strategy should be maintained

The Panel was informed that the possibility of the abolition of the RSS and the targets it contained had been considered by Officers prior to the announcement. There was nothing in the new Government's agenda to indicate that there would no longer be a Development Plan or a plan at strategic district level. Because of this and as the Leeds LDF Core Strategy was not at the stage for crucial decisions to be made, Officers considered that it was sensible to continue this work with a further report being brought to Panel once the position was clearer

Members commented on the following matters:

- that whilst the abolition of the housing targets in the RSS could be understood, the RSS did contain other matters and it would be disappointing if these were lost
- that the abolition of the RSS was envisaged but that there remained a need for some targets to be in place, these being local if not regional
- that the targets in the RSS did have a scientific base to them and that if targets were left to District Councils alone, then there was some doubt about whether people's needs would be met
- whether there was a fall back position

- the possibility of having an update on this at a future meeting

The Deputy Chief Planning Officer stated that there was an ongoing debate as to what figures the Council would be working to and that a report on this would be going to the July meeting of the Council's Executive Board. One possibility would be to take an early draft figure from the RSS. However, Leeds had objected to all of the figures in the RSS. On this matter the Panel was informed that the only figure which the Authority could be said to have signed up to was the one in the UDP of 1930 (which was the taken included within the former Regional Planning Guidance document)

RESOLVED - To note the report and the comments now made

5 Leeds LDF Core Strategy - 'Preferred approach' Analysis of consultation responses: Vision for Leeds and Spatial Vision Chapter

Further to minute 34 of the Development Plan Panel meeting held on 2nd February 2010 where Panel considered a report outlining the initial comments received on the consultation exercise on the Vision for Leeds and Spatial Vision chapter, Members considered a further report setting out the detailed comments and including the Council's initial response and details of any proposed action to be taken

The Head of Forward Planning and Implementation presented the report and stated that many useful comments had been received, with many being broadly supportive. Where there were negative representations these tended to be in respect of emphasis and clarity rather than challenges to the overall approach, although some agents, house builders and developers had indicated the chapter should be more specific in respect of site and scale of development. There was also some concern that the outcome of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) was not available at the time of the consultation on this chapter, however the SHLAA had now been shared with all interested parties

There was support for the definition of the settlement hierarchy as a basis to plan for future growth

The need to better integrate the theme with the Vision for Leeds and other strategies had been noted

Comments from Government Office of Yorkshire and the Humber (GOYH) had related to the sequence of documents and its overall flow and Members were informed that Officers would consider these matters

In respect of cross-boundary issues, dialogue would continue with neighbouring authorities although some were at different stages, ie Wakefield Council had adopted their Core Strategy whilst Bradford Council were not as far forward as Leeds in the preparation of their Core Strategy

A minor amendment was reported on page 37

Members commented on the following matters:

- the need for continuous discussion with neighbouring authorities including Harrogate
- the importance of cross boundary dialogue, particularly in respect of transport and Greenbelt issues
- whether comments made by GOYH were given more regard by Officers

- that if differences did occur between the Council and Government Office on these matters, the hope these could be resolved rather than being raised elsewhere
- the possibility of the GOYH being wound down and local authorities being given some of their powers
- the need to have a good relationship with the Integrated Transport Authority and the importance of transport infrastructure to enable some planning permissions to be implemented
- the possibility of a stronger role for the City Region if other regional bodies were dissolved

The Head of Forward Planning and Implementation stated that structures had been established under the City Region for cross-boundary dialogue and it was important not to duplicate existing mechanisms. There was also a standing meeting of Officers in other Local Authorities so it was felt there existed the scope to raise cross-boundary issues at two levels

In respect of the comments made by GOYH, the Panel was informed that some of these were at an editorial level and on the matters raised, Officers had compared other Core Strategies to the Leeds CS. Where it was felt that Government guidance was acceptable then it would be followed but where it was possible to make a case on local evidence then this is what would be done

RESOLVED - To note the report, the comments now made and course of further action as set out in appendix 1 of the submitted report in preparing a draft Publication Core Strategy

6 Leeds LDF Core Strategy - 'Preferred Approach' Analysis of consultation responses: Managing Environmental Resources Chapter

Further to minute 34 of the Development Plan Panel meeting held on 2nd February 2010 where Panel considered a report outlining comments received on the consultation exercise on the Leeds LDF Core Strategy 'Preferred Approach' – Managing Environmental Resources Theme, Members considered a further report setting out the detailed comments including the Council's initial response and details of any proposed action to be taken

The Head of Forward Planning and Implementation presented the report and outlined the main issues, these being:

- Biodiversity – with GOYH stating the policies were not locally specific enough
- Carbon reduction – with comments being received from developers about the financial viability of incorporating the required reductions into new developments. Members were informed that it was important to strike a balance between setting a standard for carbon reduction which was challenging whilst not being unreasonable. In terms of financial viability, the economic situation was also having an impact
- Renewable energy – with comments being generally supportive of the policy although there were requests for it to be more spatially specific
- Green infrastructure and climate change – Following responses on the two policies it was proposed to combine these to create a new CC2 policy which would apply District-wide

- Managing flood risk – that there was an intention to put more detail on this issue in the Natural Resources and Waste Development Plan Document. Regarding the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme, comments had been received from Wakefield Council that this could cause some difficulties in their area
- Natural resources and waste management – that a separate DPD was being prepared but that in response to the comments for strategic policies to be included in the Core Strategy, broad arching policies for waste and minerals would be included in the Core Strategy

