

## **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Thursday, 6th February, 2020  
Time of Commencement: 7.00 pm

**Present:** Councillor Andrew Fear (Chair)

Councillors:	M. Reddish	B. Proctor	H. Maxfield
	J Williams	S. Burgess	S. Sweeney
	P. Northcott	D. Jones	
	G Williams	Mrs J Cooper	

Officers:	Trevor Vernon	Solicitor
	Geoff Durham	Mayor's Secretary / Member
		Support Officer
	Shawn Fleet	Head of Planning and
		Development
	Jemma March	Planning Policy Manager

Also in attendance: Mr Tom Lewis                      Stoke on Trent City Council

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors' Moffatt and Simon Tagg.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Jones declared an interest as an employee of Keele University.

3. **DRAFT JOINT LOCAL PLAN**

The Council's Planning Policy Manager, Jemma March gave a presentation on the Draft Joint Local plan.

Members were advised that 824 representations had been received as part of the consultation resulting in 5494 individual points. Seven petitions had been received in connection with specific sites.

The presentation outlined the aims and objectives of the draft plan, the current position and policies for: Strategy; Economy; Housing; Transport; Centres; Design and Heritage; Natural and Rural Environment; Environmental Resources and Infrastructure.

It was proposed that the Draft Local Plan would be consulted upon in two parts, (i) Policies and Strategies and (ii) Site Allocations. At the end of the process both parts would be brought together and taken to Full Council for its adoption.

The Consultation would take place in April/May, 2020 and would accept online, written and email representations. There would be drop in sessions and also information available on social media.

The Chair asked Members if they were in agreement with splitting the consultation into the two parts. Members agreed with this approach stating that it would give greater opportunity for each part to be dealt with and understood and also would give a better position in terms of scrutiny.

Councillor John Williams suggested that a better plan would be useful which showed the individual wards more clearly.

Mr Tom Lewis of Stoke on Trent City Council advised Members that the production of an interactive map was being looked into which would enable specific sites to be zoomed in on. This was not yet available but it was hoped that it would be ready for the consultation process.

Councillor John Williams asked if Members could have a hard copy of a readable plan as not everyone had access to IT equipment.

The Chair suggested that this be put as a comment to the Cabinet.

The Chair informed Members that he would take the document a section at a time:

#### SECTION 4: OVERARCHING STRATEGY AND POLICIES.

Members requested a suggestion to the Cabinet that the document needed to be placed onto the website in a place where it could be easily found and accessed. It was suggested that this be on the very front screen of the Council's web page.

#### SECTION 5: ECONOMY.

Councillor Jones commented on the strategic development within the Keele University growth corridor. He asked whether it was felt that the Council was at risk of 'putting all of our eggs into one basket' and what alternative sites/economic zones were being looked at. Ms March stated that alternative options had been looked at previously and the next stage would show reasonable alternatives /options. Councillor Jones was advised that there was an 'exceptional circumstances case' in respect of growth at the University.

Councillor Jones asked what was meant by the term 'local' under point e of Policy E3. He enquired whether 'local' meant 'across the whole of Stoke on Trent'. Ms March stated that there was perhaps a bit more work to do in relation to some references. Officers had tried to standardise these but they needed to be looked at and defined.

#### SECTION 6: HOUSING

Councillor Maxfield enquired about Policy SH01 on page 72 of the document. The Policy stated that a minimum of 33,360 new homes needed to be delivered across Stoke on Trent and Newcastle to meet housing needs between 2013 and 2037. Councillor Maxfield asked how many homes had already been built out of the required number and whether the target was ambitious. Ms March advised that she could not give an exact figure but stated that homes already built had been taken into

account. With regard to the Draft Local Plan, evidence would be sense checked to ensure that all information was up to date.

Councillor Northcott enquired whether setting the target too high would put the Council's five year housing land supply in jeopardy. Ms March advised that the Plan would be tested to ensure that it was deliverable and not moving away from targets.

Councillor Jones suggested that there would be people wishing to see the evidence base and asked if the evidence could be published showing the level of housing need. Ms March advised that all of the evidence was included in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment which was available.

The Chair asked whether the target was fixed or if it could be amended. Also, if it could be amended at what point could it not be changed. Ms March explained that the housing need must be based on evidence. The government would look at the different categories, for example affordable housing. The plan was based on the evidence held. Once the document had been submitted to the Inspector it could not be changed.

Councillor Maxfield asked about traveller accommodation and where the evidence had come from for the provision of permanent and transit sites.

Ms March advised that the evidence would be updated and Part two of the consultation would contain the sites that would meet the needs of gypsies and travellers.

The Chair asked whether the updated work would be available when the document goes out for consultation. Ms March stated that document would go out for consultation with the most up to date information.

