

MINUTES of a meeting of the LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE held in the Remote meeting using Microsoft Teams on THURSDAY, 10 DECEMBER 2020

Present: Councillor J Bridges (Chairman)

Councillors D Harrison, D Bigby, R Boam, J Houlton, R Johnson, J Legrys, V Richichi and N Smith

Officers: Mr I Nelson, Mr C Elston, Mr C Colvin, Mrs M Long and Woollett

20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A C Saffell and M B Wyatt.

21 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

22 PUBLIC QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

There were no questions received.

23 MINUTES

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2020.

It was moved by Councillor J Legrys, seconded by Councillor D Harrison and

RESOLVED THAT

The minutes of the meeting held on the 15 October 2020 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

24 LOCAL PLAN OBJECTIVES

The Planning Policy Team Manager presented the report to members. He advised the Committee that over the past months, draft objectives had been considered at meetings of Cabinet as well as this Committee and that all but one of the objectives had been agreed with the only outstanding matter being the wording of Objective 4, which related to sustainable transport. Following the last meeting of the Committee, some suggested alternative wording has been formulated which members were now being asked to confirm following the approval of Cabinet. Subject to the Committee's decision, the agreed set of draft objectives will be included in the next stage of public consultation on the Substantive Local Plan Review.

Councillor Legrys, from whom the suggestion to amend the wording of this objective had originally stemmed, was pleased that compromise wording had been agreed for Objective 4 but he asked that time be allocated to provide clear and concise explanations of what the objectives mean and that they be explained in a user friendly and meaningful manner. He felt that this would help members when responding to queries from the public. The Planning Policy Team Manager advised that the objectives were very high level and work would follow on agreeing the policies and ensuring they fulfilled the criteria set out within them. In response to this, a member referred to an earlier request for a framework of issues and the date by which they would be considered, as this had yet to be received by members and he considered that such a timetable would be helpful to the Committee. The Planning Policy Team Manager was also asked for an idea of the timeframe for when the next consultation

Chairman's initials

was due to happen and details of other aspects of the review, which would be included in this round of consultation. He was also asked how the Plan would tackle the issue of air quality, particularly given the recent decision of Cabinet to provide a Supplementary Planning Document on air quality in the coming years.

The Planning Policy Team Manager responded to these issues by advising that air quality was already included as part of the Plan but this would be reviewed and amended as necessary, and a Supplementary Planning Document will be compiled following the decision of Cabinet noting that this document on its own will not dictate policy but it will offer guidance on procedures. He advised that he anticipated the next round of consultation to be in the early part of next year and, in relation to the questions relating to content and timetabling of the Plan, it was noted that these would be addressed as part of the following agenda item.

It was moved by Councillor D Bigby, seconded by Councillor N Smith and

RESOLVED THAT

The Local Plan Committee notes the revised wording of draft Objective 4, as set out at paragraph 1.8 of the report, for inclusion in the next consultation stage of the Substantive Local Plan Review.

25 LOCAL PLAN UPDATE

The Planning Policy Team Manager presented the report to members. He took the report in two parts, commencing first with the issues around the Partial Review.

He reported that the hearing sessions at the Examination concluded on 17 September 2020, and at the end of the hearing sessions, officers were requested by the Inspector to prepare a number of main modifications that arose from the various discussions, which took place.

The Inspector asked the Council to undertake consultation on these main modifications and these were published for a 6-week consultation period starting on 30 November 2020. The consultation closes on 10 January 2021. Following the close of the consultation, officers will go through the responses and prepare a schedule for the Inspector. In the event that the Inspector recommends that the revised Local Plan can be adopted this will then be subject to a report to Council for adoption.

A member sought clarification on the references to the Use Classes, and specifically where these had changed, and asked why the specific change of Use Class was not referenced and asked if there were any substantial differences between them and which of the definitions would apply in the Local Plan once the modifications have been agreed. Another member was concerned about the timing of the consultation, given that it was over the Christmas period, access to the consultation and the methodology for responding.

