

Cabinet Housing and Planning Panel
8 September 2016

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the CABINET HOUSING AND PLANNING PANEL held on Thursday 8 September 2016 at 7.30 pm in the Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE.

PRESENT: Councillors S.Boulton (Chairman)
M.Perkins (Vice-Chairman)

D.Bell, D.Bennett, H.Bromley, H.Quenet (for
M.Cowan), G.Hayes, M.Holloway, P.Shah, M.Spinks

OFFICIALS Head of Planning (C Haigh)
PRESENT: Planning Policy and Implementation Manager (S Tiley)
Governance Services Officer (M Lowe)

34. SUBSTITUTIONS

The following substitution of a Panel Member had been made in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 19-22.

Councillor H Quenet for M Cowan.

35. APOLOGY

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor M Cowan.

36. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 August 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

Councillor S Boulton declared a non-pecuniary interest in the item relating to the response to Broxbourne Borough Council – Draft Local Plan Regulation 18 Consultation (Minute 45 refers) as appropriate by virtue of being a member of North Mymms Parish Council.

38. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (LDS) FOR WELWYN HATFIELD LOCAL PLAN

Report of the Director (Governance) proposed a revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) timetable for the preparation of the Welwyn Hatfield Local Plan. The LDS is the Council's official timetable for the preparation and adoption of the Local Plan and other planning documents for the Borough. It is now proposed that the Local Plan be submitted to the Secretary of State in spring 2017 to allow

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sufficient time for responses to the public consultation to be analysed and considered by Members.

During discussion the following points were made and addressed:-

- Proposals to substantially change or revise the Local Plan including the addition or removal of sites would require a further consultation period prior to Submission.
- Variations proposed to any site would be considered on a site by site basis.
- Should the removal of a site be proposed, legal advice would be sought.
- Interested parties, such as developers, would make a case should a site be removed.
- All objections received in connection for each site would be considered carefully.
- All responses received during the consultation period would be analysed and brought to the Panel for discussion.
- Members needed to be aware of any responses given during the consultation period.
- The Planning Inspectorate was expecting the initial draft of the Local Plan to be submitted by early 2017.
- A named Inspector would be identified at the point of submission.

RESOLVED:

1. That the revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) timetable be agreed by the Cabinet Housing and Planning Panel.
2. That the revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) be recommended for adoption by Cabinet, at its meeting on 4 October 2016.

39. RESPONSE TO BROXBOURNE BOROUGH COUNCIL - DRAFT LOCAL PLAN REGULATION 18 CONSULTATION

Report of the Director (Governance) asked Members to approve the areas of support and concern for the proposals contained in Broxbourne Borough Council's (BBC) Local Plan and to indicate any further issues that Members wished to see included in this Council's (WHBC) response.

During discussion Officers responded to the issues and concerns raised by Members which are set out below:-

- In terms of housing provision, the question as to whether BBC met the needs of WHBC needed to be explored.
- BBC had a duty to cooperate with WHBC. If BBC failed to cooperate the Planning Inspectorate might expect Welwyn Hatfield to find alternative housing provision elsewhere within the Borough.
- There was a risk as WHBC had set a target below that of the need identified by its Strategic Housing Market Assessment, without an arrangement with its neighbours.
- It was noted that significant issues regarding the schools had been agreed at Officer and County Council level.
- There was an expectation that Goffs Oak would provide additional primary school provision, which would create capacity that did not currently exist.

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- If Goff's Oak were to be expanded, a new school there would free up spaces at the school in Cuffley.
- If Goff's Oak did expand then there would be coalescence between Cuffley and Cheshunt, with Cuffley becoming part of North London.
- Regardless of the fact that there would be substantial residential development around Brookfield Riverside it could not be considered a town centre.
- The number of gypsy or travellers sites needed by BBC was much smaller than that of WHBC as BBC did not have the same level of need.
- Waltham Cross and Cheshunt's projected level of housing by the ONS was a realistic estimation of the housing need in those areas. The area did not have the same level of inward migration as that of WHBC.
- Concerns were raised regarding the fact that BBC did not appear to be cooperating as was wished. This would create a knock on effect in WHBC especially if the delivery plan was not acted upon.
- WHBC to give some indication to BBC of the areas of concern or issues which would affect to Borough.
- The avoidance of the intervention of the Planning Inspectorate at BBC was imperative as this would greatly affect this Borough.

The Head of Planning, referring to a document which set out the Preliminary Concerns of the Inspector on St Albans City and District Council's (SACDC) Strategic Local Plan 2011-2013 on Examination, highlighted the following comments:-

Duty to Co-operate

- There is a significant matter relating to legal compliance;
- Concerned that the Duty has not been met;

Other Concerns regarding:-

- Overall housing provision;
- Insufficient clarity and detail regarding the associated infrastructure;

It was reported by the Head of Planning that the Planning Inspectorate proposed to hold an Initial Hearing Session for SACDC and that WHBC would send an Officer to observe the proceedings.

Members expressed concern regarding the effect that SACDC's Submitted Local Plan would have upon this Borough, which may have to pick up any short fall.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the areas of support and concern for the proposals in Broxbourne Borough Council's Local Plan as set out in this report be agreed.
- (b) That further issues as indicated by the Panel which Members wished to see included in the Council's response be as follows:-
 - ❖ A comparison of the proportion of existing growth and the rate of growth should be made against the proposed numbers.

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- ❖ There was a higher rate of growth in WHBC than in BBC due to inward migration and growth begets growth.
- ❖ It was right to make comments to BBC where it affected WHBC.
- ❖ An informal approach to be made regarding the areas of concern with a formal approach to be made further into the process.
- ❖ WHBC, whilst maintaining its own position with regards to the Local Plans had a duty to cooperate with as a neighbouring authority and would do so.

That the Head of Planning be given delegated authority to agree the final response to the consultation with the Executive Member for Planning.

Meeting ended at 8.10 pm
ML