

## **LOCAL PLAN COMMITTEE**

**29 JULY 2020**

### **UPDATE**

#### **Agenda item 6 : Local Plan review – draft objectives**

As noted at paragraph 1.2 of the report, the draft objectives were considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 23 July 2020.

Prior to the Cabinet meeting, a question was submitted by Councillor Bigby. A copy of the question together with the response of Councillor Ashman as Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure is attached at Appendix A of this note.

Cabinet agreed to amend Objectives 2, 3 and 10 as set out in Councillor Ashman's response.

#### **Agenda item 7: Statement of Community Involvement for planning purposes – addendum**

As noted at paragraph 1.4 of the report the proposed addendum to the Statement of Community Involvement was considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 23 July 2020. The recommendations in the Cabinet report (attached as Appendix 1 of Agenda Item 7) were agreed.

**CABINET – 23 JULY 2020**

**ITEM 9 - LOCAL PLAN REVIEW – DRAFT OBJECTIVES**

**SUGGESTED RESPONSE TO QUESTION FROM COUNCILLOR BIGBY**

Question to Cabinet 23/7/20

**Agenda Item 9 - LOCAL PLAN REVIEW – DRAFT OBJECTIVES**

1. The Labour Group are pleased to see that this Council are now making progress in developing the framework for the substantive revision of the Local Plan. We welcome the general subject areas identified for the revised Local Plan objectives, which appear to be sensible and cover the range of important issues that the Local Plan needs to address. We particularly welcome new objective 7 which firmly lays down our need to respond to the Climate Emergency.
2. We also appreciate that this item will be going to the Local Plan Committee for scrutiny in due course and then to public consultation, but the nature of the constitutional position of that Committee appears to be that it can only accept or reject Cabinet decisions on Planning policy. So, in order to avoid unnecessarily slowing the process of Local Plan review, it seems sensible to raise queries now rather than wait for that Committee and then possibly send the whole thing back to Cabinet.
3. The content and tone of these draft objectives will provide the setting for the new and revised Local Plan policies to be drafted. One of our concerns is the general tone and language used. Many of the new draft objectives use relatively soft verbs, such as, “Enable”, “Support”, “Enhance”, “Conserve” and “Promote” and only a few of the policies employ stronger, more active language such as “Ensure”, “Achieve” and “Reduce”.
4. We appreciate that there are strict limitations on what the Local Plan can impose on would-be developers and that we must work within the framework of current legislation, including the NPPF. However, we believe that these objectives, and the Local Plan to follow, would benefit from tougher language, if the Council is to make clear what it wants to achieve and what it wants to restrict.
5. We also have concerns about two specific objectives
6. New Objective 3 – We suggest that the policy would be improved by including the Council’s desire to ensure safe “travel” within the district. Safe travel is increasingly important to our communities, given the extensive use of motor cars within our District and our desire to promote walking and cycling, and the Local Plan has an important role to play on this
7. New Objective 5 – We are concerned about specifically including the generic term, “needs of business”. Including it in this way implies that one of the Council’s priorities will be providing premises for any business that wants them, rather than meeting the employment needs of our communities. It implies a desire to continue authorising the building of large warehouses that provide jobs for the residents of Derby and Nottingham to the detriment of our own residents. Instead we suggest incorporating Objective SA7 of the Sustainability Appraisal.
8. My question is as follows:

Would the Cabinet implement the following amendments to the draft Local Plan Objectives?

- a. New Objective 2 – Change “Enable” to “Ensure”.

Suggested Response

**It is agreed that this change would be appropriate as it would be more positive.**

- b. New Objective 3 - Add the word “travel”, so that it reads “Achieve high quality development which is sustainable, which responds positively to local character and which creates safe places to live, work and travel”.

Suggested Response

**It is agreed that this change would be appropriate.**

- c. New Objective 5 - reword this objective to read as follows, “Support the district’s economy, including its rural economy, by providing for a range of employment opportunities which respond to the skills and needs of local residents”. If not, then maybe you could at least consider using the term “local businesses” rather than business in general.

Suggested Response

**It is considered that such a change would not be appropriate. This is because it would suggest, incorrectly, that the economy of North West Leicestershire operates as a self-contained entity, which it does not. The district is part of the Leicester & Leicestershire Functional Economic Area confirming the strong commercial relationship with the wider county. Inevitably this also extends over the border to Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Staffordshire and beyond because of where the district is located. The proposed change would conflict with the thrust of the NPPF which states that “Significant weight should be placed on the need to support economic growth and productivity, taking into account both local business needs and wider opportunities for development”.**

- d. New Objective 9 – Change “Conserve” to “Protect”.

Suggested Response

**It is considered that such a change would be not appropriate. ‘Conserve’ is the term used in the NPPF and so is consistent with national policy. ‘Conserve’ also suggests an added dimension of taking opportunities to enhance significance where opportunities arise and where appropriate.**

- e. New Objective 10 – Change “Promote” to “Ensure”.

Suggested Response

**It is agreed that this change would be appropriate as it would be more positive.**