The Planning Policy Team Manager advised that he was not aware of any change to the definition but the Use Classes have been amended to include more Use types. He acknowledged the unfortunate timing of the consultation and confirmed that responses could be submitted in writing or by email and that the on line form was for ease of access to those who wished to use this platform. The Chairman also offered to collate responses and offered this as an additional vehicle for responding to the consultation and urged fellow councillors to spread the word in their communities to encourage participation.

The Planning Policy Team Manager went on to report on the Substantive Review. In response to issues raised by members earlier in the meeting, he advised that the

Chairman's initials

timetable for the Substantive Review would be reliant on the modifications from the Partial Review. The proposed modifications require submission of the Substantive Review to the Secretary of State within 18 months of whichever is the earliest of a Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) being agreed or 21 May 2021. There is no firm timetable for the agreement of the SoCG, but it is considered unlikely that this would happen before the end of February 2021 at the earliest. On this basis, submission of the Substantive Review would be required by the end of August 2022. If a SoCG is not agreed or slips significantly, then submission of the Substantive Review would be required by 21 November 2022 (i.e. 18 months on from 21 May 2021). It was acknowledged that this a very tight and challenging timetable.

A member understood that some sites which had been refused planning permission both at the Planning Committee and on appeal may now be put forward for development and this, it was felt, would cause considerable confusion and anger to affected local residents. Officers were urged to try and do what they could to prevent this happening as far as they were able. Concerns were also raised about the lack of cross boundary considerations and asked that these be factored in.

A member reiterated concerns around presentation and language and asked that documents be written so that they can be easily understood by the public given that they will be strongly encouraged to respond to the consultation. Issues were also raised in relation to the suggested High 2 scenario, which seeks to take account of the issue of unmet needs from Leicester City and the proposal to build in an additional proportion for growth of 20%. However the report went on the state that, in the event that the proposed changes to the standard method are confirmed by the government, then it is understood that Leicester City would no longer have an unmet need. This was considered contradictory. A member felt that many local residents would be harshly affected in order to meet this projection and he would not want the Committee to go down this route unless it was convinced that there was a good reason for doing so.

The Planning Policy Team Manager confirmed that the references to the unmet need of Leicester City did appear to be contradictory but the reason that these references have remained is due to the fact the government's intentions on 'standard method' were currently unknown, and so, whilst there is a possibility that Leicester City won't be able to meet its needs, then it is considered prudent to factor in a contingency against this

There were mixed views on whether the preference for new development should be spread across a number of sites or whether it should be a dedicated 'new town' given the bolt on effect and loss of identity of some of the local towns and villages and the lack of infrastructure.

Officers were commended for their report and it was moved by Councillor J Legrys, seconded by Councillor V Richichi and

RESOLVED THAT:

That the Local Plan Committee:

- (i) Notes the progress on the Local Plan Partial Review;
- (ii) Notes the suggested timetable for the Substantive Review;
- (iii) Agrees to updating the Local Development Scheme when there is greater clarity in respect of the timetable for the Statement of Common Ground to be agreed by all of the Leicester and Leicestershire Authorities;

Chairman's initials

(iv) Agrees to testing the four Growth Options set out after paragraph 3.25 of the report; and

(v) Notes the proposals to develop the evidence base.

26 CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO LEICESTER CITY LOCAL PLAN

The Planning Policy Team Manager presented the report to members. It was noted that Leicester City Council recently issued a draft Local Plan for consultation ('the Draft Plan') which sets out the vision and objectives for growth of the city between 2020 and 2036. The Draft Plan consultation closed on 7 December 2020. As this was before a meeting of this Committee, officers submitted comments following discussion with the Portfolio Holder for Infrastructure and Planning but on the understanding that they were subject to being agreed by this Committee. The proposed comments were set out in the report.

Members considered it was a good report but one member expressed disappointment that the County Council's comments on the consultation were not appended to the report.

It was moved by Councillor D Harrison, seconded by Councillor J Hault and

RESOLVED THAT:

- (i) Leicester City Council be thanked for consulting this council on its Draft Local Plan; and
- (ii) The recommendations at paragraphs 2.3, 2.12, 2.19 and 2.25 of this report be agreed as the District Council's response to the Draft City of Leicester Local Plan.

The meeting commenced at 6.00 pm

The Chairman closed the meeting at 7.25 pm

Chairman's initials