

Development Plan Panel

Tuesday, 6th September, 2022

PRESENT: Councillor C Gruen in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, C Campbell,
J McKenna, K Brooks, H Hayden, A Lamb,
E Taylor, J Akhtar and P Carlill

9 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals

10 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exempt items

11 Late Items

There were no formal late items but supplementary information had been submitted in regard to Agenda Item 7 Local Plan Update 1 (Publication Draft)

12 Declaration of Interests

Members did not declare any interests at the meeting

13 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Finnigan

14 Minutes

RESOLVED- That the minutes of the Development Plan Panel meeting held on 12th July 2022, be approved as an accurate record

15 Local Plan Update 1 (Publication Draft)

The report of the Chief Planning Officer requested endorsement of the Local Plan Update 1 Publication Draft policies and a recommendation to Executive Board to grant approval to undertake public consultation on the Publication Draft, accompanied by a consultation documentation.

The Head of Strategic Planning gave a background overview of the report, outlining the workshop and consultation process prior to Local Plan Update 1, the role of planning in the aim to achieve net zero carbon and why the proposed policy changes were considered necessary due to the climate emergency, improvement in green and blue infrastructure, flood risk alleviation and placemaking within Leeds.

The Group Manager for Policy and Plans introduced the report. Members were informed that the effects of the update would amend the Leeds Core Strategy. It was also noted how the amendment to policy EN2 regarding operational carbon would not apply to all planning applications, for example, change of use, energy use intensity and space heating demand targets will be introduced. New policies would

focus on raising sustainability standards of housing and requiring Home Quality Mark 4 for residential developments and BREEAM 'Outstanding' for non-residential. An update on renewable energy mapping was presented to show strategic opportunities areas for wind and solar power provision, a new approach to flood risk was outlined, taking greater consideration to future risk, with a focus on the improvement of the quality of greenspaces and biodiversity as well as increased carbon storage.

A Team Leader from City Development Planning presented the revised proposed policies relating to achieving twenty-minute neighbourhoods in Leeds. Mott MacDonald had been commissioned to identify where amenities were easily accessible and areas where provision was not adequate; a scoring system for accessible amenities was outlined which would allow a sound approach to identify where there are gaps in provision. An online smart survey had been conducted regarding the willingness of the citizens of Leeds to travel for a variety of amenities and had received 730 complete responses. An update was provided on the minor amendment to the Sustainability Appraisal Report which outlined what can be considered reasonable and unreasonable to be dealt with via the planning process. A non-technical summary of the report will be included for the Executive Board agenda. It was noted that, the viability of the Local Plan Update may be subject to scrutiny depending on the scenario of different planning applications but it was believed the viability at a strategic level will be achieved and applications would cover all or some of the bases of the proposed policies and judged on individual merits. Members attention was also drawn to legal documents around Habitat Regulations and Strategic Duty to Cooperate issues which will form a part of the consultation as well as a report on the consultation carried out last year at an earlier stage of preparation.

Members discussed the following key matters:

- As it is quite common for public objection to large planning applications to cover how development overwhelms local amenities and services, how would the quality of services through the twenty minute neighbourhood scoring system be measured. The inclusive growth strategy could be paired with the twenty minute neighbourhood scheme to address barriers to access of services. As part of existing policies Highways, Children and Health services are consulted for their input on infrastructure development. It was considered to be a more desirable option for new areas with new amenities to be created rather than adding additional housing onto areas where amenities were at capacity.
- Some concern was raised in relation to green infrastructure policies and that emphasis should be put on green space provision to be on site. Proportional provision of green space and an expectation for developers to do what they can, dependant on location, to provide green space for the wider area rather than just provision if the development would be considered large, over ten dwellings, was discussed. It was noted a definition of tree protection schedules will be helpful to define what can be considered, for example, ancient woodland and also that young woodland can also be of value to the city as it is a less common habitat. Blue infrastructure was also considered vital and members were supportive of robust policies to protect and enhance these areas.

- The importance for consultation on the Local Plan Update and also the planning process as a whole to include those less likely to engage and specifically younger people was discussed as citizens may not always be aware of how a large development can contribute to further future local amenities. It was stressed that the information in the Local Plan Update would be as accessible as possible and the ideas raised such as a summary document and videos explaining each policy on social media were noted.
- Under current planning policies developers are expected to meet minimum standards whereas these new proposed policies were thought to be ambitious and set high quality standards and expectations. With the declaration of carbon zero by 2030 by the council, it was outlined that the council should be leading the way for good practice and meeting as many of these policies as possible, if not all. When considering planning applications officers should reflect on the weight given to Leeds strategic policies depending on national policy and local opinion on the development. Planning enforcement would have to ensure sound procedure and practise to keep developers adhering to the new policies and plans.
- Concerns regarding viability issues were raised and confidence was needed in the implementation of the policies to ensure developers would not bring sub-standard applications forward. Members felt there should be greater achievement of developers meeting standards and the local planning authority should resist unviable applications on a given site as perhaps the next application to come forward will be viable. The new policy framework will provide a clearer position for the district valuer to appraise viability and it should create a stronger initiative for the council to turn down unviable applications. To achieve the commitments and declarations of the council and the government there will need to be less of a margin for the new policies to be flouted due to viability issues and a revision of policy at a national level to reflect the commitment to combatting the climate emergency within the scope of the planning process.
- The policies regarding zero carbon and passive energy, which exceed current building regulations, will create innovation and inspiring initiative through the quality of development and will positively affect new house buyers due to significantly reduced energy costs. It was noted that in the future. Members would like the policies go further to achieve airtight properties, such as Passivhaus, which have even lower cost energy; however, it was appreciated the technology, materials and national policy are not yet in line with all homes meeting this ideal.

Members thanked officers for their continued hard work, detailed documentation, and their approach to connect the document with the wider picture of the climate emergency and national carbon budgets.

RESOLVED

- a. To endorse and recommend to Executive Board the proposed Publication Draft policies and supporting paragraphs of the Local Plan Update 1, as set out in Appendix 1, and the Sustainability Appraisal, as set out in Appendix 2;
- b. To recommend to Executive Board that approval be given to 8 weeks consultation of the proposed Publication Draft policies and supporting paragraphs as set out in Appendix 1, together with supporting technical information (comprising Sustainability Appraisal at Appendix 2, Habitat Regulations Assessment at Appendix 3, Report of Consultation at Appendix 4 and Duty to Co-operate Statement at Appendix 5) and it was noted that this will be accompanied by additional draft supporting consultation

documentation, including the Council's evidence and background papers, alongside accessible summary material for consultation purposes.

Councillor Akhtar joined the meeting at 13:45 during consideration of this item.

16 Date and Time of Next Meeting

RESOLVED – To note the date and time of the next meeting as Tuesday, 1st November 2022 at 1:30pm.

(The meeting concluded at 15.28)