In response to a question on how SSSIs and SEGIs would be maintained at a strategic level, the Panel was informed that the UDP afforded protection with the Core Strategy being used as a basis to continue this protection at a strategic level. It was hoped for site allocations a document would be prepared and if it was necessary to amend boundaries, this would be considered

Whilst the LDF stated that SSSIs would be protected in perpetuity, it might not be possible to use this same wording in the Core Strategy as it was not the role of the LDF to duplicate national guidance. However, it was felt that the document could signpost people to that precise wording, which would be a way to address this issue

RESOLVED - To note the report, the comments now made and the course of further action (as detailed in Appendix 1) in preparing a draft Publication Core Strategy

7 Leeds LDF Core Strategy - 'Preferred Approach' Analysis of consultation responses: Managing the needs of a growing city

Further to minute 34 of the Development Plan Panel meeting held on 2nd February 2010 where Panel considered a report outlining the initial comments received on the consultation exercise in respect of the 'Managing the needs of a growing city' theme, Members considered a further report setting out the detailed comments and including the Council's initial response and details of any proposed action to be taken

Officers presented the report and outlined the main issues relating to:

Housing supply

- concerns were raised in respect of the phased requirements which had been put forward with the criticism being made that this was 'back loading' the delivery of housing to later years
- the need to focus on urban areas and previously developed land
- that the policies would not deliver sufficient housing
- that some greenfield sites were needed to be considered alongside brownfield sites
- criticism of the previously developed land target of 75% over the planning period and that the figure of 85 – 90% in the early years was too high

Officers' response to these points were:

- with the abolition of the RSS, the housing targets would go and at this stage it was not clear what would replace these. If Local Authorities set their own targets, these would be subject to examination and evidence would need to be provided to support the figures being used

- that the OPCS household projection statistics indicated a higher figure was needed for housing provision, whereas the economy and actual housing demand indicated a lower figure was needed
- further work was currently underway to consider future housing growth options, to examine the concerns raised regarding green belt, locations of growth areas and the scale of this

Housing mix

- the main objection to this policy was that it was too prescriptive. The Panel was informed that Officers did not agree with this as the policy set bands for provision not individual targets for greater flexibility
- the lack of guidance in respect of the city centre was highlighted with Officers stating that this could possibly be looked at now that the City Centre APP was not being progressed

Affordable housing

- Two main objections had been made to this policy, these being the requirement for up to 40% affordable housing which was considered to be too onerous and not sufficiently evidenced, together with the view that the SPD on affordable housing should not be progressed in advance of the Core Strategy

In response to these two objections, Panel was informed that Officers were to refresh the evidence and that the Core Strategy would provide a 'hook' for the SPD but that the major part of the policy on affordable housing should be examined in greater detail so it would be included in the Core Strategy

Specialist housing

- an objection to this was in respect of the lack of evidence for the need to control specialist housing. Officers accepted the need to reference this so policy H6 would be retained and greater clarification would be made as would the potential for an area-based policy to be brought in at a later stage

In respect of comments on the Leeds Economy, Members were informed:

- there was general support for the retention of the primacy of the city centre as the main location for retail and leisure development
- some support for the identified employment land requirement but also some concerns that the requirement was insufficient to support the growth of Leeds as the main economic driver of the City Region

Officers agreed that there was a need to update the evidence base and to ensure a flexible supply of employment land was identified

Members commented on the following matters:

- the judgement and the implications of recent planning appeal decisions need to be considered
- the affordable housing targets and the need to take account of viability and to be realistic in some areas about the levels of affordable housing being sought
- to recognise that even affordable housing was beyond the reach of some people
- land use around Leeds Bradford Airport and whether all of the offices which had been built there were for uses related to the airport

- the need for a policy on employment land; that it had been useful in some areas of the city but that for it to be effective it needed to be long-term and far-sighted

RESOLVED – To note the report, the comments now made and the course of further action (as detailed in Appendix 1 of the submitted report) in preparing a draft Publication Core Strategy

8 Natural Resources and Waste Development Plan Document - 'Policy Position' document: Analysis of consultation responses

Further to minute 46 of the Development Plan Panel meeting held on 11th May 2010 where Panel considered a report outlining the initial comments received on the consultation exercise on the Natural Resources and Waste Development Plan Document, Members considered a further report setting out the detailed comments and including the Council's initial response and details of any proposed action to be taken

Officers presented the report and outlined the main issues; these being:

- Land use
- Minerals – that attempts to identify sites for safeguarding had been made but that the Coal Authority was of the view that further work should be undertaken
- Energy – that the policy was drawn up in the context of the RSS targets but that these had been abolished
- Water – that a 'Sustainable Design and Construction' SPD was shortly due to be released for public consultation in respect of reducing water consumption for new developments
- Air Quality – the possibility of introducing low emission zones; that this would tie into transport issues and that more work and consultation on this would be needed
- Waste – that no further sites had been identified for hazardous waste; that there was a need for long-term forecasting on waste levels linking in with policy PPS10 which related to the need to identify sites for waste over the plan period, including cross-boundary discussions. On this matter, the Panel was informed that Wakefield Council had approved their Waste Development Plan Document

Members commented on the following matters:

- that politically, the most sensitive issue was in respect of open cast mining
- the dwindling supplies of sand and gravel in the region

RESOLVED – To note the report, the comments now made and the course of further action (as detailed in the Appendices) in preparing a draft Publication Natural Resources and Waste Development Plan Document

9 Date and time of the next meeting

Tuesday 13th July 2010 at 1.30pm

The Chair referred to the possibility of altering the day/time of future meetings and that the clerk, in conjunction with the Chair would look at possible dates and advise Members accordingly

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting
to be held on Tuesday, 13th July, 2010

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