Councillor Northcott asked how the calculations had been made to determine the sites for gypsies and travellers adding that the Council could be asked as to how the figures had been arrived at. It was felt that Newcastle was taking in more than Stoke on Trent. Ms March stated that all authorities had to meet the need in their own area.

The Chair made reference to the available documents in relation to the Draft Plan and asked how open to challenge they were. Ms March advised that they were completely open to challenge.

Councillor Jones enquired about Policy SH03, the Rural Settlement Hierarchy asking why the village of Silverdale was not included. It is a rural village with most of the former Keele Golf Course falling within the Parish of Silverdale. Ms March advised that she would look into this and come back to Members.

Councillor Northcott referred to Policy SH03 stating that some might argue that Keele is not a rural centre and added that Loggerheads used to be referred to as a Key Rural Service Centre. Councillor Northcott queried why Keele was not considered in those terms with its close proximity to a doctors' surgery, shops and bus routes. Mr March advised that this point had already been raised and the methodology could be challenged.

In response to the query regarding Keele Councillor Jones stated that the University campus was a private estate and not necessarily available to residents living off campus. There was requirement to see what level of access people had to those services.

## **SECTION 7: TRANSPORT**

Councillor Maxfield referred to Policy ST1 (f) and asked how the impact of congestion, air quality and noise pollution would be addressed around bus stations and travel hubs.

The Council's Head of Planning, Shawn Fleet stated that this interlinked with the Development Management side of operations. Section 106 agreements may look to developers for contributions to help offset such issues through supporting sustainable travel, electric car charging points and enhancing pedestrian/cycling facilities. The Policy would enable officers to enter into dialogue with developers.

Councillor Jenny Cooper referred to an agreement that Wolstanton Retail Park has entered into to provide a bus service to residents to take them to the retail park and asked if this could be a future consideration. Ms March stated that this would be down to implementation of the Policy and would be tested for viability.

Councillor Maxfield enquired whether a tram system in the Borough had been considered. Ms March advised that no specific evidence had been commissioned.

Councillor Jones stated that if housing was a controversial part of the document, the transport part was critical. The document could have been more aspirational of how transport networks would be fixed. One of the lacking elements was Kidsgrove Railway Station which formed vital links and this should be highlighted. Mr Fleet stated that the Plan would work alongside Travel Strategies.

## **SECTION 8: CENTRES**

This section had been covered in earlier discussions in this meeting.

## **SECTION 9: DESIGN AND HERITAGE.**

Councillor Northcott stated that 66% of the population were interested in climate change and the Plan may need to be more bold, bearing in mind it extends to 2037. There may be an expectation from the public for the Council to encourage developers to come up with environmentally friendly buildings.

## **SECTION 10: NATURAL AND RURAL ENVIRONMENT.**

Councillor Northcott enquired whether anything would be put into the Plan in terms of Fracking. Mr Lewis from Stoke City Council advised that this would come under the Minerals Local Plan.

## **SECTION 11: CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES**

Councillor Jones stated that the Plan did not give any mention to the using of old mine workings to generate energy adding that this was expanding across valleys. The Councils could be use heritage tunnels to provide cleaner energy. Mr Lewis

stated that Stoke city Council had been looking at this and the Policy would support that development when it came forward. Ms March added that Keele University was doing a district heat project and the remit could be looked at as technologies change.

**SECTION 12: INFRASTRUCTURE:**

Councillor John Williams stated that western villages' infrastructure had suffered through 'piecemeal' developments and asked if the Draft Plan could look at major infrastructure changes such as traffic links and looking at the area as a whole. Ms March advised that several sites could be looked across for cumulative impact and cumulative solutions and that options needed to be explored.

- Resolved:**
- (i) That the responses to the previous consultation exercise carried out on the Preferred Options Consultation Document be noted.
  - (ii) That the presentation of the Draft Local Plan in two parts, Part One for strategic and development management policies to be consulted upon in Spring 2020 and Part Two for proposed site allocations be consulted upon Autumn 2020, be noted.
  - (iii) That support be given for:
    - (a) The Draft Joint Local Plan Part One Strategy and Policies Consultation document to be published for formal public consultation during Spring 2020.
    - (b) The consultation to be carried out in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).

That the results of the consultation exercise be reported back to Committee in Summer 2020 to inform the next stage of plan preparation (Part 2 Site Allocations) in partnership with Stoke-on-Trent City Council.

Councillor Proctor thanked officers for the hard work that had gone into the preparation of the Draft Plan.

**4. URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no Urgent Business.

**COUNCILLOR ANDREW FEAR**  
**Chair**

Meeting concluded at 8.41 pm