

PLANNING POLICY COMMITTEE

Thursday, 22nd June, 2017
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

Present:-	Councillor Bert Proctor – in the Chair
Councillors	Burgess, Fear, Heesom, Naylor, Northcott, Panter, Simpson, Spence, Sweeney, S Tagg, Turner, G Williams, J Williams and Wright
Officers	Helen Beech, Geoff Durham and Trevor Vernon
Apologies	Councillor(s) S Hambleton, Reddish and White

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors' Hambleton, White and Reddish.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest stated.

3. JOINT LOCAL PLAN - STRATEGIC OPTIONS CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

Members received a presentation from the Council's Planning Policy Manager, Helen Beech, on the Joint Local Plan.

The presentation provided an update on the plan-making process for the Newcastle-under-Lyme and Stoke-on-Trent Joint Local Plan and also sought the support of the Planning Committee to go out to public consultation on the Strategic options Consultation Document.

A copy of the presentation would be sent to the Members.

Following the presentation, Members were invited to ask questions.

Councillor Fear asked who would decide which was the preferred option from the six given and was advised that the Council would decide. The Planning committee would have the opportunity to agree which of the six options went forward for a final decision.

Councillor Fear asked what the remit of the consultation was and also, what would happen if the two authorities – Newcastle and Stoke had different opinions? This concern was shared by a number of Members.

Members were advised that there had been a long established partnership between the two authorities, starting with the adopted Core Spatial Strategy and an equal balance would be aimed for. A Joint Advisory Group, with representation from both authorities, at Cabinet level, had been established and this could discuss any

matters that needed resolving. Planning Committee would be consulted again at the next consultation stage. Full Council would not get involved in the decision making until at least the Draft Plan stage.

Councillor Tagg asked when the Borough would have a Local Plan in place. Mrs Beech stated that staff resource issues had contributed to the delay but there was a need to ensure the Joint local Plan process was robust and a realistic timescale would be to have a Plan in place by 2020.

Councillor John Williams raised concerns about contaminated land and how this might impact on the ability to find new employment land. A lot of former employment sites around the Borough had also been lost to other uses. Mrs Beech stated that contaminated land and the loss of employment land to housing were both serious issues but national planning policy did not protect employment sites which had little prospect of coming forward. The issue of contamination was serious as it impacted on the viability of a site and deliverability and these were big issues. There was a need to find employment sites in suitable locations attractive to business sector investors. However, on the whole less employment land was required due to changes in labour force behaviour including more agile working/working from home.

Councillor Naylor asked if Neighbourhood Plans would have any status as the Local Plan was prepared. Members were advised that once a neighbourhood plan was 'made' it would become part of the Development Plan. However if a neighbourhood plan was made in advance of the Joint local Plan there was a risk that it could be superseded by the Joint Local Plan.

Councillor Northcott stated that there was little evidence of the part that the rural economy played on the Local Plan and what the economic potential was for rural areas. Mrs Beech advised Members that the Strategic Housing Market Assessment covered both Authorities and took the economy of the rural areas into account.

Councillor Spence stated that there had only been 82 responses and asked how many of those were from residents and how do we engage with communities:? Members were advised that it was not easy to engage people and get the message across. The number from residents could not be identified but the greater number of those who did respond were Newcastle residents.

Councillor Turner advised members that the timetable 'is what it is' and that it must not slip further. The Plan needs to be deliverable and sustainable.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the responses to the consultation exercise carried out on the Issues Paper Consultation Document as set out in in the Joint Local Plan Issues Consultation and Responses Document be noted.
 - (ii) That it be recommended to Cabinet to approve the publication of the Strategic Options Consultation Document and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal Report in line with the methods of consultation set out in the adopted Joint Statement of Community Involvement.
 - (iii) That a report be submitted to a subsequent meeting of the Committee on the results of the Strategic Options public consultation exercise, as part of the next stage in the Joint Local Plan process – Preferred Options later in 2017.

- (iv) That it be recommended to Cabinet to agree the revised timetable (attached as Appendix 2 to the agenda report) for the production of the Joint Local Plan, and that this is published as an update to the council's Local Development Scheme.

4. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no Urgent Business.

COUNCILLOR BERT PROCTOR
Chair

Meeting concluded at 8.55 pm